



For a time such as this, a message from our Leadership

Beyond the Images, The Call of a Faithful People

There is no question that the images of children sleeping on concrete floors, and the pain of the separated families along the southern border of our nation have again captivated our attention in disbelief and shame. The images of these faces beckon us to look – but the pain is such that we are often tempted to quickly turn away and not “see.” Another temptation is to move quickly past the images – to not see the faces at all. We are tempted to get caught in the political discourse that can easily serve as a distraction or deflection from the reality that each image reflects the suffering of a child of God. The truth is it is often easier to argue with one another than to consider how we might address a situation that feels overwhelming.

As a leadership body, we’ve been considering how it is we might respond as a people of faith at a time such as this. How do we allow ourselves to look and “see” the pain before us that calls us to act – without reducing our conversations to political preferences and hyperbole, especially at a time when hurtful words continue to be the norm in our public discourse? How do we live into our covenant commitment to be a Matthew 25 presbytery as we seek to be faithful to our commitment to revitalize our congregations, alleviate poverty and respond to “isms” in the world? How do we come together to be a people of the Gospel when confronted by the brokenness near and far?

It was just one year ago on June 22, 2018 that we as a presbytery affirmed our conviction to #keepfamilies together. Through the voice of our then-moderator Elder Linda Rutkosky and the leadership collegium, we affirmed that *“Those of us called by God to be servant leaders are perplexed and discouraged by the lack of mercy and grace shown to mothers, fathers and their children by our own country. Silence is not golden. We cannot be neutral. We are on the side of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior....”* We acknowledged that *“We may be divided on our perspective of how we got to this place, but we need to be united in how we respond as a people of faith.”*

Our conviction has not changed – we stand with the Gospel of Jesus Christ that clearly teaches us to stand with those who cannot stand on their own. And it is apparent that the situation on our southern border continues to be one compelling us to respond. In an effort to do so, we must first “understand.” And in order to “understand,” we must first “see.” In order to “see” first-hand, your Presbytery Leadership Collegium is working with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance to send a leadership team to the southern border in Texas to be our eyes and ears – to see and to hear on our behalf – and then to return and share what they have witnessed with the larger presbytery.

It is our hope and prayer that what they will bring to us will enable us to lean into our identity as a people who discern and decide together what then shall we do – at the border and at home as a presbytery committed to Matthew 25. By so doing, may we incarnate the prayer of that communication one year ago – we *“pray that hearts will soften, eyes will see, and minds will be enlightened with different ways to resolve problems and that the love of Christ will triumph.”*

“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”
Matthew 25:40