

John Calvin Presbytery
November 4th, 2023

Two Hundred and Twelfth Stated Meeting
First Presbyterian Church
Joplin, Missouri

JOHN CALVIN PRESBYTERY

Report of the Executive Presbyter

October was designated Pastor Appreciation Month by an organization about three decades ago. It is not a very prominent part of our tradition, so even if you didn't do anything, there are other ways you can show appreciation to your pastor. In our case, maybe it should be called Moderator Appreciation Month, because every congregation has a moderator.

I did some reading on pastors and appreciation recently. Pastors are accustomed to all kinds of Sunday morning feedback, from people who avoid the greeting line by going out another door, to those who say only "Good morning," to those who comment about the sermon. Sunday morning is a chance to verbalize appreciation, and we don't have to wait for a specific month.

It is surprising that some pastors are made uncomfortable by lavish appreciation gifts. They don't expect a Cadillac, or a trip to Europe, or even a lot of fanfare. The greatest gift you can offer your pastor is to pray for him/her, keeping in mind that one of the outcomes of prayer is that it can transform the person who is praying, sometimes in unexpected and powerful ways. That's part of our spiritual growth as Christians.

If October is pastor appreciation month, maybe November could be Pastor's Spouse Appreciation Month. (If your moderator doesn't have a spouse, then you have the opportunity to double down on appreciating your moderator.) Pastors' spouses are all too familiar with having family meals and vacations disrupted, work creeping in on days off, and a fairly steady stream of church drama. As the wife of a pastor, I remember some touching gifts that truly seemed no-strings-attached: a few packages of meat when someone butchered, quarts of fresh strawberries on our front porch, tomatoes. Being invited to sit with a family who was already at the pizza place when we got there, and they bought our supper. And so many more!

Sometimes it's easier to be grateful when you understand what there is to be grateful for. Pastors engaged in years of preparation for ministry. They shoulder many different responsibilities to be the spiritual leader of your congregation. They are not the highest paid in the professional sector. Note: while pension comes at great cost to the church, it is not salary, and any comparisons need to reflect this.

Through gratitude for one another's work, we carry out the mission of Christ.

The committees of John Calvin Presbytery have been working hard, and you will see evidence of every committee's work at the November 4 meeting. I think our pastors would feel a smidgen of appreciation if their churches are represented by elder commissioners. Our host church is making plans for hospitality. It will be a good day. I hope to see you there!

Thanks for reading!
Malinda

Meanwhile, I'm going to think about what color my new Cadillac should be.