



# In the Loop

## Moving Into the Future

“An Opportunity is a Problem Dressed in Work Clothes.” I read that on a church sign on my drive up Rt. 46 to the Presbytery Center. I liked the sentiment, but I wish we didn’t have so many “opportunities” as we move into the future.

Seriously...we do have many opportunities that would probably go unnoticed if they did not come to us in the form of challenges. For Eastminster Presbytery, one of those opportunities is the future of Joseph Badger Meadows Camp and Conference Center. The reason we have an opportunity rather than a problem is because of the caliber of people who are willing to put on “work clothes.” We really have extraordinary leadership at JBM under the direction of Gary Hoskins and Doug

Hoffman. We owe them a debt of deep gratitude. Then there is the JBM Committee, the JBM Task Force, and the many, many churches and folks who invest their time, energy, talents and money in JBM’s ministry.

I was pleased by the quality of the conversation on the future of JBM that took place around tables at the most recent presbytery meeting. I’m certain that not everyone was happy with everything they heard, but it appeared that everyone was engaged in the conversation. Be assured that the presbytery was listening and that your comments and ideas will be carefully considered.

So, what’s next? All of the Convener’s/Recorder’s Forms have been returned

and the information recorded there will be placed into a single document. This document will be provided to the JBM Committee, the JBM Task Force, and the Board of Trustees. The three presbytery entities will be invited to meet together, reflect on the information you provided, and seek to build consensus on a “next step” recommendation to the presbytery. At the November 9 presbytery meeting, you may expect to receive a copy of the recorded responses of the presbytery from the Sept. 14 conversation as well as a recommendation for your consideration. Until then, keep JBM and its future in your prayers.

Dan Schomer  
General Presbyter



## The Greatest Generation

One of the highlights of the most recent presbytery meeting for me was the presentation of ordination anniversary certificates to some of our minister members. The Revs. Joe Atkins, Jim Ray, and John Sharick (who was vacationing on the Outer Banks and couldn’t be with us), were

honored with 50 year certificates. The Rev. Al Shakley received a 55 year certificate. The Rev. Debby Dockstader did an outstanding job sharing with us information about the accomplishments of our honorably retired brethren. We sometimes forget the impact that our senior col-

leagues have had on the church and the world around us. These were pastors that didn’t watch things happen or ask “what’s happening?” They made things happen and the church and the world are the better for it.

Thanks Brothers!

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### Prayer Concerns

- Prayers of comfort for the family of Marian Bauer.
- Continued prayer for Dick Ramsey, Christy Ramsey’s father.

### Welcome

- To the Rev. Bill Winch and his wife Ann who are residing at Copeland Oaks Retirement Community.



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## Quote of the Week

*“Addictive fallacy”—people usually believe more, particularly more data, will solve problems. But facts—no matter how many one introduces—do not motivate people to change...What (Edwin) Friedman suggests, as opposed to more data, is elevating the level of people’s maturity, their capacity to respond rather than react, to reflect instead of defend, and to choose wisely rather than just jump on the bandwagon.*

Peter Steinke. [A Door Set Open](#). Printed by Alban Institute



## Reflections on “A Door Set Open”, Part 2

Peter Steinke stresses in his writing that a key to effective change is leadership. Leadership is a theme that is woven throughout Steinke’s [A Door Set Open](#). Steinke’s key insights include:

- A key function of leadership is to introduce processes that will bring about change so that anxiety in the system leads to new learning.
- A leader cannot lead and be as anxious as everyone else. One’s own reactivity can result in self-inflicted sabotage.
- The leader must be self-regulated in the face of anxious reactivity. “Being focused on principle and direction, the leader does not get caught up on rash behaviors or cruel comments.”
- Church leaders must be patient. Significant change takes time. There are no short cuts.
- Consultant William Bridges says that change is experienced as transition in three movements—endings, the neutral zone, and beginnings. Endings involves coming to terms with what is being lost. The neutral zone is the between time, the wilderness, the edge of chaos, where there is potential for learning. The beginning is a time of reorientation and new direction. The greatest challenge for the leader is to hold the congregation in the neutral zone and not let them rush prematurely in a new direction.
- A key to functioning as a leader in times of high anxiety and reactivity is self-differentiation. Differentiation seeks to hold in tension two basic needs—the need to be a separate self and the need to be connected to others. To fail to stay connected is called emotional cutoff. To fail to stay separate is known as emotional fusion. Either condition (cutoff or confusion) will render the leader ineffective.
- Nonetheless, Steinke warns that a leader who is functioning maturely will incite reactivity in the least mature in the group. “The capacity of a leader to be aware of, to reflect upon, and to work through people’s reactivity may be the most important aspect of leadership.”
- Even though William Bridge’s neutral zone is the best time for innovation to happen that makes revitalization possible, churches will often react to the neutral zone by seeking shortcuts in the form of transformational programs that promise quick relief. Effective leadership helps a congregation turn its attention away from looking outside itself for solutions and instead look inwardly to determine what God is calling the church to be and do.
- “Church leaders have to reeducate people as to the purpose of the church...Its purpose is to invite people to be part of the true mission of the church.”