

Small Church Conference

“It has been the best church conference I ever attended!!” “It was uplifting to realize that there are many other small churches and we can do mighty things and make a difference.” “I enjoyed the insight of the opening speaker — Marcia Myers — wonderful communion — saxophone was great with hymns. Always improvise!”

These are just three of the comments from the evaluation forms for the First Annual Presbytery of West Virginia Small Church Conference. It was held May 19 at Fayetteville Presbyterian Church. There were approximately 65 people in attendance. The folks from Fayetteville were very gracious hosts, proud to help the conference out with a great introduction. They have invited us back in 2015.

Marcia Myers, former director of the Vocations Office of the General Assembly and former teaching elder member of the presbytery, gave the keynote address. Forrest Palmer got us started with some get acquainted activities. There were wonderful welcoming and break time refreshments from the folks at Fayetteville.

There were six workshops in the afternoon. Marcia led “A Time with Marcia.” Joanne Glaser, pastor of Belington, Beverly, and Tygarts Valley, led one called “Mission in the ‘Micro’ Church.” Kathryn McCrary, formerly of Presbytery staff and a ruling elder at Village Chapel, led “Christian Education in the Small Church.” Frank Cunningham, pastor of Ripley, First, and First United of Ravenswood, offered “Getting Connected and Other Computer Stuff.” Lanny Howe from Alderson presented “How Much ‘Ministering’ Do We Need?” Forrest Palmer and Craig Butler of the Presbytery staff presented “What Can Presbytery Really Do for Us? Q&A with Forrest and Craig.”

The most common experience with the workshops was that they evolved into opportunities for participants to share their joys, concerns, and ideas with each other. The idea that “we are not alone” permeated the event, lifting many spirits.

When asked on the evaluation form if people would like to have another Small Church Conference in 2015 100% of those responding said a resounding “Yes!” A planning team for that event will be put together this summer. Look for news of the Second Annual Small Church Conference soon.