

December 2021

Special points of interest:

- Staff Letters
- PNW Stated Meeting Summary
- Prayer Rotation
- Church Vitality
- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Work Trip

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Northern Lights

Letter From Richard Blood

Dear Sisters and Brothers in the Presbytery of Northern Waters,

Each year since 2009, with the exception of 2021 due to COVID 19, a group of PNW folks have traveled south or east in late winter to help with storm damage recovery. In 2021 we stayed closer to home and worked at Clearwater Forest, our camp near Deerwood, MN. This year Hurricane Ike hit Hammond Louisiana, where we've served before, hard. Again.

It's still difficult to know what will be happening with COVID by the end of February. Most of us have been vaccinated by now however, and we hope to be able to head back to First Presbyterian in Hammond, and work with the Ginger Ford Fuller Center there. We've reserved space for 20 this year. That's a slightly smaller crew than usual for us, but probably realistic with some still understandably concerned about the safety of traveling and staying together. The dates are the 19th – 27th of February, including the two weekends driving down and back.



Rev. Richard Blood and his daughter

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Letter from Ken Ribe

Dear PNW Friends;

I'm thinking about all of you on this last Friday before Christmas Eve. This has been another one of those years—unforgettable in many ways, yet a year most of us wish we could have skipped because of the pandemic that so far has claimed over 800,000 lives here in our country. We wish it were not so.

Yet, here we are a week before Christmas and we've made it through so far. Some of you have had delayed memorial services to catch up on, and then there is the stress of preparing for Advent, and Christmas services and all that comes with it.

This morning my wife and I were reading our devotions, and one that we read was from Dianna Butler Bass's Advent devotionals that she sends out by email. It's about Christmas tree memories. Her father was a florist and decorated many fancy trees for people in their community, but their own tree, was pretty spartan by comparison. I found her telling of the story pretty moving. Perhaps you will to. Here is an excerpt from her devotional.

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2022 PNW Prayer Rotation

26-Dec-21: First Presbyterian Church of Bemidji, MN - CRE Chip Holt

2-Jan-22: First Presbyterian Church of Bigfork, MN - Ray Cole, Moderator

9-Jan-22: Presbyterian Clearwater Forest of Deerwood, MN (Summer Camp registration for 2022 is now open.)

16-Jan-22: Bowstring Chapel of Bigfork, MN - Sharron Lewis, Pulpit Supply

23-Jan-22: First Presbyterian Church of Blackduck, MN - Rev. John Yingling, Pastor

30-Jan-22: Lawron Presbyterian Church of Bovey, MN - Rev. Dorothy Duquette, Pastor

6-Feb-22: Brule Presbyterian Church of Brule, WI - CRE Leslie Anderson

13-Feb-22: Community Church of Calumet, MN - Rev. Dorothy Duquette, Pastor

20-Feb-22: River's Edge Church of Carlton, MN - Rev. Nancy Deever, Moderator

Presbytery Meeting Highlights

October Presbytery Meeting Highlights

The Presbytery of Northern Waters held its Stated Meeting on October 9, 2021, starting at 10:00 am, via Zoom. It was our hope that we'd be back at Clearwater Forest in person this fall, but COVID transmission rates were still very high in all our PNW counties. Presbytery Council made the difficult decision to hold off at least another few months on in-person meetings. Lord willing, we will be back together again by May. This meeting was brief, due to the change from our anticipated format. We did our regular fall business, and were done in 2 hours.

Our Moderator, Rev. Dorothy Duquette, opened the meeting at 10 am with prayer and a reading from Psalm 104. A quorum was declared, and a motion to approve the docket was passed. Our Stated Clerk, HR Rev. Brad Carloss, reviewed the standing rules for the meeting.

Due in part to the abbreviated format, much of our fall business was handled in the consent agenda. We received reports from the annual external review of our finances, and on changes made to the Clearwater Forest bylaws. The Presbytery acted to pass the budget for 2022, and to approve new minimum terms of call for 2022 in keeping with standing Presbytery policy.

The Ironwood Administrative Commission reported that the only remaining task for them is to hold a memorial celebration for the closing of the church. This will happen at our May meeting.

Program Strategy Committee reported that documents for the Church Vitality Fund have been drawn up, and that congregations are beginning to use the fund. (See HR Rev Arlin Talley's article in the Northern Lights.) There will be a work trip to Hammond LA in February to help with recovery after Hurricane Ike. (See further information in this issue of Northern Lights)

Committee On Ministry reported that RE Gary Cross has resigned as co-chair to spend more time with his family, and that Rev. Jim Deters is also resigning as co-chair to take up his new responsibilities as Moderator of the Presbytery of Northern Waters. Both resignations were received with appreciation for jobs very well done. Thank you, Gary and Jim! Rev. Robyn Weaver and Rev. Lawrence Lee will be taking over leadership of COM. Thanks to them too!

Nominating Committee nominated Rev. Jim Deters as PNW Moderator for the year. A slate of nominations for those who will serve on our presbytery committees was also moved and approved. Rev. Mathew Arneson was nominated as chair of Program Strategy Committee.

Presbytery Meeting Highlights Continued

Moderator Dorothy Duquette called our attention to the necrology report, recognizing elders who have died over the last year, and asked us to take a moment to remember them. Dorothy and a group from Glen Avon providing music led us in worship, and we were invited to send in gifts to be divided between our Peace and Global Witness and Christmas Joy offerings. The service ended with the installation of the Rev Jim Deters as our new PNW Moderator.

Rev. Dorothy Duquette moves on to her role as PNW Council Chair, and Presbytery recognized her outstanding service during these difficult COVID years with a gift. Thank you, Dorothy!

Our Fall meeting was adjourned with prayer at 11:53 am.

The next meeting of the PNW will be Saturday, February 5, 2022, also via Zoom.

Letter from the Moderator

Grace and peace to you, the name of Jesus Christ. This Presbytery has been a haven for us in the Northwoods, where we have had the opportunity to grow in faith and care for our neighbors. It is the most district privilege to serve with you.

I was told that it would be wise to introduce myself. I have served United Presbyterian and Congregational church in Ashland, WI for 5 years. Before coming here, I served in Hibbing, MN and Colorado. I have more hobbies than time. One of my major goals in life is to raise children that will be in church when they are my age. But, enough about me.

As the Holiday season approaches, this is a passage that means a lot to me. The great poem, *The Work of Christmas* by Howard Thurman, reads:

When the song of the angels is stilled,
 When the star in the sky is gone,
 When the kings and the princes are home,
 When the shepherds are back with their flock,
 The work of Christmas begins:
 To find the lost,
 To heal the broken,
 To feed the hungry,
 To release the prisoner,
 To rebuild nations,
 To bring peace among all people,
 To make music in the heart.

2022 PNW Prayer Rotation

27-Feb-22: First
 Presbyterian Church of
 Chippewa Falls, WI –
 Vacant
 6-Mar-22: Presbyterian
 Church of Cloquet, MN -
 Rev. Gary Terrio, Pastor
 13-Mar-22: First United
 Church of Coleraine, MN -
 Rev. Dorothy Duquette,
 Pastor
 20-Mar-22: First
 Presbyterian Church of
 Cornell, WI - CRE Beverly
 Thompson
 27-Mar-22: First
 Presbyterian Church of
 Duluth, MN - Vacant
 3-Apr-22: Glen Avon
 Presbyterian Church of
 Duluth, MN - Rev. Robyn
 Weaver, Pastor
 10-Apr-22: Lakeside
 Presbyterian Church of
 Duluth, MN - Rev. Kari
 Jutila, Pastor
 17-Apr-22: One Great
 Hour of Sharing -
 Presbyterian Hunger
 Program, Presbyterian
 Disaster Relief, Self-
 Development of People
 24-Apr-22: Pike Lake
 Presbyterian Church of
 Duluth, MN - CRE Deb
 Emery

RB

2022 PNW Prayer Rotation

1-May-22 Westminster
Presbyterian Church of
Duluth, MN - Rev.

Carolyn Mowchan,
Pastor

8-May-22: First
Presbyterian Church of
Eau Claire, WI - Rev.

Kathryn Reid Walker,
Pastor

15-May-22: North
Presbyterian Church of
Eau Claire, WI - Rev. Tim
Bush, Pulpit Supply

22-May-22: First
Presbyterian Church of
Ely, MN - Rev. Corey
Larsen, Pastor

29-May-22: St. Croix
Presbyterian Church of
Gordon, WI - CRE Leslie
Anderson

5-Jun-22: Pentecost
Offering - Ministry with
Children at Risk,
Presbyterian Mission
Agency

12-Jun-22: Community
Presbyterian Church of
Grand Rapids, MN - Rev.
Jason Schiller, Pastor;
CRE Mary Shidler

Congregational Vitality Fund

We – the churches of our presbytery – have a fund with over \$225,000, and it's meant to be used, even to be used up! It has had several names, such as Church Redevelopment Fund, Church Redevelopment/Development Fund, Church Development Fund, and now...Congregational Vitality Fund.

The Congregational Vitality Fund takes its name from the Matthew 25 Invitation put before us by the 222nd and 223rd General Assemblies. The Matthew 25 Invitation is for us to be churches of “action, where God’s love, justice and mercy shine forth and are contagious...our common identity to do mission.”

The limits of the use of our Congregational Vitality Fund are your imagination. As sessions, groups of sessions, or sessions working with presbytery committees/commissions/task forces, we have an opportunity to imagine, and act on, ideas to develop or expand the ministry and mission of our churches.

To date, three of our churches have made use of the fund, two for mission/ministry in their communities, and one for working through a time of transition, considering the future of their congregation and community. Each of our churches is invited to imagine how they might use the fund:

...a [congregation’s] vitality is primarily its spiritual strength and its capacity for purposeful mission. Congregational vitality is evident in a worshipping community when its structural systems, finances and discipleship practices are aligned in such a way that the community is actively engaged in the mission of God in their local community and the world, and they are powerfully focused on growing as disciples in the way of Jesus Christ. Faith comes alive when we boldly engage God’s mission and share the hope we have in Christ.”

If you have questions about the fund and how your church might access it, please contact the Program Strategy Committee by calling/emailing the presbytery office.

Arlyn Talley, Former Program Strategy Chair

Congregational Vitality Fund Grant Application

The Presbytery of Northern Waters
Congregational Vitality Fund
Grant Application

Date: _____
Church: _____
Project Leader: _____
Email address: _____
Phone number: _____
Amount requested: _____
Description:

Signatures
Project Leader: _____ Date _____
Clerk of Session: _____ Date _____

Send this application to: Presbytery of Northern Waters
5203 E 2nd Street
Superior WI 54880-4363

2022 PNW Prayer

Rotation

- 19-Jun-22: New Hope Presbyterian Church of Hannibal, WI - CRE Beverly Thompson
- 26-Jun-22: First Presbyterian Church of Hibbing, MN - CRE Katie Larson
- 3-Jul-22: First Presbyterian Church of Hurley, WI - Rev. Donald Nickolson, Stated Supply
- 10-Jul-22: Congregation of the Good Shepherd of Keewatin, MN – Rev. Aaron LeRoy Lofgren, Pastor
- 17-Jul-22: Community Presbyterian Church of Lac du Flambeau, WI - Vacant
- 24-Jul-22: First Presbyterian Church of Lake Nebagamon, WI - CRE Leslie Anderson
- 31-Jul-22: Community Church of Manitowish Waters, WI - Vacant
- 7-Aug-22: Calvary Presbyterian Church of McGrath, MN and Wahkon Presbyterian Church of Wahkon, MN – Rev. John Mann, Stated Supply

Presbytery of Northern Waters Hammond Louisiana Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Work Trip February 19- 27, 2022



Why Volunteer to Assist Hammond: Southern Louisiana experienced extensive flooding in 2016, followed by more damage from hurricane Barry in 2020. In August of 2021 Louisiana was hit once again.

Requirements: Must be at least 18-years old, be in good health, and have health insurance.

Abilities: Experience is helpful but not necessary! Experience and/or a willingness to learn the following, are needed: drywall, flooring, painting, siding, gutting, and roofing.

Accommodations and Transportation: We will be staying at First Presbyterian Church of Hammond, Louisiana. We will be provided with high-quality air mattresses, a shower trailer and kitchen. Sleeping bags will be needed. *The church can accommodate a maximum of 20 volunteers, so please register soon!* We will carpool down and back. The trip will take two days each way with an overnight stop at a hotel.

Cost: The total cost is approximately \$350 per person. A non-refundable deposit of \$125 per person should be included with your registration.

Registration and Deposit Directions: Please submit your registration form and a check payable to: Presbytery of Northern Waters at 5201 E 2nd St, Superior, WI 55808. Please include on the memo line: Presbytery Mission Trip 2022. **Registration is due by January 25, 2022.**

Contacts: If you have any questions, please call Rev. Richard Blood at 218-343-4850, or Rev. Jim Deters at 720-530-1073. We will meet in mid-January for a pre-trip orientation session.

2022 PDA Work Trip Registration Form

Name _____ Deposit _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

E-mail _____

Letter from the Moderator Continued

This poem speaks to me the gentle truth of Christmas. It is more meaningful than the things around us. It is bigger than the swelling of the pews this time of year. It is more lasting than the delicious things that grace the table. This truth is full of promise and purpose. The truth is that yes, you are found. The broken parts in you are mended. You are fed with nourishing things. Freedom is now yours. You are rebuilt as you receive peace and a new song. We celebrate this work of God in us and around us. This has been the work of God that we observe through the ages and in our own lives today.

But the true message of Christmas is deeper than what we receive. It is also a quiet one and quite a mystery. The message of Christmas is that we are found, fed and freed to bring these Christmas gifts to our friends, family and neighbors in our own corner of the world. Christmas is less about what you receive and more about whom you give hope, joy, peace and love.

On this side of Christmas, we have opportunity. In our planning, organizing, inviting, shopping and cooking, start the work of Christmas before everything is put away. Set time aside to give thanks for the gifts you receive. Set time aside to be part of the gentle truth of Christmas- that is God is working in you. Now, you can serve others.

One of the best parts of Christmas is that people around the world set aside time each year to focus on some of the best things in life; hope, joy, peace, love given to us through Christ. And, that we are chosen, not for special favors, but for the honor of carrying these things to our family, friends and neighbors. Be the light of Christmas for someone this year.

As the world comes back to life after our COVID cocoon, we now are faced with questions. What does it mean to be faithful? How does the church best serve the whole community? How can we as people of faith work together? How can the churches in our presbytery support each other to continue the “work of Christmas”?

Consider calling the church down the road or the other side of the Presbytery. Ask them, “What are they doing right now? What are they doing to serve the community? What things are working? How are they rounding up members that have strayed during COVID? How are they reaching out to new people?”

We live in an amazing time. There is fear, divisiveness, mistruth, need and despair all around us. In our lifetimes, the church has never been needed more than right now. The work of Christmas has begun.

Rev. James F. Deters,
Moderator

2022 PNW Prayer

Rotation

14-Aug-22: Round Lake Presbyterian Church of McGregor, MN - Rev. Arlin Talley, Moderator

21-Aug-22: Trinity Episcopal/ Presbyterian Church of Park Rapids, MN - Rev. Mary Marotte, Pastor

28-Aug-22: First Presbyterian Church of Phillips, WI - Rev. Matthew Arneson, Pastor

4-Sep-22: United Presbyterian Church of Rice Lake, WI - Vacant

11-Sep-22: United Protestant Church of Silver Bay, MN - Rev. Paul Scaringi, Pastor

18-Sep-22: Country Peace Presbyterian Church of Superior, WI - CRE Leslie Anderson

25-Sep-22: United Presbyterian Church of Superior, WI - Rev. Brett Foote, Pastor

2022 PNW Prayer

Rotation

2-Oct-22: Peace & Global Witness Offering - Presbyterian Mission Agency and Synod, Presbytery, and Congregational peace and mission efforts
9-Oct-22: First Presbyterian Church of Tamarack, MN - Rev. Rick Mann, Pastor
16-Oct-22: St. James Presbyterian Church of Tower, MN - Rev. Douglas Workman, Pastor
23-Oct-22: United Church of Two Harbors, MN - Paula Gaboury, Pastor
30-Oct-22 Hope Community Presbyterian Church of Virginia, MN - Vacant
6-Nov-22 Warba Presbyterian Church of Warba, MN - Rev. Arlin Talley, Moderator
13-Nov-22 First United Presbyterian Church of Willow River, MN - Vacant
20-Nov-22: First Presbyterian Church of Winter, WI - Vacant

Letter from Richard Blood Continued

Those of you who have gone in the past know these service trips are among the best things we do together as a Presbytery. We work hard, and we come back tired in the evening. But we make a real difference. We sleep on air mattresses on the floor, but we eat well :). We may be leaving comfort zones, but we have the opportunity to get to know others from all around the Presbytery. And it's a nice break from February in Northern Minnesota and Wisconsin!

Folks with abilities in carpentry, drywall work, flooring, siding and painting are always needed. But so are people who can do clean-up work, or can cook, or are just willing to learn a new skill. The cost to us is \$125 per person for the week at the Hammond church, plus food and travel. We should be able to hold the total we collect from each person to the \$125 registration fee as we always get gifts from congregations and help from the Presbytery. Some congregations choose to sponsor the people they send and cover the registration fee as well.

There is a registration form included in this newsletter, and we'll be sending out further information to clerks, pastors, and those who have gone on these trips before. There will be an organizational meeting in late January to share information and coordinate rides. Please register as soon as possible to help us in the planning process.

Join us for an adventure! Questions? Call Rich at 218-343-4850, or the PNW office.

Grace and Peace,
Richard Blood

Per Capita

PASTORS, CLERKS, AND TREASURERS

All Church Pastors and Clerks should have received an email with important year end reporting information. Contact Presbytery office if you didn't. Watch for a letter snail mailed to Treasurers with the year-end receiving date, as well as the 2022 Per Capita Apportionment statement mailed to the church. We thank all of the congregations that gave 100% of their 2021 per capita. Because the Presbytery is required to send the full share of General Assembly and Synod per capita each year, your congregation's payments keep us from. To learn more about how your per capita dollars are used, please enjoy this [short video](#) from the denomination. Perfect for a "minute for mission"!

<https://vimeo.com/486858440>

Letter from Ken Ribe Continued

“In the waning days of Advent, we finally put up our own tree: a well-used artificial one with lights purchased from Sears in the 1960s and a mismatched collection of ornaments my parents had assembled throughout the years. After spending a month on the strangers’ trees, all sparkling with stylish and coordinated décor, ours seemed sadly neglected to me. I felt a twinge of envy that our tree was not as festive as those we had adorned for others.

One late December day, more than forty years ago now, we pulled our tree and worn boxes from the shed, and I asked, “Dad, why doesn’t our tree have a theme?”

“It does,” he said with certainty. “Our tree is about memories. You can’t buy that tree and no one can put it up for you.”

My father passed away nineteen years ago. And I still remember that moment of wisdom: Our tree was a tree of memory.

I’ve never had a coordinated Christmas tree. The oldest ornament on my tree came from my grandmother’s house. It is a candy-cane man that was originally a holiday pull for window shades. I still remember being four or so years old and reaching up for him for the fun of raising and lowering the blinds. There are a few ornaments from my parents’ first Christmas tree, and several from my early childhood. There’s a red ball painted with glitter – “Diana 1969” – a survivor of a Brownie troop holiday project. There’s a goofy ornament celebrating the American bi-centennial, a tiny pair of wooden shoes from my first trip to Europe. There are six small, hand-sewn felt stockings that I made while in graduate school – because I had no money and couldn’t afford to buy anything. And a quick succession of ornaments from 1997 and 1998: “Our First Christmas,” “Our First House,” and “Baby’s First Christmas.” Next, there are handmade decorations crafted by my stepson and my daughter dating from preschool onward. The last Christmas ornament given to me by my father before he died. And now, mementos from travels around the world.

A tree of memory. Not purchased, assembled through the decades. Few pieces were particularly expensive, and few match. Taken one piece at a time, they don’t seem like much. But, once all these assorted trinkets are all hung on the tree, something magical happens: the Christmas tree becomes a tree of life.

In the deep winter, a tree stands in the house, branches laden with the fruit of our lives. There are some Christians who think that the Christmas tree is a pagan symbol, and that may well be, but it is also a biblical one. Trees are ever-present in scripture as an icon of God’s rootedness in this world, and we, as God’s people, are the dressers of trees and the growers of fruit. As Jesus said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

And so, I remember. About dad and trees and fruit and beauty. And the words of the haunting Christmas carol, “Jesus Christ, The Apple Tree,” echo in my mind:

*The tree of life my soul hath seen
Laden with fruit and always green
The trees of nature fruitless be
Compared with Christ the apple tree.*

Here’s to you, wishing you all the blessings of the season. May your memories cause you to reflect with gratitude on all that God has given to us in Christ—the babe in a manger, who lives in us today.

*Grace and Peace to you all,
Ken Ribe
Presbyter for Pastoral Care*

Remembrance of Pastor José Manuel Leite

From Rural Pastor to Mayor and Universal Ecumenism



Pastor José Manuel Leite, from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Portugal (IEPP). Photo © All Rights Reserved

David Valente | 22 Nov 21

Pastor José Manuel Leite, from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Portugal (IEPP), died this Monday, November 22, 2021, in Coimbra, after months in hospital to treat various health problems. A prominent figure in Portuguese Protestantism, José Manuel Leite supported rural communities, was mayor and worked in international ecumenical bodies. A personality of dialogue and openness, he also leaves a legacy in the creation of structures for interfaith rapprochement in Portugal, in particular the Centro Ecuménico Reconciliação. 7MARGENS publishes its obituary, written by David Valente, member of the Portuguese Society for the History of Protestantism, on [whose page this text is also published](#).

*José Leite's funeral will take place on **Wednesday, 24, at Igreja Evangélica Presbyteriana** (10 de Agosto, in Figueira da Foz), with the wake starting at 10:00 am. The funeral celebration starts at 15:00.*

The Municipality of Figueira da Foz decreed municipal mourning for that same day, with the county's flag being placed at half-mast.

José Leite was born in Lisbon on 24/03/1940, from families linked to Portuguese Protestantism. After completing his secondary studies at Liceu Pedro Nunes, in 1959 he entered the Presbyterian Seminary of Theology, in Carcavelos. He continues his studies at the Faculty of Theology in Montpellier (France) and at the Ecumenical Institute in Bossey (University of Geneva, Switzerland). He even prepares a doctoral thesis at the University of Salamanca, on Miguel de Unamuno, which he will never defend. On the other hand, with the aim of helping farmers in his parishes, he took a bachelor's degree in Agronomy at the Instituto Superior de Agronomia in Coimbra (1967-1970).

Ordained pastor of the Presbyterian Evangelical Church in 1964, he marries Eunice Soares, and takes up his first pastorate in the parishes of Alhadas (Figueira da Foz) and Bebedouro (Montemor-o-Velho). He would later become pastor of the communities of Granja do Ulmeiro and Portomar.

Pastor in rural communities, José Manuel Bravo Teixeira Leite studies what he can serve his faithful and in 1968, together with several farmers, he founded the Cooperativa Agrícola do Bebedouro, of which he will be the first technical manager.

In 1969, he was appointed first director of the recently inaugurated Centro Ecuménico Reconciliação, in Buarcos, Figueira da Foz, a position he occupied until 1988.

Aware of social and political reality, José Manuel Leite is elected by the Socialist Party as the first mayor of Figueira da Foz, in the first free municipal elections, after the 1976 Constitution, a position he holds, with devotion and brilliance, between 1976 and January 1980.

With the Roman Catholic priests Agostinho Jardim Gonçalves and Luís de França, and also with Jeremias Carvalho, Guilherme Pereira and David Valente, in 1988 he founded Oikos – Cooperation and Development, an ecumenical and universalist Non-Governmental Organization, one of the first NGOs for Development in Portugal.

Remembrance Continued

Later that year, he went to Geneva to work as executive secretary of the Department “Justice, Peace and Human Rights”, of the Conference of European Churches (KEK or CEC) and one of those responsible for organizing the 1st European Ecumenical Assembly (Basel 1989). In Geneva, he is also chosen to represent the World Council of Churches on the UN Commission on Human Rights.

Returning to Portugal in 1994, he assumed the rectorship of the Evangelical Theology Seminary, in Lisbon, where he had moved from Carcavelos, and there he taught Patristics and Ecumenism. At the same time, he returns to the pastorate in his beloved rural community of Bebedouro.

He is a member of several ecumenical commissions established between the Churches of the Portuguese Council of Christian Churches (Copic) and the Roman Catholic Church.

At the 1995 Synod of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Portugal, he was elected president of the Church, and of its Executive Committee, functions he held until 2002. In this place, he carried out important and necessary reforms, with a view to preparing the Church for the new millennium and its challenges. He was also later president of the national synod of his church.

He was one of the presidents of Copic, which he helped found, a member of the “Church and Society Commission” of the KEK (Brussels) and of some working groups of the World Council of Churches (Geneva). He was also a member of the Board of the Biblical Society of Portugal.

Author of many articles in theological and ecumenical magazines, in Portugal and abroad, he collaborated with the regional and national press, daily and weekly, on issues related to Church/State relations, religion and politics.

He wrote *The Una e Plural Church*, as an introduction to ecumenism, which has served as a textbook for his students in this area.

In addition to his activity related to writing, José Manuel Leite has been a speaker at many forums, both in Portugal and abroad.

On 6/24/2018, the Municipal Council of Figueira da Foz, which had already given his name to an artery in the city, awarded him the title of Honorary Citizen of Figueira, giving him the gold medal and the key of the city. The Minister of Internal Administration was present.

He died in Coimbra, on November 22, 2021.

The IEPP board expressed its regret at the death of José Manuel Leite. “Servant and faithful believer dedicated his life to the mission of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. (...) Confident of unity in Christ, he was a dynamizer and enthusiastic entrepreneur of the ecumenical movement in Portugal”, reads on the Presbyterian Church page on Facebook.

The Portuguese Council of Christian Churches (Copic), which, in addition to Presbyterians, also brings together Methodists and Anglicans (Lusitans), released a statement to the same effect. “In the year it celebrates its 50th anniversary, Copic respectfully remembers the work done by Pastor José Leite in implementing the ecumenical movement in Portugal”, says the text. “His direct involvement in world and European ecumenical instances projected the Portuguese ecumenical movement internationally, also bringing new visions and openings to the national Churches”, he adds, also highlighting “the praxis of Christian life and faith” of José Leite, “that led him to assume political positions for the good and service of the community, always defending the role of religious and other minorities in Portuguese society”.



**PRESBYTERY OF
NORTHERN WATERS**

5203 E 2nd St
Superior, WI 55803

Phone: 715-394-6265
Email: office@northernwaters.net
Email:
presbyteryofnorthernwaters@gmail.com

WEBSITE

www.northernwaters.net



Invitation to Share News

Our plan is to send out Northern Lights on a quarterly basis. The next issue would be after our February Presbytery Meeting. We'd really like to feature the events and mission projects your congregation is most proud of, as a way of planting ideas and encouraging us all. Please send us notes, articles, and needs that we can share. Want to brag? Send it. Have prayer requests? Send them. Celebrating the life and accomplishments of a congregation member? Someone you're really grateful for? Let us celebrate with you! We'll remind you from time to time, but start thinking and setting aside news now. It'll help keep us better connected!

Synod News

<https://lakesandprairies.org/2021/10/18/fall-synod-meeting-summary/>

Go to the above link to read about what happened at the fall Synod meeting. The focus was Congregational Vitality.

