

Wow! Four years seems like a long time when you are at the beginning, but, in retrospect, the last four years seems to have flown by. I will be retiring on Dec. 31, and I want to say a few things about my time on the staff of the Presbytery of West Virginia.

I want to thank all the congregations and sessions that I have had the opportunity to work with. One thing I have looked for in my 40+ years of ministry has been passion for Jesus Christ. I have seen that in the commitment to Christ's mission in each congregation I have worked with. Organizations like WVMAW and the many food pantries, community ministries, and outreach activities speak to the way you love Jesus and seek to share his love. Please keep it up.

I want to lift up to you the Small Church Conference which will be coming up on April 30th. We have 135 congregations in the presbytery. There are about 85 or so of them which have fewer than 50 members! We are a presbytery of small churches. The Small Church Conference is an opportunity for churches to gather. Mike Burton and his team are planning an exciting event for this year. All are welcome to gather to share the joys and concerns of being a part of the family of God, sisters and brothers of Jesus Christ. Look for the information about the Conference which will be at the Fayetteville Church again.

There are so many thank you's to express. I haven't taken the time to count how many pastors and sessions I have worked with, but I want to thank them for welcoming me into their midst with whatever support and advice I could offer. You all have been a joy to work with. Thank you, too, to the many people whom I have met these past four years who have become friends and colleagues in ministry. I especially want to thank all of you who have prayed with and for me. Most of you are aware of some of the health problems I have faced, particularly pancreatic cancer and the necessary surgery. Your prayers and words of encouragement have made a huge difference in my health and wellbeing.

I need to say a word about staff. Presbytery of West Virginia has one of the best staffs in the denomination. Forrest, Maureen, Barbara, Rocky, Susan, Mark, Nellie, Leslie, thank you for all the help and support you have given me. I hope that I have been able to return at least a small portion of the kind of help you have given me. The same goes to the members of the Committee on Ministry, the Ministry Committee, and the Relations Committee with whom I have had the privilege to work. What passion and commitment you all have shown.

This note would be pointless if I didn't thank the most important person. For six years now Caroline and I have lived a strange life as I lived at least 4 days a week away from our home in Marietta, OH. I thank Caroline for her support, understanding and love as we lived this crazy lifestyle. Retirement will bring us the wonderful opportunity to share one home and one life. Thank you, Dear.

Remember, I'm retiring, not disappearing. I intend for at least the near future to maintain my membership in PWV. I will be in Marietta, OH, right across the river from PWV. My cell phone will be the same. My e-mail will change, though, to [revjcraig75@gmail.com](mailto:revjcraig75@gmail.com). Please keep in touch. I so appreciate you all.

Craig Butler