



April 2021

As registration begins for our 41st General Assembly, I want to report to you on the April 13-14 meeting of the National Leadership Team.

It was a hybrid meeting, in that we had members participating virtually from the Bahamas all the way to Hawaii. No, we don't have a church in Hawaii yet, but one of our members was enjoying some much-needed R&R there.

At the April meeting, the primary focus of the NLT is on its report and recommendations to the June General Assembly. The most important recommendation addresses next year's EPC budget.

You will recall that at the 40th General Assembly last September, the NLT presented to you what it called a "Bare Bones Plus" budget that totaled \$2.36 million. Anticipating that our churches might be stressed financially as the COVID-19 shutdown continued, the NLT reduced its original budget request by 17%. That reduced amount enabled us to keep the essential ministries of the EPC going.

Having planned for giving to be off as much as 17% in this fiscal year, I'm thrilled to report that as of March 31, giving to the EPC is not off 17%. It is off by only 3%. I'm just overwhelmed with gratitude to God and gratitude to you for your incredible generosity and faithfulness. During this most challenging and difficult time in the life of our church, you have demonstrated in a material way how much you value the rich connection that is so central to who we are.

Because of this strong giving, we were able to restore to their original levels funding support for such strategic priorities as church planting and church revitalization earlier this year. This strong giving has also affected the NLT's thinking about next year's budget, which will be presented to you for approval in June.

The proposed budget for fiscal year 2022, which runs from July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022, is a bit under \$2.8 million. This budget includes \$200,000 to support EPC church planting, \$56,000 to support the church revitalization matching funds program, and \$116,220 for effective biblical leadership. And of course, 20%, or more than half a million dollars, is allocated to EPC World Outreach. The full budget presentation will be made available in the Commissioner's Handbook which will be released no later than June 1.



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Related to the budget are the special offerings we receive during the worship services at our General Assembly. This year, in keeping with our theme, “God Will Restore,” those offerings have been designated to restoring the health of EPC leaders.

The Wednesday night offering will help fund efforts to restore the health of EPC church planters. The Thursday morning offering will help fund efforts to restore the health of EPC pastors. And the Thursday night offering will go to restoring the health of EPC global workers. We will have online giving and text-to-give options for these offerings so our virtual participants can contribute.

Thank you again for your generosity over the past year. I’ve been inspired by the stories of resilience, creativity, and courage as so many of you have struggled and prevailed in overcoming the historic challenges you’ve faced.

I know many of you are tired or worn out. My hope is that our 41st General Assembly will be a time when together God will join us and give us rest and refreshment, and He will restore your energy, enthusiasm, and passion for Jesus Christ and the life-changing work He’s doing in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

God bless you, and remember: He is risen!