



**EPC**

*A Global Movement of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches*

**THE JEREMIAH JOURNAL**

## **November 2019**

Each year in the late fall, I report how your financial support of the EPC through Per Member Asking is put to work. But before I get into the numbers, I want to take a moment to thank those of you who have been so faithful in this area.

I have served as your Stated Clerk since 2006. I would not have imagined back then that 13 years later we would be a vibrant, connectional community of more than 630 churches, including congregations in the Bahamas and Puerto Rico. And I am convinced that God is not done working in the EPC to grow His kingdom and bring glory to His name!

And since I'm on the subject, I want you to know that I am not done yet either. In June of 2021 I will step aside from this ministry. But I want to assure you that I am not coasting to the finish line. There is too much to do, and frankly, I am just not wired that way.

The Stated Clerk Search Committee is earnestly seeking God's leadership as they do their work. A significant part of my next year and a half is to set the table for my successor to hit the ground running. The last thing I want is for that person to spend undue effort as he ramps up in that role. So I take very seriously the responsibility to help the next Stated Clerk succeed.

I hope you will take that responsibility to heart as well. You can do that in a practical, profound, and powerful way with your continued support for Per Member Asking. I believe I can challenge you with that because our DNA as a larger body is connectional. We are the EPC—you, your Session, the other EPC churches in your presbytery, the members of your congregation—all of us. The EPC is not the General Assembly Office in Orlando. It is all of us, together. And we are Better Together.

When we pool our resources, we have much greater leverage and impact for the Kingdom of God. We've seen this in the equipping opportunities at our annual General Assembly meeting. We've seen this with our prayer and advocacy efforts on behalf of Andrew Brunson. We've seen it in our response to natural disasters. We do exponentially more together than any of us could do independently. That's why we are Better Together—much better.

So let's talk about your financial support of the EPC through Per Member Asking, and how those funds are used to help make us Better Together.



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Our budget this year is \$2.65 million, allocated across three categories: Collaborative Ministries, Connectional Support, and Custodial Operations.

Collaborative Ministries is about 40% of the budget—roughly \$1 million. Connectional Support is a little more than one-quarter of our budget—\$730,000. Custodial Operations is about a third of the budget—\$890,000.

Collaborative Ministries are what we do as we pursue God’s vision of being a global movement of churches engaged together through transformation, multiplication, and effective biblical leadership. These are our strategic priorities.

The largest portion of global movement—20 cents of every PMA dollar—funds the operations of EPC World Outreach. Most of our World Outreach global workers serve in the hardest places to do mission work, like the Middle East and North Africa. Your PMA support provides the structure to send and support these workers in a wide variety of ways.

Multiplication describes our commitment to church planting. About 45 of our 630 churches are plants—that’s roughly 7%. We would love to get to 10%, and our Church Planting Team is looking at what is needed to get there.

Now, I know that reporting numbers and percentages is pretty impersonal, but these church plants are more than numbers. These are real faith communities, reaching people for Christ and making disciples in an increasingly antagonistic culture. We have African-American church planters, planting in under-resourced inner cities. We have, of course, suburban church plants. One of our newest is a Spanish-language congregation in Charlotte, planted as a result of our partnership with the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico. You can read about that plant in [EPCconnection](#).

As we continue to make church planting a priority in the EPC, your support helps us recruit, develop, and care for the next generation of church planters.

In transformation, this year we launched a “matching grant” model for church revitalization. We have learned that the most successful revitalization efforts happen when the congregation has some skin in the game. When a church applies for one of our matching grants, it tells us that they are serious about addressing plateau or decline.



In effective biblical leadership, PMA supports our annual gatherings of presbytery Stated Clerks, Moderators, Ministerial and Candidates Committee chairs, and permanent committees such as Next Generation Ministries, Women’s Resource Council, and World Outreach. Your giving also allows us to hold the Leadership Institute of our annual General Assembly.

Connectional Support focuses on who we are as a family of Presbyterian, Reformed, Evangelical, and Missional churches. Your PMA giving ensures that our churches, sessions, presbyteries, and General Assembly committees are united and aligned. Now you might think “so what?” but our adherence to our Constitution is one of our most effective defenses against any legal challenges to our ministry and outreach for Jesus Christ.

My friends, this is increasingly important as we face a much more antagonistic culture in which we minister.

Other areas of Connectional Support are committee and staff travel, and the infrastructure, staff, and technology to promote our ethos and tell the story of God’s work in and through the EPC.

The third major category in our budget is Custodial Operations. It’s how we ensure wise stewardship protection and oversight of EPC assets, including our finances, our information, and our staffing. This stewardship commitment supports all EPC activities, groups, presbyteries, and churches.

Your financial support of the EPC is managed and dispersed at the highest fiduciary standards. The Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability has given the EPC the highest grade they can give for our financial stewardship. For more detail, we post an Annual Ministry Report on our website.

So back to the numbers. Our Fiscal Year 2020 budget—which runs from July 2019 to June 2020—is \$2.65 million, and is entirely funded with your Per Member Asking contributions. We can’t do Collaborative Ministries, Connectional Support, or Custodial Operations without you. And beyond the basic fact that that your giving is how we accomplish our mission and vision, your PMA support makes at least two statements:

One, we are a connectional church, and we’re better together than if we go it alone.



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And second, when we pool our resources we can have greater leverage, greater impact for the Kingdom of God.

Those two statements are in our DNA. It is who we are. So thank you for your continued support of Per Member Asking.

And to reiterate, even though I am stepping down as Stated Clerk in 2021 I am not going to sit back and coast. God has too much He wants to accomplish in and through the EPC in the next 19 months. I hope you will take the same approach with your PMA support. Your investment helps us be Better Together than we ever could be without the connectionalism so central to who we are.

And in a very practical sense, strong PMA giving is a tangible way to set the table for the next Stated Clerk to be able to lead and to serve the EPC most effectively.

Thank you, God bless you, and remember: He is risen!