

## **Siblings in Christ,**

First, *thank you* for giving me the privilege to serve Savannah Presbytery as part of your leadership team. It is a responsibility that I take seriously and prayerfully consider when choosing which continuing educational opportunities I should participate in and how to share these experiences broadly with all of you to equip our congregations. The decision of our presbytery in 2023 to spend a year “learning and discerning” the Matthew 25 Invitation led me to enroll in the Matthew 25 Summit held in Atlanta, GA January 16-18<sup>th</sup> of this year.

I took with me the questions I’ve been asked by our members; “What is Matthew 25?” “What do we have to do to become Matthew 25?” and “If we’re already doing the work, why do we need to join or have a label?” I considered these questions in every worship service, plenary, workshop, and conversation I experienced at the summit to find answers to share. Here is what I learned;

### **The Matthew 25 Invitation is:**

- The fruition of the work of the *2020 Vision Team* charged by the 222<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly (2016) with developing a guiding statement for our denomination.
- The call to all of us to actively engage in the world around us, so our faith comes alive and the world wakes up to new possibilities. -*Rev. Dr. Diane Moffett*
- A message woven throughout the Old Testament scriptures and is the work of the Gospel- *Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis*
- An opportunity to be a healing presence in the world. -*Rev. Dr. Diane Moffett*
- A “test of the heart”- for it requires us to ask, “Are our hearts large enough to enact God’s love and God’s justice?” - *Rev. Dr. William Yoo*
- The name for what we are called to do. - *Rev. Hodari Williams*
- An invitation to whole new processes. - *Rev. Dr. William Yoo*
- The vision of the wholeness of God’s creation. - *Rev. Dr. Diane Moffett*

### **Why should your congregation engage in the Matthew 25 Invitation?**

- We are followers of Jesus- charged to teach, proclaim the good news, and heal.
- We can make a bigger impact on harmful systems when we are united.
- People will know us by our love.
- Scripture speaks to justice and healing and Jesus embodied these.
- We know in our hearts that God has called us to this work.
- We can leave a legacy of loving our neighbors as ourselves in our communities.
- We can transform lives and advance the common good.

### **What do we have to do to become a Matthew 25 group, congregation, or presbytery?**

- First step is to pledge to become a Matthew 25 church here: [Presbyterian Mission Agency Matthew 25: Sign up my congregation | Presbyterian Mission Agency](#)

- Beginning with ***Building Congregational Vitality***, the foundation of M25, explore the three key pillars of Matthew 25. Note-There is no mandate in the Matthew 25 Invitation on how many pillars you choose to embrace. Your congregation can discern for themselves what they are being called by God to do. ([Presbyterian Mission Agency Building Congregational Vitality | Matthew 25 in the PC\(USA\): Join the Movement | Presbyterian Mission Agency](#))
- An important continuing responsibility of being a Matthew 25 church is proclaiming our successes: how our congregation or community has been impacted or changed, how we've found a new purpose in ministry, how our faith as disciples has been energized. Sharing our stories also gives clarity to our ministry and strengthens our commitment to continue this important work. Read other's shared stories here: [Matthew 25 stories - A bold vision and invitation \(presbyterianmission.org\)](#)

In closing, I pray that you will engage your congregations with our presbytery as we continue in this year of "learning and discerning" the Matthew 25 Invitation through personal study and reflection, opportunities in our monthly Newsletters and participating in our remaining two M25 focused Stated Meetings on February 23<sup>rd</sup> and May 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Peace,**

Marty Susie

*Director of Mission & Program Advancement*