

A Witness for "Remote Office Day"
Sharon Core, Presbytery of the Western Reserve

"What's your agenda being here?" she asked as we sat at the table.

It was close to 3:30 p.m. and we had been there since 10 a.m.

"We" being the Presbytery staff and "there" being the coffee shop in Ashtabula, Ohio. And why where "we" "there"? Eight of our 37 churches are in Ashtabula County, which is the easternmost boundary for the Presbytery of the Western Reserve. And from there, it's about an hour's drive to the presbytery office. Suffice it to say, we don't have many people from Ashtabula just "dropping by" the office.

Josh, our very capable and oh-so-valuable office administrator, has us on a digital phone system and network that allows us to access our company files even when we're not in the office. So, why not take the office on the road?

We got in touch with the churches in the area, letting them know we'd be there for the day. Staff packed up computers, phones, books, writing tablets, and set out for Ashtabula. Not sure if anyone would come by, we wanted to have "work" to do.

People were waiting for us when we arrived, and we had NOT A LULL the entire time we were there. Toward the end of the day another staff member and I looked at each other and said, "You know, we actually brought work to do." And I realized what we were doing—talking with people, hearing stories about their churches, learning where they went on vacation, finding out how long they had lived in the area, *was* our "work" for the day.

"What's your agenda being here?" she asked as we sat at the table. "Talking to you," I said. And a smile crept across her face. "Well, that is wonderful," she said. "Because I'll tell you when folks from presbytery have been here before, it's been to tell us what they want us to do rather than listen to us."

Walking to the car at the end of the day, Josh said, "That was wildly successful." Agreed. We got to know people—with no agenda other than to sit and listen and learn. Never would have happened sitting in the office.

This is now a "regular" for us—every other month, we take the presbytery office on the road. Some locales are more "popular" than others and no matter who and where, it's always worth it!