

VISION 2020 FINAL REPORT

The report that follows is based on the work of the VISION 2020 Team that was appointed by the Presbytery Moderator, Vice-Moderator and General Presbyter and presented at the October 2016 Stated Meeting.

Team Members: Rick Hinchberger (M.Div), *team captain* (Salisbury), Bill Brownfield (Ruling Elder, Three Chopt), Judy Cutting (Ruling Elder, Richmond Second), Ellen Davis (Ruling Elder, (Providence Forge), Patrick Dennis (Teaching Elder, Tuckahoe), Tonya Johnson, (Ruling Elder, Eastminster), Bonnie Snyder (Ruling Elder, MAL), Brittany Tamminga (Teaching Elder, Fredericksburg), and Karen Witt (Teaching Elder, Providence, Gum Spring), and Rev. Dr. David Sawyer, Consultant from *Flourishing Church Consulting and Coaching*.

Purpose: The Team was tasked to develop a vision with specific “Provocative Proposals” which will come to fruition by the year 2020.

Approach: The Team began gathering data at the February 2017 Stated Meeting. We handed out forms completed by the commissioners with the following questions:

Tell about a time when you were most proud of being part of this presbytery. What happened? Who was there?

What are your passions as a disciple of Jesus Christ? How do you see your passions expressed in our presbytery?

Name one wish for our presbytery’s future.

We conducted listening sessions utilizing these same questions at session meetings, fellowship gatherings, Purpose Group meetings, with leadership teams and seminary representatives. The *Theme Statements* on the following pages summarize our findings along with specific comments (bulleted).

After prayerfully considering these *Statements*, we developed four *Provocative Proposals* which build upon what we had heard in our meetings. These *Proposals* represent the final recommendation from the Team to be voted on by the Presbytery.

Future Work

With the acceptance of these Proposals, the Team completes its task and requests to be dismissed. It will be the task of the Implementation Teams appointed in the same manner as this Visioning Team to fashion the proposals into specific recommendations with practical application.

Our Thanks

We thank the churches, pastors and elders for their support in this process and for what they are doing and will do to further the Presbytery’s mission to the glory of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THEME STATEMENTS

The paragraphs below are narrative summaries of the responses we received from the questionnaires. The bullet points are actual or proximal responses that may represent multiple responses. Every effort was made to report them unedited.

A. THE PRESBYTERY’S MINISTRY OF SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

The Presbytery nurtures relevant, joyful, creative opportunities to refresh our life together in ministry. We welcome healthy, Spirit-filled celebrations, keynote event, and Christ-centered guest speakers. We provide times of special music and other artful experiences. Travel opportunities for small groups highlight our heritage and mission. Our commitment to evangelism is strengthened by our partnership with Union Presbyterian Seminary. Such transformative opportunities invigorate faithful discipleship and bind us together. A ministry of renewal infuses fresh spirit in service to Jesus Christ as it makes real the gift of God’s good news.

- Transformation:
 - Congregations and individuals
 - Providing tools for transformation
- Revival
- Music
- Travel seminars
- Evangelism
 - Gospel
 - Share the faith
 - Grow in faith
- Motivating

B. *THE PRESBYTERY’S MINISTRY OF EQUIPPING AND SUPPORTING*

The Presbytery provides resources and support for member churches. The resources focus on, but are not limited to: Stewardship which is administered through Deborah Rexrode working with congregations, Evangelism with John Vest offering workshops on evangelism and the changing nature of the church, and Preaching with resources developed in partnership with Union Seminary which is a growing resource for the churches. In addition, The Resource Center at Kingsley Hall supports small churches, in particular, with programmatic materials.

- Resourcing
 - Stewardship - Debbie Rexrode
 - Evangelism- John Vest
 - Preaching
 - Seminary partnership
 - Technology
 - Hospice for churches - life cycle
 - Small churches
 - Resource Center
 - Communication and Marketing
 - New Church Development
- Three-legged stool

C. *THE PRESBYTERY’S MINISTRY OF MISSION AND JUSTICE*

The Presbytery is a community of churches working passionately together to bring healing and hope to communities, both local and international. We encourage, support, and network with ecumenical and interfaith organizations for the purpose of witnessing to God’s activity in the world. Welcoming racial, economic, and gender diversity, we promote and support ministries of social and racial justice, peacemaking, and self-empowerment. This endeavor continues through concentrated and purpose-driven efforts to focus on the heart and spirit-led passions of God’s people, promote a culture of mutual acceptance, make room for differences, and celebrate our unique cultures and identities.

- Intentional direct involvement with congregations
- Culture of mutual acceptance
- Social justice
- Ecumenical cooperation

- Allowance for differences
- Local and international mission efforts
 - Concentrate our efforts through purpose groups
Haiti and Caritas
- Social issues
 - Hunger, Sexuality, Race, Gun violence
- Welcoming diversity
- Campus ministry
- Valuing and serving others
- New Church Development
- Innovation

D. *THE PRESBYTERY'S MINISTRY OF CONNECTING*

The Presbytery recognizes that as the Body of Christ we are better together than we are apart. We encourage opportunities of collaboration among our congregations and ecumenical partnerships. We also promote ministry and educational opportunities through a user-friendly and interactive website and broadcast emails. Additionally, technology such as electronic conferencing bridges the distance between member churches and enables increased support of the ministries. Camp Hanover is a model for effective relational ministry for the entire Presbytery. It supports congregations with summer camps, retreats, seminars, and conferences bringing together members of all ages.

- Camp Hanover
 - Cloning
 - Viability
- Technology
- Collaboration among churches
- 2-way communication
- Ecumenical partnership
- Seminary partnership
- Music
- Colleges and universities
- Building bridges
- Creative ways to forge and foster relationships
- Being the body of Christ

E. *THE PRESBYTERY'S MINISTRY OF ENABLING AND COORDINATING*

The Presbytery of the James works to support pastors and congregations. Our goal is that our congregations be well led and our pastors equitably supported. We understand the challenges of our Presbytery's geographical boundaries and the number of congregations; large and small, urban and rural. We work to improve communication with and among all. This diversity challenges us with the need to do more. We ensure our Presbytery meetings begin with worship, providing time for groups and interests to meet. We follow our Reformed Tradition in all matters of theology and polity.

- Presbytery meeting
 - Operating business
- Reformed tradition
- Polity
- Geography
 - Size of presbytery
- PC(USA)
- Us and them

- Division
- Losing numbers
- Marketing and Communication

PROVOCATIVE PROPOSALS

It's the year 2020 and after a period of studying what Presbyterians in our Presbytery are saying about our identity and calling, we are focusing on spiritual renewal of its members and churches and on improving communication and coordination. These proposals are not intended to be a comprehensive capture of the Presbytery's ministry but rather innovative ways to further our mission.

SPIRITUAL RENEWAL OF TEACHING ELDERS

To promote the spiritual health of the Pastors in ministry to congregations, our Presbytery provides annual retreats for spiritual renewal and reflection. Discovering that this experience has resulted in pastor's renewed energy for ministry, this time of focus on spiritual development is mandatory. The Presbytery is currently considering a similar experience for Christian Educators and church officers.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

To enhance our Presbytery's cohesiveness and be more responsive and accessible in disparate geographic regions, the Presbytery now has three regional offices. Presbytery leadership of a Head of Staff and two Associates are distributed among the offices. The regional offices work with local churches to establish and enhance technology to facilitate communication, ministry and spiritual growth. Regional leadership teams oversee each office with Presbytery committee meetings rotating among the three locations.

CHRIST-CENTERED SPIRITUAL GROWTH

To assist congregations in their spiritual growth, church vitality partners establish and nurture on-going relationships with churches and visit them at least semi-annually to listen, help them identify their spiritual gifts and strengths, and recommend opportunities for Christ-centered spiritual development.

EQUIPPING AND SUPPORTING CHURCHES

To further support churches in their spiritual growth, there are stated meeting(s) with the sole purpose of worship and study which may include liturgy, music, keynote speakers, small group conversation, contemplative prayer, Bible Study, and avenues to pursue the Spirit-led passions of God's people. To enrich their own worship, prayer and discipleship, *all congregants are welcomed*. Special meetings may be called in response to regional, nation and international events.

RECOMMENDATIONS *(as presented at the October 2017 Stated Meeting of the Presbytery)*

- 1- That the Presbytery approve the four (4) provocative proposals: Spiritual Renewal of Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Communication and Coordination, Christ-centered Spiritual Growth, Equipping and Supporting Churches
- 2 - That Presbytery authorize the formation of implementation teams for each of the four (4) proposals.
- 3 - That Presbytery authorize the Moderator, Former Moderator, and the President of the POJ Trustees to appoint the implementation teams.
- 4 - That POJ Moderator dismiss with heartfelt thanks the Vision 2020 Team for their fine work and faithfulness.

