

Strategic Planning Team Final Report

On behalf of the Strategic Planning Team, many thanks to the POJ members who took time and energy to join one (or more!) of our Listening/Feedback Sessions in January. The team was both challenged and encouraged by the significant consideration and deliberation demonstrated by all of you over the proposed Strategic Plan. You gave us perspectives and assessments from a variety of different angles and outlooks, and we sincerely appreciated it. You pushed us to better articulate our motives and intentions behind certain aspects of the plan and, in so doing, we were shown places where we could better bolster the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan.

In this report, you will find attached a list of the frequently asked questions from the Listening/Feedback Sessions and the SPT's corporate response to these questions and concerns. Also included is a revised/adjusted/amended Summary Report and Budget of the proposed Strategic Plan. Changes and additions are highlighted. The PowerPoint presentation which accompanied the SPT's report at the November called meeting as an orientation to the Strategic Plan is available on the POJ website for review <https://www.presbyteryofthejames.com/listening-sessions/>. Also, you should have received by email the VISION 2020 Report which is referenced in our report.

With gratitude and thanksgiving to God for this team, for the prayerful support of the presbytery, and for the wonder of experiencing the Holy Spirit working in, around, and through us all in this process, we are excited to present this Strategic Plan to you.

Jen Rowe

SPT Moderator

FAQs from the SPT Listening/ Feedback Sessions

- **What is the timeline?**

If the Strategic Planning Team report is approved, Committee on Nominations will be asked to form one Search Committee for the three presbyters with the hope that the recommended search committee slate will be elected by the Presbyter at the June stated meeting.

- **What are the geographic expectations of 3 presbyters?**

As the plan is implemented, the office in Richmond will continue to be utilized by the three presbyters unless the presbytery deems it advantageous to divest of it. The C&C Team, who are the Trustees, will be responsible for reviewing its use and making

recommendation to the presbytery. SPT will suggest that the Mission Council (formerly C&C Team) solicit applications from churches who could accommodate workspace/hosting sites to allow for accessibility to members and ministries for meetings in their areas. This may require more than three sites.

- **What are the provisions in the plan for youth and young adult ministry?**

The Presbyter for Congregational Life will help secure volunteers and cluster churches for youth and young adult events and serve as the staff liaison for the POJ Youth Council. The proposed SPT budget includes \$8,000 to support youth and young adult ministry initiatives.

- **In the new mission statement, what is meant by “growing disciples”?**

As we considered the realities of churches reducing in membership numbers, our focus is on spiritual growth for our current churches and ministries. This is both inward growth and growing connections among our churches and ministries. Our hope is that by encouraging spiritual growth, churches and ministries may in fact change the downward trajectory of membership trends.

- **Is this plan financially sustainable?**

In consideration of, and including, unrestricted giving from churches, there are sufficient earnings on the investments to fund this plan into the foreseeable future. This is based on historic portfolio averages as well as anticipated increases in assets from current real estate and church property sales.

- **Is this a “top-heavy” staffing model?**

The design of this model is *support*. It is the intention that these positions will actively resource and assist churches and ministries in a way that goes out to meet them where they are and familiarize themselves and the presbytery with their challenges and opportunities.

- **Why two presbyters at 30 hours per week and not full time?**

Our proposal celebrates, that for some people, a 30-hour position offers flexibility, especially with the assurance of full benefits. Since most of our churches are staffed by part-time positions, this proposed model also reflects what we as a Presbytery look like.

- **Why is the stated clerk position not assumed by one of the three presbyters?**

Some presbyteries in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have a structure where a presbyter serves as stated clerk. This has been the practice of the POJ for over thirty years. But these positions have very different roles. A presbyter is a “pastor, counselor, and advisor” to the ministers, educators, churches, and ministries of the presbytery (*Book of Order 2019/2021* G-3.0307). A stated clerk is the constitutional officer required by our denomination’s Constitution (G-3.0104). This officer bears responsibility for interpreting the law and assuring its careful application. In disciplinary cases, a presbyter

who is also stated clerk must shift immediately from the more pastoral-focused role to the role of being an officer of the law. By separating the two functions, the POJ can expect both roles to be fulfilled faithfully, compassionately, and efficiently.

- **Will all three presbyters be teaching elders?**

The Presbyterian Church maintains a rich and historical identity of shared ministry responsibility.

We believe that, for these three positions, ruling or teaching elders should be considered. This has been accomplished successfully by other presbyteries (e.g., Northwest Coast Presbytery, Presbytery of New Covenant, Presbytery of West Virginia) and is a strong witness to the parity embraced and practiced in the POJ.

STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM PROCESS AND CONSIDERATIONS

As the Appendix below records, the Strategic Planning Team has worked steadily and deliberately for two years. From its inception it has understood that the Presbytery of the James, like the PCUSA itself and the world in which we live, is undergoing dramatic changes that directly impact the health of our congregations, leadership, and work as the Presbytery.

At its meeting in October of 2017, the Presbytery directed the SPT to:

- a) articulate a mission and vision for the POJ
- b) propose a structure for the implementation of the mission and vision
- c) recommend a financial plan for the implementation of the mission and vision.

What follows is the fulfillment of those mandates.

Mission Statement

The SPT's first task was to create a mission statement for the Presbytery that would speak effectively to these challenging times. With the four Provocative Proposals of the Vision 2020 Report in mind, along with the mission and vision statements of numerous presbyteries within the PCUSA, it adopted its first version in August of 2019. With one subsequent modification, it now reads as:

“The mission of the POJ is to support leaders, congregations, and ministries in growing followers of Jesus Christ who joyfully live out God’s mission in the world.”

The Mission Statement is at the very center of the strategic plan. It is a broad description of **WHY** we do what we do in the POJ.

Vision Statements

From the Mission Statement the SPT created the following Vision Statements. Informed by the work of the Vision 2020 team, they describe the **WHAT** of the strategic plan. These are the goals and objectives we hope the Mission Statement inspires over the next 5 years.

- **Christ-centered Spiritual Growth:** specifically as this relates to POJ staff resourcing and supporting church leaders, pastors, and ministries.
- **Communication and Coordination:** specifically as these relate to connecting churches and ministries with one another and creating vital partnerships.

Three-Presbyter Staffing Model and Responsibilities

It became increasingly clear to the Strategic Planning Team that fulfillment of the Mission and Vision Statements would be through staffing. A Three Presbyter Staffing Model is the **HOW** that builds a bridge from our **WHY** (Mission Statement) to our **WHAT** (Vision Statements).

Staffing will include:

Lead Presbyter for Vision & Collaboration (full time; head of staff)

Presbyter for Relational Care (3/4-time)

Presbyter for Congregational Life (3/4-time)

Stated Clerk (15 hours weekly)

Associate for Administration (full-time)

Associate for Communications and Technology (part-time)

Contracted services will include:

Finance and Accounting Service Manager (approximately 10 hours weekly)

Characteristics & Competencies Anticipated for 3 Presbyters of the POJ

Be a faithful **Ruling or Teaching Elder** of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) who is supportive of its ministry, demonstrating her, his, or their Christian faith and beliefs in working with the Presbytery of the James, its members, congregations and staff, and the broader community, upholding Christ's message to the world as revealed by the Creator, the Holy Spirit, and the Scriptures. It is the intention that these positions will resource and assist churches and ministries in a way that actively goes out to meet them where they are and familiarize themselves and the presbytery with their challenges and opportunities.

They will represent the POJ to other councils, ecumenical bodies, and interfaith circles, and will participate actively in the GA Presbytery Leader Formation cohort and Mid-Council Leaders Gathering. Each Presbyter will collectively energize and resource the current seventeen Ministries and future Ministries and volunteers of the POJ to joyfully live out God's mission in the world.

Lead Presbyter for Vision & Collaboration

Responsibilities

- Discern who we are as a presbytery and help guide the POJ in how we joyfully live out God's mission in the world
- Consult and coordinate with the POJ members and staff on strategies for developing and supplementing effective means of communication for their ministries
- Supervise – with creativity, grace, and teamwork – the POJ staff in the implementation of decisions and matters of strategy, programming, and resources as determined by the presbytery
- Administer the budget of the POJ, under direction of the Budget Committee of Mission Council, including oversight and monitoring of expenditures, receipts, and disbursements
- Collaborate with the Presbyter for Congregational Life and the Presbyter for Relational Care as staff persons and resources to the Mission Council & Trustees
- Provide New Professional's Orientation; serve as staff liaison to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) and other presbytery entities as time permits; attend virtual and in-person POJ staff meetings as scheduled
- Full-time

Attributes

- Exceptional listener, effective communicator, perceptive leader, dreamer

Presbyter for Congregational Life

Responsibilities

- Celebrate and support existing ministries
- Guide and equip presbytery members and ministries in exploring new opportunities for enriching congregational life
- Collaborate with the Lead Presbyter for Vision & Collaboration and the Presbyter for Relational Care as staff persons and resources to the Mission Council & Trustees

- Serve as staff liaison to the Committee on Nominations (CON), the Committee on Representation (COR), Youth Council and other presbytery entities as time permits; attend virtual and in-person POJ staff meetings as scheduled
- help secure volunteers and cluster churches for youth and young adult events.
- ¾ time

Attributes

- Visionary adviser, compassionate listener, adaptive thinker, risk-taker

Presbyter for Relational Care

Responsibilities

- Provide pastoral support and oversight of the POJ members, setting a tone for the pastoral care of ministers, educators, chaplains, and commissioned pastors
- Develop and encourage clergy peer groups, create opportunities for imaginative and relevant Christ-centered spiritual growth and renewal, and arrange counseling support in conjunction with the Committee on Ministry (COM)
- Collaborate with the Lead Presbyter for Vision & Collaboration and the Presbyter for Congregational Life as staff persons and resources to the Mission Council & Trustees
- Serve as staff liaison to the Committee on Ministry (COM) and other presbytery entities as time permits; attend virtual and in-person POJ staff meetings as scheduled
- ¾ time

Attributes

- Supportive listener, faithful advocate, judicious adviser, even keeled

POJ Administrative and Support Staff Characteristics & Competencies

Stated Clerk

Responsibilities

- Execute and complete the duties enumerated in the *POJ Manual of Administrative and Standing Rules*, complying with responsibilities outlined in the *Book of Order* G-3.0104
- Prepare minutes for stated and called meetings of the presbytery; maintain regular communications to presbytery members and ministries related to actions of the presbytery; prepare attendance records and balancing of commissioners for presbytery meetings
- Serve as a resource to the standing committees of the POJ; serve as the officer of the presbytery as required by the Rules of Discipline in the *Book of Order*
- Assist clerks of session with regular training opportunities and annual statistical report preparation; coordinate annual session minutes review
- Implement tasks required in the PC(USA) EQUIP site for stated clerks and participate actively in the Association of Stated Clerks in the PC(USA)
- Attend virtual and in-person POJ staff meetings as scheduled; perform other duties as directed by, and coordinated with, the presbytery
- ½ time

Attributes

- Detail-oriented, concise communicator, willing collaborator

Associate for Administration

Responsibilities

- Serve as POJ “first contact” by aiding callers, answering and/or disseminating emails, keeping the POJ website current, and assisting with online registrations for presbytery events
- Provide staff support to the three General Presbyters and the Stated Clerk; attend virtual and in-person POJ staff meetings as scheduled
- Provide staff support for ministries of the POJ, including scheduling for satellite office locations
- Prepare and publish meeting packets for stated and called POJ meetings; serve as point-person and resource for churches hosting POJ meetings
- Process and deposit checks to POJ bank account; notify appropriate persons upon receipt of financial gifts

- Maintain the presbytery database, master calendar, inventory of office supplies
- Full-time

Attributes

- Detail-oriented, hospitality expert, welcoming demeanor

Associate for Communications and Technology/Technology Specialist

- Webmaster services for effectively promoting the POJ’s mission and ministries
- Consults with individual congregations concerning their communication and technology needs
- Attends POJ stated and called meetings to provide technological support and service; may attend POJ virtual or in-person staff meetings when requested
- ½ time

Attributes

- Creative, innovative, willing teacher

(Contracted Services)

Finance and Accounting Service Manager

- Produce monthly, quarterly, and annual financial reports; provide monthly reconciliation of all accounts
- Distribute funds in accordance with approved budget and financial policies of the presbytery; sweep and manage investments; act as purchasing agent
- Maintain payroll account in collaboration with contracted payroll company
- Attend Mission Council & Trustees meetings as scheduled; serve as resource to the Budget Committee, the Finance Advisory Group, and the Major Gifts Advisory Group
- Provide fiscal year-end accounting and audit preparation
- Coordinate, prepare, and distribute “End of Year” letter to clergy, treasurers, and clerks of session with Associate for Administration
- Reports to the Lead Presbyter for Vision & Collaboration
- ¼ time

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Recommend adoption of the Strategic Plan Report including the projected budget.
 2. Recommend that the Committee on Nominations form one search committee for the three Presbyters.
 3. Recommend that the Communications and Coordination Team form a task force to research, promote, and evaluate applications for POJ workplace/hosting sites.
 4. Recommend that the Strategic Planning Team be dismissed with thanks.
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Appendix

STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM

NARRATIVE MILESTONES

October 2017: The report of the Vision 2020 Team is referred back by Presbytery. A new group is to be formed whose purpose will be to:

- a) articulate a vision and mission for the POJ
- b) propose a structure for the implementation of the vision and mission
- c) recommend a financial plan for the implementation of the vision and mission.

October 2018: Presbytery approves Committee on Nominations recommendations for the following persons to serve on the Strategic Planning Team:

Jen Rowe (Moderator), Ruling Elder

Stephen Hodges (Vice-Moderator), Minister of the Word and Sacrament

Liz Hulme Adam, Minister of the Word and Sacrament

Thomas Coye, Minister of the Word and Sacrament

Patrick Dennis, Minister of the Word and Sacrament
Elizabeth Gatewood, Ruling Elder
Shannon Waite Hendricks, Minister of the Word and Sacrament
Bobby Hulme-Lippert, Minister of the Word and Sacrament
Katherine Jackson, Minister of the Word and Sacrament
Marilyn Johns, Ruling Elder
Lamar Lockhart, Ruling Elder
Susan Mapes, Ruling Elder
Hal Raddin, Ruling Elder
Peter Ro, Ruling Elder
Katherine Todd, Minister of the Word and Sacrament

Interim General Presbyter Fred Holbrook will also serve the Team in an *ex-officio* capacity.

January 2019: The Strategic Planning Team begins its work with personal introductions and an overview of its mandate. Copies of the Vision 2020 Final Report are distributed.

March-July 2019: After considerable research and discussion, the SPT adopts the following mission statement for the POJ based on the Vision 2020 report, the Book of Order, and the statements of numerous other presbyteries in the PCUSA.

The mission of the POJ is to support leaders, congregations, and ministries in growing followers of Christ who joyfully live out God's mission in the world.

August 2019-January 2020: To gain a better understanding of how the POJ can move forward in its mission, the SPT spends several meetings looking at both what is going well and what could use improvement within the POJ. Subjects explored included:

- the quality of presbytery meetings
- benefits and drawbacks of decentralizing the POJ's facilities and resources
- tapping the talents of persons within the POJ to help churches in their ministries

- the regional needs of pastors and churches
- the challenges of membership decline in many of the churches
- better spiritual, emotional and collegial support for pastors
- how the church can respond to the societal changes currently affecting its life and work
- new ministries that are flourishing within the POJ

February 2020: The SPT reports to the Presbytery a summary of the Why, What and How of its work to date.

The mission statement serves as the **WHY** of our work.

The mission of the POJ is to support leaders, congregations, and ministries in growing followers of Christ who joyfully live out God’s mission in the world.”

The four provocative proposals of the Vision 2020 Report serve as the **WHAT** of what we wish to see accomplished in the Presbytery during the next several years.

- a) Christ-centered spiritual growth
- b) Equipping and supporting ministries
- c) Spiritual renewal of teaching elders
- d) Communication and coordination

The **HOW**, which embodies the new structure and financial plan, is currently in development.

March 2020: The SPT identifies the two most essential themes for the strategic plan:

a) Communication and coordination, specifically as it relates to connecting churches

with one another and creating vital partnerships

b) Christ-centered spiritual growth, specifically as these relate to POJ staff resourcing

and supporting churches and ministries.

April 2020: An exploration of the current staffing pattern is conducted to discern what needs to be done to implement these themes.

May-June 2020: A first draft of a revised staffing pattern is discussed at length. Several modifications are suggested and incorporated.

July 2020: The idea of regional offices of the Presbytery is discussed. The decision is also made to alter the proposed Vision/Mission statement by adding “Jesus” to “Christ”:

The mission of the POJ is to support leaders, congregations, and ministries in growing followers of Jesus Christ who joyfully live out God’s mission in the world.”

August 2020: The staffing model is further refined along with an exploration of what it will take to fund it. Work begins on Strategic Planning Team’s report to Presbytery.

September 2020: The SPT begins assembling its report and developing a timeline for its presentation at the called meeting of the Presbytery in November, its listening sessions in January, and its submission for adoption at the February, 2021, meeting of the POJ.
