

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

February 11, 2017

FINAL REPORT OF THE TRANSITION VISIONING TEAM

The Transition Visioning Team Process

The creation of the Transition Visioning Team (TVT) was authorized by an action of the presbytery on May 10, 2016. The Team was charged with the following:

1. Exploring and articulating a vision for the presbytery's mission for the next decade.
2. Defining the presbytery's staffing structure and operating strategy necessary to accomplish that vision.
3. Following the Council's approval of the results of items 1 and 2, preparing job descriptions for the staff positions called for in item 2, in conversation with the Staff Support Committee.
4. In conversation with the Council, designing a process to select candidate(s) to serve in the role(s) defined in item 3.

The TVT consisted of TE Maggie Gillespie (chair), RE Art Gooray (Fairborn: First), TE Michael Isaacs, TE Brian Maguire, RE John Mauntler (Troy: First), RE Marge Morgan (scribe, Dayton: Sugar Creek), TE Diane Ziegler.

The TVT began meeting in June 2016 and held 11 regular meetings during 2016. All members subscribed to the Richard Rohr daily meditations from the Center for Action and Contemplation so that we could engage in a spiritual discipline together. During our meetings, the TVT talked, prayed, worshipped and studied the book *Journey in the Wilderness – New Life for Mainline Churches* by Gil Rendle. We also studied additional writings by Rendle and by others writing on change in the church. Members shared their hopes and dreams for our presbytery in the future.

As part of our work we interviewed the current staff (Executive Presbyter Dennis Piermont, Stated Clerk Larry Hollar, and Office Manager Tom Oxley) to understand the work that they do and how their positions interact. We also examined their position descriptions as well as similar documents from other presbyteries.

In August, four members of the TVT travelled to Des Moines, IA to attend the 2-day *Practical Presbytery Leadership Workshop* led by the Rev. Sue Krummel of the PC(USA) denominational staff. The conference provided us with much useful information and allowed us to engage in helpful conversations with others experiencing similar transitions. And the 20 hours in the van was filled with lively and thoughtful conversation.

To gather input from others throughout the presbytery, we designed and implemented an *Appreciative Inquiry* conversation with attendees at the November presbytery meeting. We were assisted in this process by Sue Weber of the Center for

Congregations. The questions used and the responses collected are included as appendices to this report. This was a very successful and well-attended event, largely because team members actively invited all session members from all churches to participate. Following this meeting, we studied the data that we had collected.

In December, we gathered at Kirkmont Center for an overnight retreat to worship, pray, dream, wrestle and to focus on completing our work. This report is the product of our work.

Our Mission

The mission of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley (PMV), as stated in The Presbytery Covenant, is *to prepare, equip, and nurture congregations in their ministries for God's mission for the transformation of creation and humanity by calling all people to Christ*. This mission statement is about 10 years old. Does it still accurately reflect the purpose of the PMV, and do we see ourselves moving into the next 10 years guided by this mission?

The input received from Ruling and Teaching Elders overwhelmingly indicated that the answer is yes. Although conversation repeatedly suggested that there was something missing from this mission: connection. Connection with other congregations is one of the most valued aspects of belonging to the presbytery. While structurally, the presbytery may be viewed hierarchically with individual congregations connecting directly to the office of the presbytery, in function it may more closely resemble a web, where there are connections from one congregation to another, as well as to the central office of the presbytery.

The Presbytery of the Miami Valley is more than a middle governing body of the PC(USA). In function and intent, the presbytery is the aggregate body of Christ, working together to support each congregation in their ministries. The presbytery is all of us, and as such we all share in the presbytery's mission and purpose. Therefore, for our mission to more accurately reflect our values and practices (and for the sake of brevity), the TVT recommends editing the mission statement as follows:

The presbytery prepares, equips, nurtures, and connects congregations in their ministries for God's mission.

How, then, do we live out the mission of the presbytery effectively? The gathering of pastors and sessions at the November 2016 meeting gave us valuable input from elders regarding their hopes for the presbytery in the next five years. Their comments may be summarized in four categories: 1) the type of experience people seek to have, 2) the Presbyterian brand, that is, how the experience of the presbytery resonates or makes people feel, 3) the types of functions the presbytery offers congregations, and 4) the ways and means by which it is accomplished.

Experience: Participants expressed a desire for a culture in which people are invited to participate – a culture of trust, clarity of purpose, and openness. Too often there is a sense that the presbytery is merely a regulatory body, whose purpose is to control what congregations can and cannot do. Yet, there is a longing to experience the presbytery as a joyful, cooperative, optimistic enterprise. Specifically, there are three aspects of experience that should be addressed:

1. **Communication:** As is true in every congregation, it is also true at the presbytery level that there is a need for over-communication. While we might believe we are constantly inviting people to participate in our work, individuals do not necessarily feel invited. While we might believe we provide information about all

our events and programs, the message is getting lost somewhere along the way.

2. Collegiality: Too often, the presbytery is experienced as “the powers that be” coming down to reprimand and discipline congregations. There are numerous reasons why this is the case, but the perception seems to indicate a need for more positive, collegial interactions. Congregations who feel empowered by the presbytery will have an overall more positive experience of the presbytery.
3. Hospitality: The term may be hard to define, but we all know what it feels like to be made welcome. Extending hospitality to individuals and congregations requires two things: 1) a certain amount of empathy, for “insiders” to be able to see things from the perspective of “outsiders,” and 2) a clear understanding of what we are welcoming them into, that is, what are we “selling?”

In the coming decade, it will be important for presbytery leadership to embody these qualities. Strong, purposeful, and frequent communication with our congregations are essential. In addition, a collaborative, or collegial, leadership style will serve us best.

Brand: Most of us associate the term brand with the for-profit sector, a label that is identified with a product and its value, quality, and prestige, among other things. In recent decades, nonprofit organizations began to use the concept of brand to enhance their fundraising efforts. However, there is an emerging paradigm that “sees brand as having a broader and more strategic role in an organization’s core performance, as well as having an internal role in expressing an organization’s purpose, methods, and values.”¹ The concern is for how the brand affirms the identity and purpose of the organization.

According to this paradigm, the PC(USA) brand is more than our logo. If it is to be effective it should be integrally aligned with our values and mission. Furthermore, members should understand and be able to speak to these values and mission.

Comments made by participants revealed that we want to have such a commitment to our PC(USA) brand, but we may need some help with it. It is not often clear enough what it means to be a part of this denomination, nor is it even clear why we value connectedness as a denomination. Again, communication is key to resolving this problem, but to some degree it is indirect communication.

For example, how does the presbytery office communicate the mission, vision, and future we are seeking to embody? Is it hospitable? Does its appearance represent our mission? What would that look like?

Additionally, when we are visited in our congregations by representatives of the presbytery, does the experience make us feel inspired to be more participative? And

¹ Kylander, Nathalie and Christopher Stone, “The Role of Brand in the Nonprofit Sector,” *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Spring 2012.

finally, how well do our congregations represent Presbyterianism in our communities? Are we known as more than just our buildings?

In the coming decade, we will need leadership to be able to think strategically about how the presbytery represents and serves the brand. In addition, leadership will need to be intentional about developing ways in which the presbytery can help congregations commit to and represent our brand.

Function: A great number and variety of programs and functions were mentioned by participants as means by which the presbytery has been in the past and/or may in the future be effective in living out its mission. They were aware of educational and training offerings and mission opportunities. These are essential, and the presbytery should continue to offer a wide variety of opportunities in a variety of mediums. In addition to events organized at the presbytery level, there is a desire for cross-congregational sharing. Every congregation has something they can offer to other congregations; the presbytery may serve as a clearinghouse of information and opportunities to make use of these gifts.

In addition to sharing, the presbytery may act as a “nudger” – that is, the entity that challenges congregations to move out of their comfort zones. In the present times, churches need to have a sense of urgency about the work they are called to do. This means 1) doing the work of discerning what God is calling us to be and do, 2) engaging in that work and 3) assessing our effectiveness. The presbytery can serve as an agent of accountability, in addition to a resource, for congregations embarking on this journey.

The subject of worship arose as a need that is perhaps unmet. Several individuals voiced a desire for presbytery-wide special worship services. Clearly, this is an opportunity to live out our spiritual connection.

In the coming decade, we will continue to need leadership who can facilitate events that provide education, training, mission opportunities, and more. We will need leadership who can effectively invite and challenge congregations toward greater faithfulness in their ministry. In addition, it will be very beneficial for our leadership to be adept at connecting congregations with each other to share their experience, strength, and expertise. Finally, we should explore using our connections and collegiality to offer worship experiences across the presbytery.

Ways and Means: This is the matter of how we do the work to which we are called. If we are to prepare, equip, and nurture congregations in their ministry, how is that best facilitated? If we are to create connections between congregations within the presbytery, what will that involve?

While we recognize that there are many opportunities for individuals and congregations to participate in the work of the presbytery, there needs to be a more effective on-ramp. Predictably, there are the same individuals who serve on committees, commissions, and task forces. Predictably, there are the same congregations present at presbytery meetings and contributing financially to the work of the presbytery. If we are not to

resign ourselves to this fact and write off a large proportion of the presbytery membership, we must find new ways to invite people in, then help these newcomers feel welcome and work effectively.

Some of this will result from effectively addressing the needs expressed in the first three areas. But in addition, there should be attention focused specifically on nurturing connections across congregations and between congregations and the presbytery as a whole. One aspect of this problem is how well we articulate and share the vision. Presbytery leadership may find new ways to reach congregations, such as seeking invitations to speak at worship services and using these opportunities to share the vision of the presbytery.

Another aspect of this problem is how well we foster relationships between congregations for our shared mission. More creativity and flexibility is needed in designing programs or other offerings to bring a greater number of people into the work of the presbytery.

Yet it is important to be aware that this process involves more than just nurturing and encouraging. Equipping is sometimes in conflict with nurturing, and it will be essential for our leadership to move congregations away from nostalgia for the good old days and toward a readiness to move into the future equipped to do ministry effectively.

Our Vision

If we are effectively and authentically living our mission in the next 10 years, what will that look like? What is our vision for the presbytery and what is the staffing and operating strategy that will be most effective?

We envision a presbytery in which

- authenticity and faithfulness are celebrated,
- we are committed to honest and open interaction with one another
- we support one another spiritually and materially.

In short, we envision a presbytery in which we are living out our covenant. Presbytery leadership is modeling this lifestyle on a daily basis.

Using the immanent trinity as our model, we envision our relationships between congregations and members of the presbytery as circular and interconnected. There is an awareness and appreciation for the interdependence of our congregations. Less than a top-down, hierarchical structure, we see the tasks of preparing, equipping, nurturing, and connecting as belonging to all of us.

This is a relationship all are free to participate in. As such, we recognize that they are also free to opt out. If our connections to one another are not seen to be serving our mission, after due diligence and careful discernment, individual congregations and the

presbytery may agree to sever the connection. With love and appreciation for all, the presbytery will value effectiveness to the mission above all else.

In this culture, the executive presbyter is the key connector; the one who sees where the disconnects are, seeks to fill in gaps in communication, and ensures to the highest degree possible that connections are functioning well.

But there is no value in speaking of connection without speaking of what it is that connects us. Thus, the executive presbyter is responsible for carrying the vision throughout the presbytery. In writing and speaking, the executive presbyter is charged with faithfully telling the story of who we are, our mission, and our purpose.

Our Strategy

Some key aspects/operating strategy of this culture include:

1. **Visioning.** Strategy is useless insofar as it is not in continuity with our identity, purpose, and mission. Consequently, the presbytery places a high value on keeping its identity, purpose, and mission before us at all times. Sharing this with the individual congregations in a variety of ways is key to our success.
2. **Connection.** Congregations are connected with one another in the ways that are appropriate for them. For example, there may be small groupings of congregations that choose to affiliate for work and fellowship. Similar to small group ministry in congregations, these groupings may work in ways that best suit their needs and desires, with the presbytery resourcing these connections and work.

As much as possible, programming of the presbytery takes place at the congregational level, either by individual congregations or jointly between two or more congregations (such as a grouping). The role of the presbytery is to share information and assist congregations in participating.

3. **Resources.** Responding to a changing world in which congregations are smaller and changes are faster, the presbytery seeks to minimize its footprint and remain adaptive, responsive, nimble, and flexible. Aside from the essential standing committees of presbytery, all other needs are addressed by ad hoc committees. The stated clerk handles all polity and judicial functions, clerical tasks are assisted by office staff, and the executive presbyter serves as the chief connector.

The presbytery is conscientious about using resources in the most effective way possible. As such, a form of triage is used to determine where and how time, attention, and funds are spent.

4. **Equipping Leadership.** “In the ‘land of the affiliated’, the work of making disciples is a work of improvement...In the ‘land of the unaffiliated’, to make

disciples leaders must address the work of creation.”²

As the one charged with carrying the vision into the presbytery, the executive presbyter is also responsible for ensuring that we are equipping congregational leaders to carry out the mission of the church. In these changing times, adaptive leadership is required, which involves a host of skills that may seem foreign and non-intuitive. The presbytery models a style of leadership that is creative, adaptive, and focused, and provides resources for congregations to develop effective leadership.

5. Evaluation. At every stage, we practice asking the questions, “How are we doing?” and “Are we doing the right things?” in relation to our shared mission and purpose. From staff performance to committee work to programs, we have processes to evaluate effectiveness. This includes measuring outcomes against goals as well as soliciting feedback from congregations who have participated in programs, services, and other areas of the presbytery’s work. Information received is used to improve our efforts. In some cases, using Rendle’s terms, this may involve the work of improvement. In other cases, this will involve the work of terminating what is ineffective or inappropriate, and then the work of creation.

As a result of this work, the TVT produced the job description that follows.

² Rendle, Gil, *Waiting for God’s New Thing*, The Texas Methodist Foundation, April 2015.

**Executive Presbyter
Presbytery of Miami Valley
(As amended and approved at stated presbytery meeting, Feb. 11, 2017)**

Term: Renewable five-year term

Classification: Full-time, exempt, professional/ministerial

Qualification: Must be ordained elder in the PC(USA).

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRESBYTERY OF THE MIAMI VALLEY

Our Mission Statement: The presbytery prepares, equips, nurtures, and connects congregations in their ministries for God's mission.

Our Vision: We envision a presbytery in which

- authenticity and faithfulness are celebrated,
- we are committed to honest and open interaction with one another,
- we support one another spiritually and materially.

In short, we envision a presbytery in which we are living out our covenant, and presbytery leadership is modeling this lifestyle on a daily basis.

Questions we are asking

- Is our definition of congregations expanding/evolving/obsolete?
- How do we faithfully journey in the wilderness?
- Why Presbyterian? Why do we need a presbytery?
- How is the Holy Spirit nudging us to change?
- How can our congregations better connect?

ROLE AND QUALIFICATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE PRESBYTER

Responsibilities

Connection

- Cultivate presbytery connections.
- Connect congregations and ministers with appropriate resources, e.g. pastoral support, continuing education, mediation, etc.
- Serve as the public face of the presbytery to congregations.

Accountability

- Model accountability to our mission and purpose.
- Measure our presbytery's fidelity to our mission and purpose.
- Reflect consistently a strong commitment to the principles of participation, diversity, and representation.
- Nurture a culture of accountability throughout the presbytery.

Identity

- Promote Presbyterian identity and ministry, and foster open communication and understanding.
- Narrate and interpret the mission and life of the presbytery.
- Worship with the congregations of the presbytery.

Abilities

- Courageous
- Curious
- Self-differentiated
- Committed

Skills

- Listening
- Relationship building
- Identifying problems and opportunities
- Assessment
- Theological imagination and reflection
- Proficiency with digital communication
- Public Communicator
- Organizational Agility

Things you are not responsible for:

- The decline of Christendom
- Frequency of conflicts within congregations
- Active participation in national church politics
- Pastoral counseling for individual pastors

Relationships

- Staff support for Committee on Ministry, Committee on Preparation for Ministry, Network Support Committee, Trustees, Self-Development of People
- Works collaboratively with the Stated Clerk (20 hours/week)
- Supervises:
 - Office Manager
 - Bookkeeper (5 hours/week)
 - Treasurer
 - Web services
- Supervised by:
 - Presbytery through Staff Support Committee

Appendix 1: Appreciative Inquiry Small Group Questions

1. Our current mission statement is

The Presbytery prepares, equips, and nurtures congregations in their ministries for God’s mission for the transformation of creation and humanity by calling all people to Christ.

Do you believe that this is an accurate reflection of what God is calling our presbytery to be and do?

2. Recall an experience when you most deeply felt a sense of belonging to the Presbytery of the Miami Valley – when you felt joy at being a part of something bigger than yourself. Recall that story.
3. Tell me about a personal experience as a part of this presbytery when you felt most alive, most **prepared, equipped, nurtured** or most enthused about your ministry. Share the story of this “best moment” – when your ministry/congregation was flourishing because you were **prepared, equipped, or nurtured** through the presbytery.
4. Make three wishes for the Presbytery of Miami Valley as it discerns its future; a future that will build on its mission of **preparing, equipping, and nurturing**.
5. Imagine it is five years later (2021) and you awaken from a deep sleep! While you were asleep many exceptional things happened. The Presbytery of the Miami Valley is flourishing in its mission. It is living God’s call in fresh, vibrant, meaningful, and powerful ways. What do you see happening that is vital and good and takes the best from the past into the future? What is bringing life to the presbytery’s greatest potential?

Appendix 2: Transcripts from Small Group Process at November 2016 PMV Meeting

Group A

Present: Central Dayton; Faith Huber Heights; Covenant Springfield; Wilmington

Absent: West Liberty, Blue Ball, Collinsville

Question 1: our mission statement

All agreed that the mission statement is reflective of what the presbytery is called to do and be.

Question 2: a sense of belonging

- Participation in a mission trip to Ghana with members of other congregations, years ago, felt very connected to the presbytery.
- As an immigrant from South Korea, was drawn to the Presbyterian Church because this was familiar.
- When my church was closed, the presbytery helped to celebrate the closing and moving on. After that I went to Covenant and found spirituality in joining and being invited to be an active member.
- Denomination is inclusive
- Appreciate being connected to large and small congregations, sharing resources.

Question 3: experience of being prepared, equipped, and nurtured

- Kirkmont nurtured and supported the youth and youth leaders.
- Presbytery helped to develop people to be leaders
- Refugee support
- During the PNC process
- When a committee met with two small congregations small about the possibility of merging. They did not merge, but the presbytery helped them recall and celebrate times they had worked together.

Question 4: three wishes

- To be able to prayerfully discern our future
- To be open to hearing all sides
- To provide knowledge and leadership
- To effectively share resources, e.g., workshops
- To put a face to the word presbytery

- For them to come to us – not just us coming to them (West Liberty, and other outlying congregations)
- To be the family of God, having fun together
- To be guided through transformation

Question 5: 2021 vision

- Full churches!
- People in the congregations would know people in the presbytery (both office and other congregations)
- Presbytery would visit and take the vision out to the congregations
- A shared sense of being a part of a bigger thing, a shared mission
- Youth are connected across congregations
- Mission is shared across congregations
- There is a reason to belong
- Presbytery is helping congregations feel connected
- Technology is being used well to facilitate connection
- There is a strategy for church planting

Group B

Churches Assigned to this Group	# Present
Fairborn: First	6
Oxford	13
Jamestown	0
New Carlisle: Honey Creek	4
Dayton: College Hill	5
New Paris	0
Seven Mile	0
Total Present: four churches	28

1. Our current mission statement is: (the complete MVP Covenant appeared in Advance Packet):

The presbytery prepares, equips, and nurtures congregations in their ministries for God’s mission for the transformation of creation and humanity by calling all people to Christ.

Do you believe that this is an accurate reflection of what God is calling our presbytery to be and do?

Response: 23 Yes and 5 No

2. Recall an experience when you most deeply felt a sense of belonging to the Presbytery of the Miami Valley – when you felt joy at being part of something bigger than yourself. Recall that story:

Church	Response
Oxford	<i>A Risk Evangelism</i> program offered by MVP many years ago was very good.
Oxford	Inspired by the love at the meeting
Oxford	Attended an Evangelism workshop which looked at ways to attract new members and to adjust to the way the church is today. Focused on How to work together.
College Hill	Hispanic ministry is encouraged by MVP. When he moved back to Dayton, he was surprised to see a bigger Hispanic community. There is also a sense of developing leadership.
College Hill	Columbia support network and how it brings people together to work.
Fairborn First	When Kirkmont Center was formed, the sense of pride in the Presbytery and the family enjoyment.
Honey Creek	While involved in Triennial visits I learned about the many mission projects that MVP

	offered. At one time there was a Presbytery choir made up of many churches. They even traveled to Ireland to sing.
College Hill	I was privileged to be a Commissioner to GA this year. I feel that as a commissioner you are responsible for decisions that are made. Presbytery put its confidence in you.
College Hill	At a Synod meeting, Larry Hollar sang and explained what a Presbytery does. I am very proud of our connection.
College Hill	As a new TE to the Miami Valley, I was well received by the C.O.M. Larry Hollar, Stated Clerk of MVP, is a member at my church which has been very helpful.
Fairborn First	Moved here from a diverse, younger church. My wife and I were welcomed by the Fairborn church. MVP reached out and invited me to be part of an A.C. and C.O.M.
College Hill	Our Presbytery is more liberal than the one that I came from. Incorporating a worship service into our meetings is very good.

3. Tell me about a personal experience as a part of this Presbytery when you felt most alive, most **prepared, equipped, nurtured** or most enthused about your ministry. Share the story of this 'best moment' – when your ministry/congregation was flourishing because you were **prepared, equipped, or nurtured** through the presbytery.

Church	Response
College Hill	Being on the PNC and working with the MVP liaison who demonstrated unity and caring.
College Hill	Attended an Elders Meeting which was a very nice connection demonstrating when a congregation flourishes.
College Hill	Our 1 st Spanish minister was Francisco who was brought to us by the GA, Synod, and the Congregation working together. We also received financial and philosophical support. Disappointed when Jane was let go.
Oxford	Originally ordained in UCC church. Met an intercity person who challenged the church to accept him. Quiet at first, but became more involved. I was equipped.
Oxford	Churches are not flourishing.
Fairborn	When engaged in improving. Over the past

First	2 years, working with the AC after conflict, helped the church understand itself. The AC was also a coaching group for Karen to help her help the church.
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4. Make three wishes for the Presbytery of Miami Valley as it discerns its future; a future that will build on its mission of **preparing, equipping, and nurturing**:

Church	Response: <i>I Wish</i>
Fairborn First	Presbytery was more visible in congregations.
Honey Creek	Presbytery offered more educational opportunities.
Fairborn First	For greater connecting, better understanding of participation.
College Hill	When the TE and RE visited our session, it made me want to participate more.
Fairborn First	Deeper Partnerships with other churches.
Honey Creek	Encourage churches to work together since many of us are small.
Oxford	I grew up Presbyterian, but did not know much about Presbytery.
Oxford	Some from my congregation have not encountered hospitality when visiting Presbytery. Need more listening. An air of collegiality is missing. A feeling of an adversarial relationship is present. Received conflicting information on mission statement.
Oxford	I sought information at Presbytery but was not helpful.
Oxford	Did not know who our advocate at Presbytery was.
College Hill	More development of minorities from our churches.
College Hill	Better “Sales Pitch” to get Elders to work on committees.
Oxford	Presbytery is not overseeing the process well for getting new pastors.
College Hill	Offer a women’s retreat. Maybe hosting to help with nurturing. Maybe encourage members of choirs to join together.
Oxford	Offer opportunity for outreach and inclusion for younger people to gather together and join.
Oxford	30 years ago, COM assigned a liaison to help committee look for new part time pastor, then

	the liaison wanted to be considered for the position. Need a Balance of Good Information.
Oxford	Look at the demographics of the Presbytery. Look forward to something new to ensure we are still here in 15 years.

5. Imagine it is five years later (2021) and you awaken from a deep sleep! While you were asleep many exceptional things happened. The Presbytery of Miami Valley is flourishing in its mission. It is living God’s call in fresh, vibrant, meaningful, and powerful ways. What do you see happening that is vital and good and takes the best from the past into the future? What is bringing to life to the Presbytery’s greatest potential?

Church	Response: <i>I Wish</i>
Oxford	Intergenerational missions. Youth and Older members reaching out to those in need.
Honey Creek	Look out (not back)
Fairborn First	Less emphasis on staff. Think of ourselves (the churches/congregations) as Presbytery. Offer more initiatives to engage.
College Hill	There is a burgeoning population that we are not sharing the word.
Oxford	At Presbytery meeting-see Kids present. Call the gathering by new faces, not traditional leadership. I see a Big list of Individuals who have been called to teaching, or maybe a webinar. Can choose from a list of things that challenged me to join or lead.
College Hill	See our Presbytery is working on initiatives and priorities of the PCUSA has put forward. Be prepared for the changes.
Oxford	New sense of stewardship-Fun and Laughter and a commitment to grow.
Oxford	Program to convert from having Sunday school separate from worship to including in worship to encourage kids to learn and participate as they grow older.
Oxford	Be OPEN to CHANGE. Open to where God is calling us to be.
Fairborn First	Less obsessed with numbers and more concerned with spiritual growth. Obsession on numbers creates depression because they want to return to the high numbers of the past which is not going to occur.
Oxford	During interim search, there was a sense of if it

	is simple, make it more complicated. Need to rethink how things are done.
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Group C

Bellefontaine, Dayton Corinth, Dayton Fairmont, Dayton Trinity, Huntsville, Piqua Westminster, Seven Mile, Sidney (*all represented except Seven Mile*)

Presbytery mission statement – Prepare, equip, nurture...

- London church had received help navigating the PNC process
- The statement is good, the problem is the implementation
- Some didn't feel nurtured, especially in the area of evangelism
- It is not clear what the Presbytery is doing
- Presbytery there when there is trouble but doesn't do a good job educating
- One couple felt a good connection to presbytery because of a special worship service at their church (Corinth?) and feels we need to that more often
- Some liked the feeling of being part of a larger group
- The gathering of clerks is helpful but wishes there could be more of this
- Sidney had both good and bad experiences
- Equipping and nurturing are sometimes in tension
- No cohesive focus on nurture or the education process
- Pastors are not mentioned in the statement

Best moments:

- Dennis P. came and spoke with a church and made them feel “not alone”
- Another comment about wishing we could gather the churches in the presbytery more often
- Still another mentioned partnerships in mission
- One came from a larger presbytery and felt welcomed in this presbytery
- Much better placed for pastoral transitions because of presbytery
- Learning new things together
- Worshipping together as one body
- Officer and ruling elder training together
- A sense that we are not alone and that together things will work out

Wishes for Miami presbytery:

- Better communication, especially on how to get involved
- Keep churches in the loop through various means (paper, electronic, etc)
- A way to communicate for those without computers
- Collective Presbytery worship service, social opportunities
- Retreat at Montreat
- Simpler pastor transitions – is the process still valid or relevant?
- Better help in pastoral transitions
- Print communications
- Presbytery-wide officer training
- Put presbytery events on Google Calendar
- Congregations need refresher course

- More opportunities for listening sessions

What would we commit to make wishes a reality

- Need better communication
- Need better teaching
- Research the resources in your congregation
- Presbytery need to explain its value
- Presbytery should publish an “apologia” explaining why it exists and has value
- Better understanding of the specific work of the committees and networks

2121 future hopes

- Better communications
- No longer cringe to say that we belong to PCUSA
- No longer burnt out and tired
- Missions are supported
- A view of the presbytery that isn't scary
- Evangelism is vibrant
- Evangelism is led presbytery wide by the presbytery
- Becomes more of a community feel
- Congregations feel empowered
- Community needs to be in mission statement
- Strong and consistent training for leadership
- Connectional youth ministries
- Connectional women's ministry
- Connections with other churches and denominations
- An explanation of why we have Synods
- Leadership training every February
- Feel an emotional connection
- Presbytery as a “force-multiplier”
- More active in synod
- Feel emotional connections
- Not regulatory

Group D

Question 1: There appeared to be unanimous agreement that the mission statement was good.

Question 2:

- Being involved in missions. For example, the partnership with Colombia and our PMV churches.
- The Xenia 1974 tornado response. Jack Angerman took an active role in the search processes.
- A tough AC that eventually made a good difference. There was a major conflict between the RE's and the TE's . The PMV AC was a major help in resolving the problem.
- The 14th Amendment vote. Many disagreed strongly with each other, but listened to what each other had to say. He was proud to be a part of that meeting.
- The process of examining church records with the clerks of the churches. Enlightening and helpful. Larry did a great job!
- A past moderator expressed his gratefulness to the leadership of the PMV helping him to experience the power of the Holy Spirit during the time when several churches left the denomination. He was very grateful for that.

Question 3:

- When Xenia lost a pastor because of a split in the congregation, the PMV helped in sending two interim pastors. “We got Kelley” as a stated supply, and that has made all the difference.
- Helping Bath set up an older adult ministry network.
- Clifton talked about the help the PMV sent to their congregation during a time the congregation nearly split.
- Aaron S. talked about the warm interview he had with Arby on his arrival in the PMV and how others connected with the PMV had reached out to him in ways that he had not experience in his ministry in the UCC. He was very grateful especially to Bob Wade's visits with him.
- An interim pastor expressed the support he had from the PMV in equipping him in his interim work (opportunity to do university work and study, grants to renew campus ministry, a sense that the PMV actually cared about his work).
- The protection that the PMV provided to a Colombian whose life was threatened there.
- Mario Bolivar's connection with the PMV through the connection that the PMV and the Colombian Network.
- Two moderators talked about the helpfulness of the PMV in sending them to the Moderators Conference in Louisville.
- The pastoral care that was given by the EP to the family of a TE whose son was diagnosed with leukemia. This prompted several other to talk about pastor care that they had received through the PMV, both formally and informally.

- A TE talked about how being in the PMV helped him to realize that TE's do not belong to the church they serve. They belong to the presbytery. He felt lucky to be here.
- An RE talked about his impatience with the presbytery in not allowing his church to get a new pastor immediately on the retirement of his pastor. With time and explanation from the PMV, he realized the wisdom of that approach and was grateful to the PMV for the patience and wisdom in the search process.
- The PMV's help in making Richard Culp's departure from Troy and the transition to a new interim TE (Hart E.) pretty easy.

Question 4:

- More and better communication coming from the PMV to sessions and especially the pews.
- Sessions that really support TE's who are trying to do ministry (God's work) and not are not supposed to be managers of a building (church). The PMV in turn would support and equip these transforming ministries.
- That the PMV be open to change.
 - Attractive to those without religion.
 - Seeking to change people.
 - Make wanting to come to church be an attractive thing.
 - Increase the flock.
 - More interfaith worship and/or support.
 - Increased older adult ministry.
- Continuation of support to pastors.
 - Pastoral support to TE's.
 - Encouraging leaders.
 - Having an EP "with heart" as we do now.
 - Reinforcing the idea that the pastors all have a common calling is very important.

Question 5:

- Continued pastoral care for TE's and RE's.
- Hope that this presbytery would maintain its focus on spiritual challenges in the midst of financial difficulty.
- That the PMV be able to hear all voices. All opinions are needed.
 - Greater emphasis on the gifts of congregations for the sake of mutual ministries.
 - Introverts and extroverts all have gifts to offer and we need to use them.
 - Bath is a good example of that.
- A better communication of what it means to be Presbyterian. Until my husband became moderator, I had no idea of what the PMV did.
- The presbytery needs to become smaller, more intimate...closer spiritually.
 - Clusters of churches working together can be more powerful than single churches working alone.
 - We need to avoid becoming congregationalist.
- We need to appreciate that most of the work that presbytery does in volunteer work

and that more people should sign up to do this work.^{[L][SEP]}

- A few people are doing most of the work and are burning out. We need to be aware of that.^{[L][SEP]}
- I wish that in the future, every single church within the PMV really feels that it is a part of the PMV in a positive way.^{[L][SEP]}
- A realization that the PMV is us, not the people who work in the offices on Smithville Rd. We need to experience an honest reflection on the covenant that we say we are a part of in our PMV.^{[L][SEP]}
- We need to have the opportunity for more conversations just like this one. It helps to hear and talk with each other. [Ed. Note – First seek to understand and then to be understood.]^{[L][SEP]}
- We need to be connectional. Some leaderships are dominant. Relationships need to be nurtured through conversation.^{[L][SEP]}
- Fewer long meetings. More short “get acquainted” conversations and fellowship.^{[L][SEP]}
- A deeper understanding of the “motherhood of God”...the great gift of mothers to nurture us and our congregations.^{[L][SEP]}
 - Bringing in the marginalized^{[L][SEP]}
 - Walls should be knocked down and people go into the community.
- More and better youth and young adult ministry.

Group E

Q1. “The presbytery prepares, equips, and nurtures congregations in their ministries for God’s mission for the transformation of creation and humanity by calling all people to Christ.”

Do you believe that this is an accurate reflection of what God is calling our presbytery to be and do?

- 9 Yes, 0 No, 3 Unsure

Q2. Recall an experience when you most deeply felt a sense of belonging to the Presbytery of the Miami Valley – when you felt joy at being part of something bigger than yourself. Recall that story:

- (Springdale-Covenant) described the support offered to him during his wife’s battle with cancer. While attending GA in Denver, the entire presbytery delegation prayed with him, and offered him constant support. Even though, the group did not know him well, he felt welcomed and at home.
- (Monroe) He described the joy of being able to use presbytery resources, like Kirkmont. Despite being a small church, Monroe has many younger families, and it was helpful for these children to participate in programming with other churches, letting them know that they are part of something bigger.
- (FPC Middletown) recalls the response of prayer that emerged from the presbytery meeting that occurred the week of 9.11.
- (General Consensus) Presbytery meetings allow for individual congregations to participate in a larger community of faith, share ideas, and experience worship in different spaces.

Q3. Tell me about a personal experience as a part of this Presbytery when you felt most alive, most **prepared, equipped, nurtured** or most enthused about your ministry. Share the story of this ‘best moment’ – when your ministry/congregation was flourishing because you were **prepared, equipped, or nurtured** through the presbytery.

- (Covenant) the support and reconciling work offered by presbytery during a period internal conflict within his congregation.
- (Covington) appreciation for the leadership given through presbytery in the absence of ordained leadership.
- (Springdale-Covenant) appreciation for the support offered by the CPM during the PNC process. He also shared the value he found in worship held during presbytery.

- (FPC Middletown) Appreciated the community through fellowship that occurs in presbytery, which is embodied by worshipping with other congregations.

Q4. Make three wishes for the Presbytery of Miami Valley as it discerns its future; a future that will build on its mission of **preparing, equipping, and nurturing:**

- A streamlined polity
- Willing to take action
- Consistent presence

- Youthful strategy
- Church revitalization
- Expansion of mission

- Meet people/congregations where they are
- Bridging divides
- Bring us together in love

- Be innovative
- Nimble/flexible
- Relevant

- Finding core needs
- Meeting those needs
- collaboration over competition

Q5. Imagine it is five years later (2021) and you awaken from a deep sleep! While you were asleep many exceptional things happened. The Presbytery of Miami Valley is flourishing in its mission. It is living God's call in fresh, vibrant, meaningful, and powerful ways. What do you see happening that is vital and good and takes the best from the past into the future? What is bringing to life to the Presbytery's greatest potential?

- Potential for being a connectional church
- Optimism of new leadership
- More trust between congregations and presbytery
 - Congregations feel more comfortable initiating dialogue

Group F

Church	TEs	REs
Bradford	0	0
Dayton: Sugar Creek	1	7
Dayton: Westminster	3	8
Eaton: First	1	2
Farmersville: Slifers	1	3
Reilly	1	1
Springfield: Northminster	1	1
Totals	9	22

Question 1 – mission statement

All agreed that the mission statement is appropriate.

Question 2 – sense of belonging

- When we hosted PMV. By meeting new folks and by getting a chance to visit with friends that do not attend your church. (SCPC)
- Being a commissioner at GA. Seeing being in a presbytery as being a part of a family. Praying for Presbyterians all over the country. (SCPC)
- Hosting PMV and seeing the work of the presbytery. Presbytery staff encouraging to me as an interim pastor. Allowing me to serve on COM even though I am a member of another presbytery. (Eaton)
- Our pastor retired after 30 yrs and it is comforting to know that the presbytery will help us select new leadership. (Eaton)
- We got guidance from presbytery to help with pulpit supply during the time before our interim arrived. (Eaton)
- I felt supported when we had educational events for pastors to help us learn and grow without having to travel. I miss the Clergy Institute. (Slifers)
- I've only been PCUSA for 5 yrs and I appreciate our polity. Especially in discerning leadership – rather than having a pastor appointed or being on your own. (Westminster)
- I appreciate knowing about and attending events at other churches (Westminster)

Question 3 - experiences

- Leadership Training Day was inspiring. It offered a wide array of classes, workshops and learning opportunities. I miss it. (Northminster)
- Presbytery is here at times when a neutral, outside voice is needed. COM helps when there is conflict. (Reilly)

Question 4 - wishes

- That we continue to have a presbytery
- Continue to grow our churches
- More educational events for all
- Deeper leadership support

- That more people know what the presbytery is and does
- That we figure out how to be the church of the future
- Hold on to what is good about our denomination and not follow other models that may be more popular. That we are leaders not followers.
- That all of you come to the PMV meeting all the time since we are the PMV together (M2).
- That we learn from and support one another.

Question 5 – in 5 yrs

- Deep & Wide has been revived and we have lots of educational opportunities.
- No more congregations have closed or left
- We are less tied to our buildings and are more in the community. The church has left the building.
- People are talking about Presbyterians – in a good way!
- We have vibrant youth groups with music, study and coffee shops. [Tom from Westminster teaches youth to play the ukulele and dreams of uke groups.]
- We are better connected to one another – both churches and individuals.
- Every church has members serving on PMV committees (M2).
- We have more mission involvement: serving local meals, food pantries.
- We are addressing the drug problem and helping families cope.
- We are helping Christians outside of the US that need our help.
- The presbytery is connecting folks from various churches that are interested in the same things.
- We are out in the community, doing events in the community. Churches are working together.
- We have a local PDA response team ready to help immediately.
- The presbytery helps coordinate and organize mission trips. This would help smaller churches where only 1 or 2 persons can go.
- We are using technology to the best advantage.
- Larger churches reach out to smaller ones helping to make opportunities available to them.

Group G

Mission Statement

Yes – 5

No – 1

Not sure/ Middle – 5

Did not solicit input on the mission but got some anyway. ☺

- How do we articulate how we are God's hands and feet?
- We have already been called to Christ; individually churches call people to Christ
- Narrowly focused
- "By calling" – limits the roll; is this the only tool? (is there room for interfaith work as well as work calling people to Christ?)
- Transformation of creation – what do these words mean?
- Get rid of the last five words
- To what extent does each play in this mission? Who takes the initiative? Presbytery or Congregation?
- Like prepare, equip, nurture
- Need to do an apologia - - what is the reason for our existence as a Presbytery?

Question 1

- Appreciated when Jackie was Associate at Presbytery and could reach out to pastors
- Southminster – interim process. There was lots of shake up in the church and they received lots of support. Judith Barr very good. First time connected with empowering support.
- Educators support – renewed Presbytery connection
- Serving on COM – get to see what is happening in other churches; 2 of 3 in transition to search for a pastor – good to see God working.
- Working with youth at Kirkmont for Presbytery. At least ½ of churches had kids at Kirkmont.
- COM with pastoral call; COM group fantastic, pulpit supply reinforced connection to Presbytery
- WM Xenia – new clerk of Presbytery is an excellent resource

Question 2

- Transition – all worked to make his transition excellent
- Connected when she was part of Evangelism group
- When she was ordained the Presbytery support made her feel like she could do the job
- Retired pastors who support churches in transition. Gracious, moderate meetings, ordination of deacons and elders, phenomenal job for that group. Pulpit supply phenomenal.

Question 3 – Wishes

- Find someone or a way to line up our mission; emphasis on NURTURE. Relational person.
- Nurture
- Whole message that COM puts out. COM should inspire. COM should have the same mission as Presbytery. Change culture of Presbytery. Less administrative. Change dreaded meetings. Change message. Positive thinking.
- Use technology as part of reaching out
- Emphasis on prayer and practice; we are in the presence of God. We are changed by this and led into the world by this. This is what it is to be human – to be able to experience the presence of God and be changed by that and led into the world.
- Focus on preparing.
- Celebrate God among us. Joyful. Now leadership stands and presents as a burden.
- All Session members come to Presbytery and see – be part of it. Power of community.
- Presence of Presbytery – COM, Staff – NURTURE. Be there when there ISN'T trouble.
- Online classes – MOOQ – about how to be an elder, Q and A, etc. – one more avenue.
- New people are there for a reason. Let them run the Presbytery. Dream big and let them see what comes.
- Good to have discussion but if nothing happens, what is the point?
- More physical presence in pulpits by rep of Presbytery
- Presbytery reps come to churches when there is not trouble

Question 4

- Growth
- Presbytery to organize and share accomplishments/resources of individual churches with others – churches are doing great things; how do we share this? Video clips? Web site?
- Reinvent ourselves. We need to find our membership.
- Technology connects us as churches to do outward focused mission, including churches with less members and programs so that we can do some things together – Habitat for Humanity; Presbytery clearing house
- More Hispanics and blacks
- Sister church relationship across Presbytery; be in worship together
- Financial commitment – Presbytery can do more with support if we are not supporting it is frustrating
- EP – right time and right place that he or she comes to us
- Flourishing
- Partnerships in the community – schools, other organizations
- Promote feedback from Presbytery meetings and other things to church members. What is the best way to communicate the full picture of what is going on?

- PNC Process for Presbytery needs to be very different for 2021. STOP and LISTEN. They started a centering prayer group after church and it really helped.
- Question asked – What do you hope your church will look like in 2012? What will it take from Presbytery to be there?

Appendix 3: “Sticky Note” Responses from Attendees at November 2016 PMV Meeting

Factors / Conditions in the Presbytery that equip ministry.	
	Outward focus
	Equip congregation to accept diversity
	Helping congregations when they need help finding a pastor
	Education opportunities
	Openness to change
	Being new, but heard more about the past things that worked previously in discussion than what is working well today. Therefore, re-examining how the Presbytery can better prepare, equip and nurture churches in their ministries
	Training i.e. – clerk’s training
	Committee on Ministry – guiding through process of choosing leadership
	Communication – video chats from leaders
	Spiritual but not religious, doesn’t speak to what I need, Help guide my life and choices
	Com and liaisons to congregations - Sometime the staff – sometimes not
	Support during the transition between pastors
	Educational opportunities for elders
	Evangelize - Join as groups (retreats, etc)
	Revive “Deep & Wide” type of Presbytery-wide education classes/workshops
	Youth leadership opportunities
	PYC Network Spring Youth retreat Presbyterian Triennium
	Share the best practice and “how to’s”
	There is help for small churches to be collegial and connected
	Organizing for the 21 st Century – Techno savvy in church
	Continue to provide support an leadership to churches in transition
	Get congregations more involved in Presbytery, come to us and by among us.
	Leadership training
	Geographical location for presbytery events (besides Presbytery) rotate outside of Dayton
	Helping us contact with what is going on as the church grows
	Prayer group and more training
	Increasing use of technology for meetings, training, education and encouragement
	“Connectionalism”, Mission, Leveraging Technology, Support for Youth
	Staff is essential but must be consistent with message
	New faces bring new energy
	Support clergy transitions
	Opportunity for workshops to learn and prepare
	Presbytery is very available to help churches in good and not-so-good times
	Colombia partnership

	Clergy institutes “Deep & Wide”
	Nurture by Kirkmont – Christ’s truth to kids in meaningful way
	Non-Presbytery business gatherings training and social gatherings of member churches
	Pulpit supply leadership supplied to Session meeting
	Collaboration/sharing new ideas. Societal Healing / Peacemaking
	Inspired pastor
	Core groups that reach out

Wishes for the Presbytery and its mission of the future.	
	Sensitivity to others
	Cooperation between churches for disaster assistance
	Addressing shrinking congregations
	Simplified processes and procedures so more time can be spent in ministry and mission
	Intergenerational opportunities to help grow each other’s faith and support each other while working together in missions.
	Foster relationships and interaction between member congregations beyond just through Presbytery meetings
	Joint church mission trips and community projects
	Collaboration
	Increase relevancy to individual congregations
	More interconnections within Presbytery training workshops
	To prepare and equip and nurture fantastic network committees
	The churches will grow if better communications with each other.
	Welcoming the new
	Global Mission with global impact
	Visionary leadership
	Provide leadership training opportunities like Deep and Wide
	Be relevant and flexible
	Connect with local colleges and universities, involve the youth
	Active use of “it” to:
	Share resources
	Introduce people of common interests
	Videos to train
	Standard “contracts” for building use, etc.
	Web casts of topics
	For example:
	As a new chair of B&G: A list of other chairs, a training package, “canned” contracts, etc. approved vendors
	Create/publish homeless resource center within the Presbytery
	Community based “worshiping communities”
	Continue to connect with larger denomination
	Find ways to interact with other churches in the Presbytery
	Create a joint music program, i.e. presbytery musicians

	Vision – 5 years more efficient and transparent networking
	Community partnerships and engagement
	Help and strengthen your ministry
	Consistent messages from Presbytery
	More adult support for Presbytery with youth ministry
	A youth strategy
	Shrinking church revitalization
	Expansion of foreign/domestic mission
	Mission trips joining together to be able to do as a group
	Be relevant, be innovative, be flexible
	Have a PPA response site
	Local PDA community/Presbytery Education Presentations
	Greater support, advocacy and assistance from Presbytery for individual congregations
	Intergenerational work
	Provide strong youth programs in all churches
	Determine people’s biggest spiritual need
	Gathering as often as possible
	More educational opportunities and fellowship activities that are intergenerational
	Focus on people not process
	The church has left the building! Be with our neighbors
	Deep and Wide Training/education events reinstated and re-established
	To become more connected through service projects. More connected by communication and Presbytery comes to us.
	Training for when go on committees. Com being biggest. Communication extremely important
	Be creative in programming – not clinging to all the past ways of doing things
	More personal contact between Presbytery and churches and between churches
	Intergenerational transformative events such as retreats, pilgrimages, learning events and worship
	Have a retreat for the Presbytery not connected to business but nurturing
	Better relationship between church and Presbytery
	Inclusivity and diversity
	Worshipping /Singing/Praying/Working together
	Church partnering
	Stronger COMs from Presbytery and church partnership to help small congregations to thrive
	Streamline policy, embrace the age we are in
	More qualified people at the Presbytery level
	Stronger COM’s from Presbytery and church partnership to help small congregations to thrive

Vision for the Future.	
	Think of “clustering” churches (by different sizes) (geographically)
	Educational events Presbyterian-wide
	More interaction/cooperation/connection among the churches – maybe a neighborhood or mission cluster
	My our hearts burn within us the disciples along the road to Emmaus
	Communication and outreach to member congregations to get them involved in Presbytery and for Presbytery to be involved in them
	Be inviters
	Build trust among all
	Openness and clarity
	Inviting more worship opportunities
	Sharing between congregations
	<i>Peer</i> church development
	Increased collegiality events which brings churches together and are opportunities for education
	Cooperation among neighboring churches i.e. special worship services, combine choirs for special services
	From our churches experiences during the interim between Pastor, it became apparent that the Presbytery subscribes to the adage, “Why make it simple when complicated will work.”
	More communication
	More connection of congregations to do ministry together
	Mission activities together
	Energy
	Find a way to allow me to help and serve others and to understand service as a gift
	Presbytery mission trips
	Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Network
	Simplify
	Mentor
	Collegiality with Presbytery and churches
	Intentional joy-filled stewardship
	Intergenerational – all places and times
	Strong connection between congregations
	Nurture geographic regions, talks\relationships for possible merges
	Presbyterian sponsored mission trips
	Presbyterian know in community as a thing to be (non-church building)
	Presbyterians are talked about in a positive way because of the many things we do to support communities
	New thoughts are energy coming in
	Outlets, avenues and structures for participation in the Presbytery that facilitate the work of the local church
	Strengthen Colombian network
	Remain a connectional church

	Local and abroad mission bringing people together in Christ's love
	Technology - help those who are not techno savvy
	Unity
	Force multiplier
	That the mission will actually be lived out through more networking and community of actual ministry and missions together In 5 years, Kirkmont camps are full and have waiting lists
	Optimism in action and doing
	Mission trips that have combined congregations
	Focus on the youth
	Presbytery becomes less restrictive Ex: Executive Presbytery screens candidate for congregations when church has a search committee – more nurturing with correct information that would facilitate a search. “Equiptise” the saints – leading to exciting worship, study and ?
	Prepare, equipt and nurture. Have all churches in MVP be connected to media to attend each other's special events
	Start ukulele choirs at youth level
	Spiritual nurture
	Community worship (just for worship sake)
	Plumb the hunger to be part of something greater
	Interconnection thriving
	Stop, listen and pray
	More winter church functions
	Better understanding of connectionalism
	More interactive relations between churches
	Joint Presbytery mission opportunities
	Disaster Relief action groups
	Inner connectedness of churches
	Working closer with PC USA missional and inclusion initiatives
	Find a way to make me feel connected to God
	More worship opportunities outside of church walls
	Church planting
	Strategies for church growth
	Youth involvement
	Shared mission opportunities
	To be relevant and of value to the churches
	Streamline admin
	Station/volunteer Presbytery