

HEALTHY GROWING CONGREGATION INITIATIVE

God's vision for the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia is "Healthy, Growing Congregations, Working Together." Our goal, to help us achieve that vision is "to enable its congregations to make and grow disciples of Jesus Christ, resulting in increased worship attendance, professions of faith, and mission."

A key component to accomplish this is a model of asking pastors and sessions to engage in a yearlong study of congregational leadership and health and semi-annual lay leadership events.

If the sessions and pastors choose, they may also request a consultation and follow-up coaching.

So far 16 pastors have met monthly to study 13 books over a 14 month period of time (February, 2009 through March, 2010). Those 16 are: Gary Bagley, Jeff Bell, Al Butzer, Michael Condrey, Deborah Dail, Ralph Herbert, Cindy Higgins, Bill Lamont, Bob Melone, Doug Nagel, Addie Peterson, Jenny Russell, Frank Webster, Lawrence Willis, Jim Wood, and Jim Young. 13 of the 16 pastors have participated in a consultation. 14 of the 16 met on April 22, 2010, to review and evaluate the course, and make recommendations to the Presbytery about how this strategy (study, consultation, coaching, and lay leadership events) might be offered to the other congregations in our Presbytery.

The next group of clusters will begin on September 23, 2010. Many pastors have already indicated interest in participating in the next round of small group clusters.

The track record of turning a church around from decline or being on a plateau, using this method, is 50%, a far higher percentage than any other model or method being tried today. If that success can be replicated in our presbytery, we anticipate by 2014, 2/3 of our churches will be growing instead of 1/3.

If you have any suggestions about this process, any of the 16 pastors listed above would be glad to chat with you and your session about it.

Grace and peace, Richard Short, General Presbyter, richard@pcusa-peva.org