

HEALTHY GROWING CONGREGATIONS INITIATIVE

A Covenant between the Presbytery, Pastors, and Sessions Of the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia

(to be signed and delivered to the presbytery office no later than August 13, 2010)

In an effort to develop healthy growing congregations, the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia has designed a "Healthy, Growing Congregations Initiative" that takes a systematic approach to congregational transformation. This covenant between pastors, the sessions of the congregations they serve, and the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia outlines expectations for all parties.

Presbytery of Eastern Virginia

The Presbytery of Eastern Virginia commits the following:

- To provide proven leadership for monthly pastor training sessions and lunch (pastor pays for lunch).
- To provide a comprehensive, fee based consultation weekend for each church upon request.
- To provide monthly coaching services after a consultation for a year.
- To provide support if conflict arises as a result of healthy changes in a congregation's system.
- To provide the syllabus early enough for pastors and sessions to purchase books and materials prior to course. The books and other materials costs approximately \$600 (12 to 13 books, one copy for the pastor, and one copy for the session.) Elders distribute their books among themselves.
- To provide semi-annual Leadership Summits for clergy and lay leaders.

Pastors

Pastors commit the following:

- To attend each monthly training session, which includes being on time and not leaving until after the event is over. Each training session includes three hours of instruction, and two hours of spiritual formation and lunch. Vacation, continuing education, funerals and other pastoral activities should be scheduled around these five hours.
- To fulfill all reading and ministry assignments in advance of the monthly training sessions.
- To pray for the other members of their training group.
- To pray publicly for one congregation enrolled in the HGCI each worship service.
- To report to the session on each of the training sessions, with input from the elder who has also read the same book.
- To report monthly to the Presbytery office basic statistics (affirmations of faith, re-affirmations of faith, baptisms, worship attendance, offerings, lay leadership training).
- To lead the session in considering if a consultation is warranted at this time.
- To attend semi-annual Leadership Summits with members of their leadership team.
- To implement the concepts of the training sessions in the local congregation.
- To advocate for the church's financial commitment to PEVA.
- To continue in a support and accountability clergy group after the first year course.

Sessions

Sessions commit the following:

- To support the pastor's participation in this strategy, by assuming any pastoral need during the time the pastor is scheduled to meet with the training group.
- To have at least one elder read the same book that the pastor has read during the same month the pastor has read it, so that they can together make a report of learnings from the book at the session meeting.
- To schedule a comprehensive congregational consultation weekend, in cooperation with the Pastor, if the session believes one is warranted, and agree to pay the members of the consultation team for the time they invest in preparation and on site work. If a consultation is scheduled, the session will complete a comprehensive congregational study (Pastor should not do this).
- If the consultation recommendations are endorsed by the congregation and adopted by the session, to work diligently with the pastor in making the recommended changes.
- To attend the two Lay Leadership Summits and recruit other lay leaders.
- To review tapes and materials provided by Presbytery.
- To make and fulfill a pledge to the General Assembly, Synod, and Presbytery, prayerfully considering 10% of their operating budget, or increasing it 1% if below 10%, but in no case being less than the governance tax. In 2010, that tax is \$7.60 a member (\$6.15 for G.A.; \$1.45 for Synod.)

Church: _____

Signatures:

Pastor: _____ /
Date

Clerk of Session: _____ /
Date

General Presbyter: _____ /
Date