

ATTACHMENT (D)
Presbytery of New Harmony
Evaluation & Long Range Planning Committee
Update Report to the Stated Meeting of Presbytery
October 10, 2017

Recent events in the life of our denomination have presented us with exciting and challenging opportunities to reaffirm our commitment to bring Christ's love, hope, joy, and peace to our congregations, communities, nation, and world. We look to the following excerpts from the Book of Order 2015/2017, Chapter One, The Mission of the Church:

“The Presbyterian Church(U.S.A.) believes that the good news of the Gospel is that the triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) creates, redeems, sustains, rules, and transforms all things and all people.”

“We believe that God has put all things under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and has made Christ Head of the Church, which is his body.”

“We believe that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior.”

“The Church's life and mission are a joyful participation in Christ's ongoing life and work.”

From this foundation, we are led to boldly proclaim that our Mission is:

MAKING CHRIST KNOWN

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**New Harmony Presbytery currently consists of 64 congregations:
19 predominantly African-American
1 Korean-American
44 predominantly Caucasian**

**As of December 31, 2015, there were 7,617 members of those
congregations**

**There are 75 Teaching Elders 18 of whom live beyond the bounds of
New Harmony Presbytery**

**22 of those Teaching Elders are Honorably Retired and 11 of those
22 are serving one or more congregations in some capacity**

**1 of 19 African-American congregation is led by an installed
Teaching Elder**

**The Korean-American congregation is led by an installed Teaching
Elder**

**14 of 45 Caucasian congregations are led by installed Teaching
Elders**

**6 African-American congregations and 8 Caucasian congregations
are led by Commissioned Ruling Elders**

**The remaining 34 congregations are led by Interim, Supply, Part-
time, and/or Honorably Retired Teaching Elders or by pastors
ordained by other denominations. Some of these reside outside the
bounds of New Harmony Presbytery.**

2 of our installed Teaching Elders are female.

**The next page shows the distribution of the membership of our
congregations as of 12/31/2015:**

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Given this diverse demographic of our congregations, it was important to learn what our congregations valued most and least about the presbytery.

We held 12 meetings in locations scattered throughout the presbytery in April 2016 and asked the just over 200 attendees to help us understand your priorities.

You told us you most valued and needed the following:

- **Connecting** (congregations)
- **Collaborating** (through ministry & mission)
- **Equipping** (congregations; communities)
- **Accompanying** (via structure & support)
- **Challenging** (think & act innovatively)

We then reviewed those functions required of presbytery by the Book of Order.

Recent revisions to the Book of Order have placed more decision-making responsibility at the Presbytery and congregational level as well as an emphasis on the functions at each level of government without defining the form of how those functions are to be achieved.

It was also deemed instructive and useful to seek to understand how other presbyteries are structured and what their guiding philosophy is as they seek to be faithful to their call in this changing environment.

At this time we are NOT presenting a proposed organizational chart, but rather GUIDING ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES.

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OBSERVATIONS

Over the course of our work, we discovered insights which are pertinent and relevant to the work of this presbytery, yet did not rise to the level of recommendations. Given this rich learning, we are preserving these insights here as observations. As the presbytery receives this report, it may choose to relate to these observations as advisement, future action items, or even current action items. We present them here for your consideration.

Observation 1

This is a time of transition for New Harmony Presbytery. We will lose funding from dismissed churches in the near future, staffing levels will need to be reviewed, and ministry priorities may vary from year to year. Given this, it seems prudent to reduce the dependency of our ministry and mission teams on the Presbytery Office. This transition time is an opportunity to shift toward engaging the broad talents and gifts of our members as a way to move forward.

Observation 2

It is clear that the churches of New Harmony Presbytery are integral to God's movement in the communities of the this presbytery. We recognize the need to be a stronger physical presence in our communities, reaching out to those who are not yet involved in the Christian movement. We want to Make Christ Known with those who are not involved in churches and may want to know Christ.

Observation 3

Through our work we discovered that half of our congregations have less than 50 members. This presents an opportunity to our presbytery. We suggest the ground is fertile for growing collaborative partnerships among our congregations. Though there are recommendations related to this dynamic, we see great opportunity for smaller and larger churches to partner in various ways. This appears to be an opportunity to maximize the benefits of our connectional denominational system.

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Observation 4

While we have noted the wide diversity in the demographics of our congregations, we also noted the wide range of environments surrounding our congregations in terms of urban/rural, coastal/interior, and manufacturing/hospitality/military/farming concentration. We have four (4) established ministerial “cluster” regions that seem to provide natural “communities” wherein congregations are likely to have similar or complimentary needs and challenges. We believe it is beneficial to achieving our mission to encourage focused ministries and missions within these communities.

A recent review has led to the identification of FIVE (5) Communities. (see Recommendation 3)

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The Presbyterian Church (USA) has changed the Book of Order to allow more flexibility for presbyteries and churches regarding how they organize and manage themselves. Many factors are influencing this change in approach. We believe increased flexibility in streamlining processes and structure will ultimately increase participation through reducing redundancy and increasing utility in our processes. To that end, the following structural changes are being considered:

1:

That only Constitutionally required functions be established as Standing Committees. Those are the functions of a guiding Council, Committee on Ministry, Committee on Preparation for Ministry, Committee on Representation, and Permanent Judicial Commission.

2:

The Administrative Council become the Guiding Council. This shift in language communicates more clearly the functions of the Guiding Council as it currently exists, as well as moving toward a leadership focus. Administrative work is one very important function of this Council, yet as the highest governing body of the presbytery, we also need the Council to focus on mission advancement. This name change emphasizes the need for effective leadership consistently aligning mission with actions, helping the presbytery move toward mission achievement.

Our belief is that there must be representation on this Guiding Council from all Communities (see Recommendation 3), and that a Financial Committee will need to be an integral part of this Council either as a standalone group whose Moderator is a member of the Council, or as a subset group of the Council. Other functions currently represented by their Moderator on the Administrative Council, (Property, Personnel, Evaluation & Long Range Planning) would instead be established on an as-needed basis in the form of a Task Force.

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3:

That New Harmony Presbytery strengthen its movement toward regional Communities.

As noted, there have been 4 regional areas that have, or are potentially able, to strengthen their presence in their communities. Some gatherings have used geographical groupings to facilitate events. We are recommending that geographical groups called regional Communities take the next step toward actively engaging mission and ministry as groups of churches and clergy.

We believe that this should be expanded to FIVE (5) communities to better serve our congregations.

These regional Communities seem to naturally form in the following ways:

- Cheraw regional Community – 14 congregations
- Florence regional Community – 16 congregations
- Grand Strand regional Community – 8 congregations
- Sumter regional Community – 16 congregations
- Manning regional Community – 10 congregations

While there have been varying degrees of success in engaging regional Community congregations around specific projects and events, we believe there is even greater opportunity to explore the possibilities of our connected churches working together. The presence of 34 congregations with less than 50 members in our presbytery highlights the potential for several churches working together accomplishing far greater goals than individual churches working alone.

4:

That New Harmony Presbytery establish Ministry and Mission Teams (MMIT) to accomplish its mission and vision.

In our research, we learned that many presbyteries are reducing their standing committees, replacing them with teams that form to address specific needs or purposes and then disband when that project is completed.

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Note: “Ministry” refers to service to this presbytery. “Mission” refers to serving through this presbytery for the benefit of the world around us.

Characteristics of MMITs:

- Purpose driven – Formed to achieve a specific purpose. Those who sense a calling or impulse toward a ministry or mission through presbytery can form a MMIT, proposing its work to a coordinating body for recognition and funding when needed.
- Time-limited – When their goal is achieved, then their work is complete and they disband. If another related goal has arisen during the time of their service, they may apply to continue onward toward achieving the new goal.
- MMITs which involve members from multiple congregations should be given priority consideration, recognizing this engages our members and churches in collaborative ministry and mission.

5:

That New Harmony Presbytery embrace greater use of technology as tools to accomplish its work.

Through our gathering input from churches, it's clear our members are ready for greater use of technology in order to facilitate our work. We are recommending that the presbytery embrace technological communication in greater ways, which may include:

- Meeting through computer based video platforms rather than in person for some meetings.
- Communicating more through electronic communication.
- Strengthening the presbytery's online presence and communication tools
- Exploring electronic record keeping
- Exploring establishing Networking Centers in each Regional Community.

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Another possible benefit to this is opening up participation to a broader representation of members including younger family members and working members who have difficulty in attending meetings that conflict with their work schedule and/or family needs.

6:

That New Harmony Presbytery initiate strong actions toward the establishment of New Worshipping Communities and New Church Development.

We recognize the need to engage in the establishment of New Worshipping Communities in alignment with the denomination's commitment to establish 1001 New Worshipping Communities and the opportunity to establish New Church Developments in rapidly growing areas of our presbytery such as northern Horry County.

A team of passionate advocates could be formed as a MMIT for specific locations.

7:

That the focus and content of presbytery Stated and Called meetings be shifted toward connecting, partnering, collaborating, spiritually enriching, and challenging participants.

We are grateful to God for our connectional denominational system, wherein we are in relationship with others who share this common mission and vision. During our exploration process, we learned that the people of New Harmony Presbytery greatly value our connections, with a desire for more opportunities to collaborate. Presbytery meetings are a prime opportunity right before us. Though presbytery governance and management needs doing in these meetings, we can streamline those items to maximize our face-to-face engagement, spiritual enrichment, and collaborative opportunities. Other presbyteries are also moving in this direction. We are recommending that those who plan presbytery meetings intentionally shape agendas to reflect this shifting focus.

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8:

That New Harmony Presbytery strengthens its publicity and communications efforts in order to more effectively communicate its story.

We recognize the need for the good news about what New Harmony Presbytery and its congregations are doing to be more visible. Since some churches have elected to leave this denomination we recognize the possibility of wrong or misrepresented information in our communities as a result of the hurt and pain of these leavings. Now we need to restart or re-launch into a new season of life and ministry together based on this renewed vision. To this end, we see the need to tell our story better. Many individuals, churches, and the presbytery as a whole are actively engaged in God's mission in this world. We want to more readily turn our eyes and the eyes of our communities toward God's movement among us, focusing ever more on Making Christ Known.

How this is structured within the presbytery is to be determined, but could include the hiring of a person (part-time??) or incorporating it within the responsibilities of staff positions, or other possibilities.

9:

That New Harmony Presbytery give great attention to the recommendations of the Camp Pee Dee & Retreat Center Task Force. Currently a Task Force is working on recommendations to the Presbytery regarding Camp Pee Dee & Retreat Center. This Task Force was commissioned before we began our visioning process. They have now transitioned to a Red River (consultant-led) Task Force. We will await the documentation of their conclusions and recommendations before proceeding to address this issue. Our only input is that the timing to address the future of our camp seems urgent. In our gathering of

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information, we learned that nearly all presbyteries owning camps are reviewing and revising their camping ministries.

10:

That the Presbytery of New Harmony form a Vision Implementation Team to shepherd the presbytery through the implementation of these recommendations in this report.

We believe that implementation of these Guiding Organizational Principles will be more of an EVOLUTION, than a REVOLUTION and that a Vision Implementation Team will be necessary to work out recommended procedures, organizational structure, timing, and to assure that each step is consistent and supportive of our mission of MAKING CHRIST KNOW

11:

That the Examinations function shift from being a sub-committee of the Committee on Ministry to become the Examinations Commission.

A Commission is empowered to act on behalf of the presbytery. An Examinations Commission would possess sufficient autonomy to prepare for and conduct examinations in a timely manner and to respond more effectively to the needs of congregations calling and, when appropriate, installing pastoral leadership.

Persons with skills pertinent to examining Teaching Elders to be ordained and/or installed, and examining Teaching Elders establishing a relationship with a congregation as Interim, Supply, or Parish Associate will be recruited, nominated, and elected to serve on this commission.

This Commission would also be responsible for examination of Ruling Elders who have completed the process and are eligible to be commissioned for service to a congregation as a Commissioned Ruling Elder.

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It should also be noted that we recommend that the Committee on Preparation for Ministry continue its current function of examining Inquirers and Candidates for Ministry.

Given this recommendation, the Committee on Ministry would no longer be responsible for this area. We believe this will equip the Committee on Ministry to more robustly embrace its vital work of care and development of congregations, sessions, and pastoral leaders.

12:

That the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) portfolio of responsibilities remain unchanged.

We suggest that it is essential to our future that this CPM continue and strengthen its relationships with the theological institutions related to the PC(USA) to guide our Inquirers and Candidates and to create/undertake/seek opportunities for seminary students and graduates, in addition to our Inquirers and Candidates, to learn more about New Harmony Presbytery and opportunities for service within our bounds.

13:

That a financial strategy/ process be implemented to help the presbytery adjust its work in accordance with its resources.

The Financial Team should analyze all forecasted funding for a given year and recommend an allocation of that funding in broad categories of (a) Per Capita, (b) operating costs and (c) Mission Beyond the Presbytery and Ministry within the Presbytery.

The process would then establish the means to determine the split of item c between Mission Beyond the Presbytery and Ministry within the Presbytery (MMIT funding).

14:

That the Permanent Judicial Commission membership be reduced from 9 to 7 members.

After assessing the work of this rarely convened Commission, and in keeping with our streamlining emphasis, we conclude that seven members are sufficient. Through this simple size reduction, the

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Commission is positioned to function more effectively while freeing others for serving in other ways.

We continue to seek input from you as we work toward defining the FORM and FUNCTIONS of our presbytery. Please feel free to contact any of us with your thoughts, further suggestions for improvement, and to offer any ways in which you can help us implement these guiding principles.

Evaluation & Long Range Planning Committee

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