



**National Capital**  
**PRESBYTERY**  
MISSIONAL · PASTORAL · PROPHETIC

## The State of the Presbytery

Delivered by Dr. G. Wilson Gunn, General Presbyter

May 22, 2018

One year ago, the Presbytery adopted a Mission Statement which begins with our sense of Identity: “Sent by the Triune God to be agents of salvation, reconciliation and justice;” And then proceeds to focus our activity: “we empower and challenge our congregations to be Missional, Pastoral and Prophetic.”

The Mission Statement then claims certain characteristics for our life together as a Presbytery:

- We are a relational network,
- We proclaim the gospel,
- We aspire to unity in Christ,
- We celebrate our diversity in service to God’s mission

It then lists emphases for our mission together over the next five years. This report summarizes the work of the Presbytery to address these emphases as a way of measuring our accomplishments over the last year.

1. We will challenge, equip, and support our congregations and their leaders in their discernment of God’s invitation to discipleship and stewardship as we:
  - a. Serve as a catalyst for mission by connecting congregations with common local, national, and international mission interests. In service to this emphasis:
    - i. We currently have a Global Mission Network that offers connections across the more than 100 international mission passions sponsored by our congregations.
    - ii. We have a Young Adult Ministry Team that encourages ministries on three different college campuses
    - iii. We have an active Israel/Palestine Network advocating and educating in pursuit of Middle East Peace.
    - iv. We have an Earthcare Network and count 10 of our congregations as official Earthcare congregations.
    - v. We have a sanctuary network which advocates for the protection of immigrants facing discrimination, abuse and unjust immigration practices.
    - vi. We have a Young Adult Volunteer program which provides oversight and provides internships for young adults in ministry across our region.
    - vii. And we have a Refugee Network that actively advocates for and hosts refugees fleeing violence and oppression.

- viii. We have an Urban Ministry Network that is actively connecting urban churches with common ministry and mission passions.
- b. Bear public witness to the love, truth, and justice of God in Jesus Christ specifically in the areas of racism and reconciliation. Fulfilling this emphasis:
  - i. We have sponsored antiracism workshops, hosted speakers and educators at the Presbytery level.
  - ii. We have an active antiracism task force.
  - iii. Concurrence with a GA Overture to honor Rev. Henry Highland Garnet, former pastor of Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church.
  - iv. I have drafted an interfaith statement on racism which is under consideration by the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington.
  - v. The September meeting will address issues around confronting racism.
  - vi. We sponsored a petition to General Assembly to provide an Authoritative Interpretation of the Constitution seeking substantive forbearance for more conservative congregations to set policy regarding same gender weddings.
- c. Cultivate and nurture our congregations to be communities of love striving for a healthy forgiveness and reconciliation with our neighbors, and working to dismantle the dividing walls of hostility and indifference.
  - i. We might enjoy a robust conversation about how we might engage in this emphasis
- d. Provide a forum for our leaders and congregations to equip them with the skills for adaptive change. Fulfilling this emphasis:
  - i. Karen and I are now introducing the constructs of adaptive change in New Pastor orientation retreats.
  - ii. The Church Development Committee has trained 12 coaches who provide support for the pastors engaged in the work of adaptive change in their congregations. 8 more are in the pipeline.
  - iii. We have six congregations who are receiving grants designed to boost resources for membership and programmatic growth.
  - iv. We offer equipping grants to congregations generating new mission and evangelism endeavors.
- e. Connect ruling elders across congregations enriching their missional identity as apostles sent into the world to serve God's mission. Fulfilling this emphasis:
  - i. Black Presbyterians United sponsored its second officer training event for the whole Presbytery last November. Todd, LaJuan, Sara, and I taught classes. Plan to come to the next one.
  - ii. The Leadership Council hosted the third annual reception for persons who are engaged in service on Presbytery committees and commissions. The event featured jazz singer Christiana Drapkin, Pianist Chip Smoley, drummer Mick Burns and bassist Wilson Gunn.
  - iii. Elders regularly are in relationship across our various Mission Networks.

- iv. Through the Church Development Commissions program “The Well,” church leaders are equipped with the tools to guide, support and increase congregational ministry.
  - v. During the Session Records Review various Clerks of Sessions read each other’s minutes and trade best practices with each other.
  - vi. The Immigrant Ministry Network regularly sponsors training events for the enrichment of their congregations. They also host an annual picnic where one can eat around the world in one afternoon and they host an annual Christmas event where one can hear Christmas music from across the world. When I retire these two events will be among the activities I will miss the most. You are invited. Come!
- f. Actively explore new ways of empowering and equipping congregations in their discipleship formation of children, youth, young and older adults. Fulfilling this emphasis:
- i. We have an active Spiritual Formation Team.
  - ii. A Young Adult Volunteer program.
  - iii. An Educator Network
  - iv. And I hear there is a Youth Ministry Network coming together.
2. We will launch new Christian communities. In this regard:
- i. We were delighted to add a new congregation to our community. On Christ the King Sunday, Christ the King Presbyterian Church was chartered!
  - ii. We Now have a “New Thing” Team which is attending to evangelism strategies and training through the formation of new worshipping communities, new church developments, workshops to equip leaders with evangelism skills. This support is offered through “the Bridge” led by Norm Gordon here.
  - iii. We have begun a new work called “The Porch” in Lucketts, VA on the site of the former Faith Chapel Presbyterian Church. We are exploring possibilities at the Unity Presbyterian Church site. That congregation has requested closure at the end of the year which is being overseen by an Administrative Commission.
  - iv. We have a “Next Blessings” approach which comes alongside precarious congregations working with them around discerning their future and the possibilities of new ministries in those sites.
3. We will provide care, oversight and accountability for teaching elders and certified educators.
- i. This year
    - 1. we have seen 7 pastors join the church triumphant;
    - 2. we have dismissed 20 pastors to new fields;
    - 3. we have received 13 new pastors into our membership;
    - 4. we have ordained 5 new pastors;

5. we have honorably retired 3 pastors with all the rights and privileges there to.
  - ii. We now have 356 pastors on our rolls. 185 active in parishes, 61 at large and 110 Honorably Retired.
  - iii. We have sponsored a Supervision of Staff workshop and a Bully management workshop.
  - iv. We provide a \$300 grant to each incoming pastor for startup coaching.
  - v. We have now provided three clergy and educator retreats. The next one will be January 28-30, 2019. Mark your calendars now!
  - vi. More than 50 pastors have received pastoral calls from the COM Care Team.

Additionally

- We have dismissed the First Korean Presbyterian Church of Annandale, Virginia to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.
- We have approved the transfer of the Centreville Presbyterian Churches to The Evangelical Covenant Order.
- We approved the transfer of the Neelsville Presbyterian Church to the Evangelical Covenant Order.
- We have worked with the Ashburn Presbyterian Church through a period of discernment. They and the Presbytery have discerned that they will remain in the communion of the PCUSA.
- The Covenant Manassas site on Hoadly Road has been sold. National Capital Presbytery is no longer paying principle or interest on loans assumed or guaranteed by the Presbytery. The Administrative Commission on Congregational Property adheres to robust criteria in the consideration of loan approvals.
- We celebrate the fourth year since we have had a clergy sexual misconduct case. The reduction in the number of cases correlates with the beginning of the requirement that each Teaching Elder and Educator receive Healthy Boundary Training every three years. Last year we provided training for 136 persons. We have 40 persons who are due to receive training this year and another 66 persons who are out of compliance. Those needing training have been notified with an assigned date for training. Those out of compliance will be listed in the Presbytery record at the September meeting.
- Thanks to your benevolence and participation in this mission we finished the year in the black.
- We continue to ask each church to pay its per capital to cover the basic costs of being Presbyterian and to additionally devote 5% of your non-benevolence and non-capital expenditures to Presbytery and General Assembly Unified Mission.

We celebrate the fact that 24 of our churches reported numerical growth last year.

- Adelphi
- Calvary
- Old Presbyterian Meeting House

- Westminster, Alexandria
- Clarendon
- First Arlington
- United Parish of Bowie
- Brambleton
- Brentsville
- Clifton
- Chesterbrook Taiwanese
- Christ, Fairfax
- Falls Church
- Grace Lanham
- Oaklands
- Saint Mark
- Saint Andrew Purcellville
- Northwood
- Takoma Park
- Fifteenth Street
- Georgetown
- National
- Northminster
- Western

Friends, I do not need to tell you what a wonderful Presbytery this is. We have over 250 volunteers working to sustain our ministry. J. Herbert Nelson, the Stated Clerk of the PCUSA is a member of this Presbytery. Denise Anderson, GA co-moderator is from this Presbytery and Jan Edmiston, the other co-moderator, served here for years. Our policies are the most copied documents in the Presbyterian Church. Our Mission giving supports Presbytery Leader Formation, General Assembly Mission in more than 40 different countries, a Disaster Assistance program that is renown and dozens of other beneficial national programs. Our Mission giving supports all the ministries outlined in this report and catalogued on our website in Mission Videos and Mission Highlights. Friends, we are making a difference. May we continue to be faithful to God's mission of salvation, reconciliation and Justice.