

A Recommendation on the Future State of New Castle Presbytery from Balcony 2

The "Balcony 2" team was tasked by the Presbytery Council to engage in the work of listening to the Spirit of God moving through our members to recommend a direction for the future of New Castle Presbytery. Balcony 2 follows the work of Balcony 1, a group that recommended a new staffing structure for NCP. Its members are Nate Phillips (convener), Sarah Holben, Julius Jackson, Signe Bell, Donna Bowers, John Molina-Moore, Mark Olson, Barbara Price-Martin, Duke Dixon, Fernando Rodriguez, Donna Jackson (chaplain), Tom Stout (chaplain), Marlene Quinn, and Mary Jo Dean.

Biblical Reference

Isaiah 60:1-4a (NRSV)

Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the Lord will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.
Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.
Lift up your eyes and look around.

John 1:1-5, 14a (The Message)

The Word was first,
the Word present to God,
God present to the Word.
The Word was God,
in readiness for God from day one.
Everything was created through him;
nothing—not one thing!—
came into being without him.
What came into existence was Life,
and the Life was Light to live by.
The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness;
the darkness couldn't put it out.
The Word became flesh and blood,
and moved into the neighborhood.

Theological Reference

"The Church is not the source of the witness; rather, it is the locus of witness. The light cast by the first rays of the morning sun shining on the face of a company of travellers will be evidence that a new day is coming." Lesslie Newbigin

"The mission of God in Christ gives shape and substance to the life and work of the Church. In Christ, the Church participates in God's mission for the transformation of creation and humanity by proclaiming to all people the good news of God's love, offering to all people the grace of God at font and table, and calling all people to discipleship in Christ. Human beings have no higher

goal in life than to glorify and enjoy God now and forever, living in covenant fellowship with God and participating in God's mission." Book of Order, F-1.01

"Jesus did not come into this world and live His life on a mountaintop isolated from human suffering. He walked among us, ate with us, and shared in our humanity. He did not heal lepers from a distance, but touched them into wholeness. He pressed His disciples and prayed for them to be in the world but not of the world. The focus of their three years together was not the salvation of the Twelve, but their ministry to the entire planet." Erwin McManus

"A missional encounter happens when the unbeliever sees 'the spontaneous overflow of a community of praise . . . the radiance of a supernatural reality.'" Lesslie Newbigin

"Daily life becomes a discipline of asking how one may move more squarely into the realm of God's reign and how one may welcome and receive it into the fabric of one's life this day more than ever before." Darell Guder

"That the zeal for God's honor is also a dangerous passion, that the Christian must bring with him [her] the courage to swim against the tide instead of with it... accept a good deal of loneliness, will perhaps be nowhere so clear and palpable as in the church, where he [she] would so much like things to be different. Yet he [she] cannot and he [she] will not refuse to take this risk and pay this price... he [she] belongs where the reformation of the church is underway or will again be underway." Karl Barth

Polity Reference

"The presbytery is responsible for the government of the church throughout its district, and for assisting and supporting the witness of congregations to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that all congregations become communities of faith, hope, love, and witness." Book of Order, G-3.0301.

"Presbytery, being composed of the ministers and commissioners elected by the session of congregations within the district, has a particular responsibility to coordinate, guide, encourage, support, and resource the work of its congregations for the most effective witness to the broader community." Book of Order, G-3.0303

Listening Campaign

The listening campaign that took place in May-July of 2016 was a tremendous success. A total of 440 Presbyterians participated in the professionally-designed and conducted survey. Each and every one of our NCP churches participated.

The survey was created through one-on-one interviews (oral and written) with over a dozen key leaders of NCP.

Chestertown, Red Clay, Trinity, Easton, Dover, Elkton, Westminster Wilmington, Church of the Covenant, Head of Christiana, and Olivet were the top participating churches (in that order).

50% of respondents were ordained elders/ deacons, 30% members of a congregation, 16% ordained as Minister of Word and Sacrament.

80% of respondents were over age 50.

29% of respondents were active in church and NCP. 64% were active in church but not NCP.

Each church had a liaison from Balcony 2 and was encouraged to participate - multiple times through multiple mediums.

Top 3 Areas of Strongest Alignment

In other words, the three surveyed statements that NCP agrees on the most.

- The typical person in the pew is unaware of what NCP does. (Compare the 29% of respondents who were active in both church and NCP with the 64% of respondents active only in church.)
- NCP should focus on being a Christ-like organization to make our communities better rather than being an organization flush with cash.
- NCP should primarily be responsive to the needs of the congregations.

The key point that emerges here: our Presbyterians wish to see the NCP involved at a local level - strengthening the churches and enhancing the mission of the churches within their specific communities.

Top 3 Areas of Misalignment

In other words, the three surveyed statements that NCP disagrees on the most.

- Because the current mission statement of the Speer Trust is not found in the bequest which established the Speer Trust, NCP has the authority to change the mission.
- The walls that presently divide the work of the Speer Trust Commission from the work of NCP should be eliminated so that NCP can make a consistent and co-ordinated determination about the use of all NCP funds.
- Too much time is spent on struggling churches that might need to be offered an exit strategy.

Our listening campaign reveals that our Presbytery needs attention and repair on these matters of disagreement, so we offer the beginning of a solution.

Recommendation

We recommend New Castle Presbytery's primary energy and focus will be to engage churches in working in mission and partnership. Everything - staff, meetings, Speer and other funds, structure - will be designed to serve that end.

Balcony 2 recommends a full implementation of a unified funding model. As the Spirit moves, this will be the primary mechanism allowing us to make this missional shift. Mission funding currently passes through many "buckets" (Speer, West Legacy, Mission Development, Church Development, etc.). The absence of a unified vision and the lack of coordination can lead to

overfunding in some areas, underfunding in others, and a general failure to direct mission resources to areas with the highest priorities for NCP. Going forward, all Presbytery funds will come from one “bucket”. Each year, the Committee on Budget and Finance will assign a dollar amount to “Ignite” churches working in mission and partnership and a dollar amount to Presbytery administration of no more than the proportional amount spent on administration at the launch of the new staffing model as described. As explained below, the “Ignite” team will be responsible for determining how those funds will be allocated each year.

Structure

Presbytery Meetings: We will move to five yearly meetings. Three of the meetings will be business meetings, including worship. Two meetings will become missional workshops (the Beach Retreat already serves as one). At the workshops, we will share best practices and success stories, and hear from dynamic speakers. We will seek to engage congregations to send delegates for more than their “votes”, but also for their passion and enthusiasm for mission. We will set aside ample funding to make these substantive events.

Number of committee members are suggested for a 12 month period and can be adjusted thereafter. The idea is to keep committees strong and encourage them to invite members of the Presbytery to engage in tasks - rather than carry all the work in our committees.

Committee on Coordination: (Moderator, Stated Clerk, Vice Moderator, Missional Presbyter, Administrator) Note: this is not a decision making body.

- coordinate agenda for business meetings of the Presbytery
- facilitate planning for worship/fellowship/education at Presbytery meetings
- propose a schedule (dates, times, & locations) for Presbytery meetings
- call special meetings of the Presbytery when appropriate
- communicate regularly with all committees to assure that work is done in a timely manner
- coordinate work of committees as appropriate (i.e. assign review of GA amendments)
- coordinate the review of structure, vision, mission as needed
- work with all committees to develop opportunities to work cooperatively with other presbyteries and ecumenical entities to fulfill their particular responsibilities

Ignite Team: (10 members, Resourced by Missional Presbyter)

For the first three-year cycle, the Ignite Team will be comprised of a current member of 1) Speer Trust commission, 2) West Legacy Trust, 3) Church Development Unit, 4) Mission Development Unit and six other “at large” members. The Ignite Team will allocate and support the allocation of the funds assigned to Ignite, for the following purposes:

- develop and support ways in which the Presbytery, its congregations and pastors, its members engaged in validated ministries, and its new congregations, new worshipping communities, fellowship groups, and other non-congregational entities can fulfill the mission of God in Christ, guided particularly by the Great Ends of the Church (F-1.0304)
- encourage and support ministry partnerships among congregations, campus ministries, regions, and ecumenical and interfaith organizations which fulfill the mission of the church
- promote and support ministries of social, racial, and environmental justice, peacemaking, and self empowerment throughout the congregations of the Presbytery

- promote and support ministries of proclamation, evangelism, and discipleship throughout the congregations of the Presbytery
- promote, support, and coordinate the establishment of new congregations, new worshipping communities, fellowship groups, non-congregational entities, and other forms of corporate witness, support congregations in the work of transformation, revitalization, and transition, and propose and administer the Presbytery's financial support for development and mission

Priority for Ignite funds will be given to NCP congregations that partner with other congregations of any denomination or with community groups 1) to alleviate root causes of poverty (key to Speer and MDU), 2) develop new worshipping communities (key to denomination), 3) seek justice and power for the disenfranchised (key to West Legacy), 4) develop new initiatives for church transformation (key to CDU).

Committee on Representation & Nominations: (6 members, Resourced by Stated Clerk)

- advise the Presbytery regarding the implementation of principles of unity and diversity
- advocate for diversity in Presbytery leadership
- consult with the Presbytery and the Committee on Leadership on the employment of personnel, in accordance with the principles of unity and diversity in F-1.0403
- nominate persons to serve in positions requiring election by the Presbytery, ensuring that nominations are broadly representative of the Presbytery and in conformity with the church's commitment to unity in diversity (F-1.0403)

Committee on Leadership: (7 members, Resourced by Missional Presbyter)

- develop and administer the personnel policies of the Presbytery
- propose to the Presbytery job descriptions and compensation for Presbytery staff and employees, review and evaluate the work of Presbytery staff and employees annually, and provide an annual report to the Presbytery
- respond to routine workplace issues and concerns
- provide care and support for all Presbytery employees
- facilitate the process for employing and terminating Presbytery employees
- care for and supervise candidates and inquirers for ordination as Ministers
- propose and administer the Presbytery's financial support for preparation for ministry
- work with the Committee on Coordination to develop and implement regular plans for growth in leadership skills for those serving in various capacities within the Presbytery
- transfer inquirers and candidates to other presbyteries, and receive inquirers and candidates by transfer from other presbyteries

Trustees and Financial Resources: (9 members, Resourced by Treasurer)

- prepare and propose a budget for annual operating expenses, including administrative and personnel costs, to support the church's mission within the Presbytery
- communicate with the Ignite Team on the level of funding available for mission
- propose to the Presbytery the means for funding the Presbytery's annual budget, conduct a full annual review of all financial books and records, and present a financial report at each business meeting of the Presbytery
- receive, hold, encumber, manage, and transfer property, real or personal, for and at the direction of the Presbytery

- monitor and oversee the financial condition of loans made or guaranteed by the Presbytery
- monitor and oversee investment performance of the Speer Trust
- invest those Presbytery funds that are not part of the Speer Trust
- oversee general business matters, including office facilities, the Hayloft, and insurance
- assist congregations in developing plans for the care and maintenance of buildings
- on behalf of the Presbytery, consider and act upon requests from congregations for permission to take the actions regarding real property as described in G- 4.0206

Permanent Judicial Commission: (7 members, Resourced by Stated Clerk)

- consider and decide cases of process for the Presbytery according to the Rules of Discipline
- composed of no fewer than seven members, with no more than one of its ruling elder members from any one of its constituent churches
- the term of each member to be six years, with members elected in three classes and with no more than one half of the members to be in one class

Committee on Ministers and Congregations: (16 members, Resourced by Stated Clerk)

- serve as pastor and counselor to all Ministers and Commissioned Ruling Elders
- facilitate relationships between congregations and Ministers and Commissioned Ruling Elders
- counsel with a session concerning reported or observed difficulties within a congregation, including: (1) advising the session as to appropriate actions to be taken to resolve the reported difficulties, (2) offering to help as a mediator, and (3) acting to correct the difficulties if requested to do so by the session or if the session is unable or unwilling to do so, following the procedural safeguards of the Rules of Discipline, recommend to the Presbytery the appointment of administrative commissions to assume original jurisdiction in any situation in which it determines that a session is not properly exercising its authority
- propose annually the minimum compensation standards for pastoral calls and approve sabbaticals and mini-sabbaticals
- provide for periodic rounding visits
- propose and administer any financial support to be provided by Presbytery for Ministers
- Examine and approve, on behalf of the Presbytery, candidates for ordination as Ministers
- appoint administrative commissions of Presbytery for the purpose of ordaining and installing Ministers and Commissioned Ruling Elders to particular pastoral service, approve terms of call and contracts for Ministers and Commissioned Ruling Elders, examine and receive Ministers by transfer from other presbyteries for the purpose of accepting valid calls to ministry and membership in the Presbytery, and approve and review annually the work of all Ministers engaged in validated ministries outside the congregation

Staffing

Missional Presbyter (full-time)— The primary responsibility of the MP is to engage the churches in connecting with one another, other worshiping communities, and community groups to be about the mission of the gospel outside the walls of their churches. The MP will work to bring enthusiasm to our churches by connecting dreams, ideas, and leaders with the work of the Ignite Team. The MP will also work with the Committee on Coordination and the Committee on Leadership, will serve as “Head of Staff” of the Presbytery, and be “looped in” on all matters of the Presbytery.

Stated Clerk (full-time) — The SC will assume the duties prescribed by the BOO. Additionally, the SC will be the resource to Committee on Ministers and Congregations, CON, PJC, and serve as the point person for matters of discipline in the local church and among clergy. An early priority for the new SC will be to work with the Committee on Ministers and Congregations and the Trustees and Financial Resources to design and implement a team to investigate viability of NCP churches and design a process to direct a future for struggling churches. The SC will also compile a list of members from NPC churches to use as a resource for committees that need to create task groups.

Administrator (full-time) — The Administrator will assume all duties of managing the NCP office and communications functions. Since the MP and SC are full time positions, they will also take on significant administrative responsibilities of their own.

Treasurer (1/4 time) - The Treasurer will be responsible for maintaining the Presbytery's financial records, providing periodic financial reporting to the Trustees and Financial Resources and the Presbytery, monitoring budget performance and supervising the bookkeeper. The Treasurer will be a resource for Trustees and Financial Resources and, as necessary, the Ignite Team.

Bookkeeper - contract determined by Committee on Leadership, Missional Presbyter, Treasurer

Mission Staff (funded through Ignite) - Campus Minister, Campus Ministry Associate

Volunteer staff - Interfaith Peacemaker, Mission Advocate, Disaster Recovery Coordinator

Timeline

Structure

Approve new structure March, 2017, for implementation January 1, 2018

Funding

Approve unified funding model March, 2017, for implementation January 1, 2018