

CLT REPORT TO PRESBYTERY of NEW BRUNSWICK 10.13.20

A. NEW JERSEY MISSIONAL STRUCTURES PROPOSAL:

- a. The members of the Central Leadership Team are taking the following actions to ensure that all commissioners to the presbytery meetings in October and November are fully informed regarding the proposal from the New Jersey Missional Communities Working Group regarding the reconfiguring/restructuring of all presbyteries in New Jersey.

1) The CLT members have been and continue to personally contact the communication lead (as identified at the September presbytery meeting), pastor, and/or clerk of Session of every congregation to ensure they are aware of all resources (see list below), that their questions are included in the CLT's FAQs list, and that every session has the tools necessary to understand the meaning of the proposal for their congregation.

2) The CLT prepared and sent FAQs to our presbytery's NJMC team members; their responses have been prepared and can be found [here](#). Additional questions gathered before the November meeting will be added to this FAQs sheet.

3) The CLT has answered FAQs which pertain to its work, and has prepared a Session/commissioner discussion guide. See [this document](#) for this information. *If you have any questions to include, please send them to nbpleaders@gmail.com.*

4) The CLT has arranged smaller-group conversations, following the October presbytery meeting, to include (as possible) a member of our NJMCWG team, with:

- the 13 congregations of Hunterdon & Somerset Counties, which the proposal includes in a new Northwest Presbytery
- new/er pastors serving in the presbytery
- validated and honorably retired ministers.

Those who fall into any of these three groups will be receiving notice of the zoom link of these meetings.

5) The CLT will meet with Rev. Thia Reggio and representatives of the proposed Central Presbytery to forward discussion on Wednesday, October 14 at 1:30pm, and together with the Trustees at their joint meeting on Monday, October 19 at 7:00pm. At the last townhall meeting, Thia explicitly invited those attending to join the October 14 meeting. Those pastors/session leaders who would like to listen to the October 14 first meeting should send Thia Reggio a request by email to thiareggio@gmail.com.

6) The CLT has provided links to resources for deliberation regarding the proposal in Monday in Ministry and the CLT Communique. Current resources are listed here:

1. *FAQs sheet by NJMC commissioners* [HERE](#).
2. *CLT FAQs and Discussion Guide* [HERE](#).
3. *Slide Deck* from the Presbytery Meeting presentation [HERE](#).

4. *Video* of the September Presbytery Meeting presentation [HERE](#).
5. *NJMC Proposal Document* [HERE](#).
6. *Interactive map* of proposed presbyteries - click [HERE](#) for the map on the cover of the NJMCWG proposal document, showing congregations in each proposed presbytery.
7. *New Brunswick Presbytery* current map - [HERE](#).
8. *Contact an NJMC Team Member*: Rev. Wendi Werner (wendi.daytonpres@gmail.com), Sal Lalama (sal.lalama@gmail.com) and Rev. Marcus Lambright (marcuslambright@gmail.com) are happy to speak to anyone's church Session as they are able to do it.

- b. The CLT proposes the following motion: **that a secret ballot be taken regarding the NJMC Proposal at the November 2020 meeting, with details to be provided with pre-meeting documents.**

B. Monday Morning/ 4Cs - Pandemic Working Group:

- Monthly zoom calls for pastors and congregational leaders (last Wed./last Saturday).
- Music sharing: several zoom gatherings have been held to produce a repository of music online available to any of our congregations for their use, with examination of licensing issues, etc. - Elder Mike Meduski (Hamilton Square) leading effort.
- Monday Morning/4Cs/Pandemic Response Working Group - meeting weekly on Monday mornings at 9am - all welcome
- **Background:** The Monday Morning Working Group was initially formed by the Moderator Team in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the pandemic has laid bare social inequities, compounded by structural racism, our scope has broadened. Our main goals are evolving and currently include support for congregations as they respond to these inequities and network and collaborate across the presbytery. The group currently includes representatives of the Grants, Urban Mission Network, and Social Witness Committees, participants in county COADs, and other interested congregational leaders. The group welcomes participation by anyone interested in our work. For more information, please contact Working Group member Sal Lalama at sal.lalama@gmail.com.
- **Anti-racism Work.**
 - Racial Justice Concert - in planning stages - convener Mike Meduski (see meeting document)
 - Anti-Racism Weekly Adjustment - Pat Deeney - see article in Monday in Ministry
 - Next steps:
 1. Collecting resources to recommend and share across region
 2. Creating place on website where people can find resources
 3. Group to plan to meet again and invite others to join after choosing next activity

C. CLT Initiatives:

1. MATTHEW 25:
 - a. The motion was passed at the September Presbytery Meeting:

We do hereby commit to become a Matthew 25 mid council. We pledge to encourage 20% or more of our congregations to become Matthew 25 churches and embrace these areas of focus:

- *Building congregational vitality*
- *Dismantling structural racism*
- *Eradicating systemic poverty*

We promise to keep track of the impact of our ministry and share our stories with the PC(USA) from time to time.

- b. The CLT invite congregations and New Worshipping Communities to share their Matthew 25 work by sending their videos to nbpleaders@gmail.com for posting on the presbytery's new YouTube Channel. **Congregations must ensure proper permissions are given for posting of videos on the presbytery channel.**
2. GRANTS & RELATED INITIATIVES: The Thriving Congregations Grant application was not awarded to NBP. For a full listing of organizations receiving this grant, go to <https://lillyendowment.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/thriving-congregations-recipient-list.pdf>.
3. VITAL CONGREGATIONS: The CLT has met with Personnel regarding facilitator hiring. Molly Dykstra and Nina Reeder have volunteered their services during this period.

D. VITALITY STRATEGY STATEMENT FOR NBP (v. 8.25.20). The CLT, in its role as strategic body of the presbytery (Plan of Presbytery p. 8) has adopted the following working strategy statement, and shares it with the presbytery for information only.

Because the Central Leadership Team (CLT) of New Brunswick Presbytery:

- Knows that a majority of our congregations are in the midst of decision-making regarding their future, as a result of participation and funding changes, societal forces, and the pandemic
- Realizes these changes cause stress, anxiety and discomfort, which may affect our relationships within congregations and between congregations and the presbytery
- Is committed to vital engagement in gospel witness in all aspects of our presbytery
- Embraces God's continuing call to faithful witness to the gospel "for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14) and are willing to follow where the Spirit leads us
- Is committed to supporting one another as leaders of congregations, New Worshipping Communities, and in validated ministries, in honest assessment, prayerful discernment, and faithful action in our gospel witness
- Has committed to living into the possibilities of the NJ Mission Structures discussion, while continuing to be faithful to our existing communities

We, the members of the CLT, seek to advance the following priorities in order to bear faithful witness in our presbytery in the coming year:

- 1) Census 2020/Continuing mission networking -- gathering information on our missions and ministries, and making this information known throughout the presbytery
- 2) Become a Matthew 25 presbytery, creating means by which we can continue to inform one another and our community of our mission and ministry, as we advance the causes of congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism, and eradicating systemic poverty
- 3) Use the Vital Congregations Initiative as our overarching structure for congregational revitalization efforts of assessment, discernment, and action, with a goal of 33% participation (33% of 38 = 13 congregations)
- 4) As affirmation of our commitment to our common witness, invite adjoining presbyteries/-congregations to join us in the VC initiative, with a financial facilitation contribution for such congregations based on a formula to be mutually agreed upon.

PRIORITY	ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN	ACTIONS TAKEN
Priority 1: Census 2020/Mission networking	-Continue to collect information	-Sharing gathered information
Priority 2: Matthew 25	-Set up means for sharing by congregations across presbytery	-Interpretation of Matthew 25 to presbytery -RISE internship (Princeton University) re. Racial justice -Racial justice concert planning -Pandemic Response/4Cs Working Group -COAD engagement -Worship & Music Sharing -Vote to become Mt. 25 presbytery 9/12/20
Priority 3: Vital Congregations Initiative (VCI)	-See CLT reports re. VCI	-Interpretation to presbytery -Presbytery reaffirmed Initiative 9/12/20 - Presbytery voted to search for facilitators 9/12/20 - Personnel has posted search -Initial contacts with leaders in Elizabeth and Monmouth Presbyteries re VCI made
Priority 4: Inviting members of		- Awaiting selection of

other presbyteries to join VCI		facilitators
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E. CLT gives thanks to God for those who serve our common life, and continue rising to the challenges of our mission today:

- For all pastors and officers of our congregations - elders, deacons - as they faithfully lead the people of God through uncharted waters
- For presbytery commissioners, seeking the Spirit's leading and wisdom
- For all the presbytery's elected leaders, serving faithfully - especially Personnel and those working in coming weeks to hire necessary staff, and our NJMC team
- For our devoted presbytery staff.

Questions or suggestions for the CLT? Please contact Past Moderator/CLT Chair Rev. Molly Dykstra at mollymdykstra@gmail.com or CLT Secretary Elder Gooitzen van der Wal at gooitzen.vanderwal@gmail.com.

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