

Transition Model and Considerations

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Transition

The leadership of the current New Brunswick, Monmouth and Elizabeth presbyteries identified as part of the Central Missional Community may wish to establish a core Transition Working Group. This group would have representation from each existing presbytery and would work on overarching issues such as timing, reporting, and coordinating the transitional elements to create an implementation plan. In addition to a core working group, the process would benefit from establishing teams to focus on specific areas of importance to the life and health of the new missional community. A preliminary list of teams is included in this document to be considered by the presbyteries as a starting point for organizing its work.

Transition Working Group

The core working group would consider overarching issues including:

- What is the timetable for the transition, and how will it work?
- Exactly what happens when? What must be in place by March 1 to facilitate the year of full transition?
- How will time be afforded in the process for different ways of doing things/different cultures and their coming together be addressed as work unfolds?
- Who will carry out the work of crafting the transition proposal?
- How will the transition proposal be decided upon?
- Will/how will we work together to find common directions for missional growth, while honoring differences and accommodating a range of priorities?
- How might lessons learned in previous structures inform the way forward?

Facilitation

Additional support for the process will be provided by a facilitator. A description of the facilitator's role in supporting the transition is attached to this document.

Mission

Mission is the primary focus for determining the way forward. Mission is made possible through ministries, resources (financial and other), structure (for relational and governance purposes), and staffing. Therefore, everything belongs under the heading of mission.

The following questions and considerations will affect the Central Missional Community's ability to articulate and carry out its mission. For purposes of supporting a transition that is creative, thoughtful, and Spirit-led, the considerations have been organized here in categories that can be translated into teams. These teams can take primary responsibility for each of the core areas identified here, subject to discussion for final consideration. Other teams based on other areas of focus may arise in discussion.

Relationship building

- How might we ensure that increased size doesn't lead to a feeling of disconnect or make it harder to recruit volunteer leadership?
- Will there be help in merging different cultures?
- How will diversity be recognized, fostered, and reflected in the new structure?

Pastoral care and support for those serving in ministry (pastors, chaplain, CRE, validated)

- In what specific new ways will pastors be supported in this challenging time as a result of this proposal?
- We believe pastors are in serious need of support during the pandemic-- how will the transition include intentional support of pastors?

Financial

- What is the new Central Presbytery's status regarding congregations, their sizes, their capacities, their resources?
- Describe the assets in detail; are they buildings, endowments, restricted funds, unrestricted funds? Are these assets owned by congregations or by the presbytery as a whole?
- How would properties currently managed by the presbytery be managed?
- Some congregations send to presbytery the per capita collected from its members; it does not pay its total member amount. Will current practice be honored in the new presbyteries?
- How might a new structure inspire increased per capita giving?
- What will happen to outstanding loans from a presbytery to congregations?
- When will the audit be conducted and who pays?
- Are there any new resources being brought into the new Central presbytery as a result of this proposal? If so, what are they?

Congregational support

- How can the new structure accomplish better mission - helping congregations strengthen their 7 vital marks?
- How will we support congregations that are in transition during this process? churches in crisis?
- What will we need to know to have a decent, orderly discussion in our churches?
- Most people in our congregations would not know about this or see its significance. How will congregations be assisted in knowing what's happening?
- What will the new structure mean for individual churches – will it be noticeable and what impact will have on each congregation?
- How will the Vital Congregations Initiative be affected? Will it continue or be put off?
- If churches are getting financial and ministerial support from our Presbytery, is there certainty that they will get the same support from the new Presbytery?
- With the new realignment, will the Trenton Urban Churches have their “voice” and financial support weakened?
- Who should our congregations contact as the transition occurs so that they feel supported?

- Who is informing congregations?

Ministries

- How do we ensure a welcoming/affirming culture of our LGBTQIA+ ministers, members, leaders--how do we ensure continuation of this culture and this priority?
- How will we coordinate our values of social and racial justice priorities across new groups?
- How will we address work/issues of disaster relief and environmental/earth care or other priorities of those congregations with which we'd be combining?
- What will be the new Central Presbytery's work around racial justice?
- How will this proposal seek to ease the overwhelm people are feeling because of the pandemic and everything else going on in the world now, and especially new to NBP?
- Urban Policy/Urban Fund - what happens to this priority of ours?
- How/will we have new opportunities to think about how validated ministries would work in new presbyteries—(e.g. college ministries, all kinds of chaplaincies - new opportunities for dialogue around these ministries?

Governance

- What are the working templates are for Committee on Ministry, Committee on Preparation for Ministry, nominating, and any other committees?
- What will we do regarding Nominations for 2021?
- How will Administrative Commissions currently active be handled?
- What are the implications for voting yes on the work of our Nominating Committee and electing leaders this fall to serve in roles necessary to continue the presbytery's work while new presbyteries are being established?
- By laws, priorities for Day One, and implementation overtime

Structure and staffing

- How does this new structure improve governance and increase engagement?
- How were congregations analyzed and designated rural/suburban/urban? How were each of those terms defined? How does the urban church definition compare with NBP's urban church definition?
- How does this proposal affect our current staff?
- Why is NBP moving to hire new staff now if this change is on the horizon?
- What is the staffing model that supports the shared vision for mission?

Meetings, Logistics and Planning

- How far will commissioners need to travel?
- How often will new presbyteries meet? How many times a year?