



**Homestead Presbytery's
Strategic Plan
Engagement Guide**

Strategy Team Members

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Engagement Guide compiled by Kris Adler-Brammer

Welcome

Welcome to the Engagement Guide for Homestead Presbytery's new Strategic Plan. We hope you will spend time with this guide to understand the proposed plan and structure. We also hope this guide will provide a way for you to see how you and your congregation might be in active partnership with the Presbytery.

Early in the book of Genesis, God shares that we were created to be in community with one another. We were not created to be alone or keep our faith to ourselves. Most often, we are in community together in our congregations. We share our faith, time, and gifts with our local congregation and communities. In the PCUSA, we believe that community goes further than our local congregations. Our community includes our Presbyteries, our Synods, and General Assembly. When we are working together with all our gifts and talents, we are truly able to be the church.

We hope that you will use this guide in a variety of ways. In addition to church staff and leaders reading this guide, it can also be used with groups. This guide contains information about the new Presbytery structure, but it also contains reflection questions for you and your congregation. Some of these questions might also be helpful in your congregational setting. You might use this guide with the groups in your congregation - Session, Sunday School classes, PW gatherings, or any fellowship or study group.

For additional information beyond this guide, please feel free to contact the Presbytery office or any member of the Strategy team. You will find them listed on the cover of this guide.

Overview of Team's Work

In August of 2020, seven members of the Presbytery came together to form the Strategy Team. They began their work together by doing some community building and study. The study portion included some of the following readings:

- *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Christian Community*, by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

- *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes*, by William Bridges
- *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools & Tactics for Changing Your Organization and The World*, by Ronald A. Heifetz, Marty Linsky, Alexander Grashow
- *Technical and Adaptive Change*, by Scott Cormode, Fuller Seminary <https://bit.ly/Fullerarticle>
- *People Don't Resist Change; They Resist Loss*, Fuller Seminary <https://bit.ly/Fullerarticleloss>

Through community building and study, they were able to create trust with each other as well as an environment where they could intentionally listen to each other. They did this work to come together as a team rather than a group doing committee work.

As the team started to gather information to guide their work, they had conversations with EVERY session to get feedback on what you thought was vital and important in the life of our Presbytery. Once they crafted a plan, they held various listening sessions to gather your thoughts on the proposed plan. All the information that you will find in this guide is a culmination of what they have heard from you.

Values to Represent the Presbytery

The discussions with each session revealed some common threads. From those comments, the following values have been identified:

Connectedness – being joined or linked; a feeling of belonging. As a congregation, you are connected to one another. How did this connection happen? What do you do to maintain that connection? How can you share this with the Presbytery to help us be connected as congregations and individuals?

Hopefulness – First and foremost, our hope is in the risen Christ, who is Head of the Church. Through our conversations with you, statements of hope were shared. As we think about the hope that is promised to us, how do we live as the church and share that hope with others? How do we approach this process of change with hope? And, what about this new model gives you hope as we move forward?

Outreach – This is an opportunity to put our faith into practice; ways in which we focus not on ourselves but on others. Our congregations have many ways in which they reach out to the community and those around them. The next challenge is how do we focus on the communities collectively. Think about the enormity of resources if we came together. In what ways do you reach out to the community?

Frederick Buechner states that *“The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.”* What are the members of your congregation passionate about? Where do their gifts and gladness meet the worlds need? Would they be willing to join in an outreach project within one of our Presbytery's communities? What might those projects be?

Creativity – When we use our imagination and original ideas, it is amazing the type of ways that God moves. It's a great *“Holy Spirit”* moment. While we love a good, new idea, moving forward doesn't always have to mean a new idea. It can also mean that we RE-create. We are **not** unfamiliar with this after the past few years. We have shifted and recreated quicker than we ever have before. Take a moment to look back and reflect on that. What ways has your congregation been creative or RE-creative? What has worked well that you could share with the Presbytery?

Once the team had the opportunity to identify the shared values, they created a **Mission Statement** to help us move forward.

***The Mission of God calls us to:
Empower Congregations
Connect Communities
Equip the people of God.***

Presbytery Team Structure

We know, that as Presbyterians, we love our committees. We believe it to be important for the community to decide the ways in which the church should move forward. While this new structure can look like just another set of committees, the Strategy Team was intentional about moving to a team approach. By working together as teams, the work can be more collaborative and provide a different opportunity for listening and dissemination.

The Strategy Team puts forth the following teams to facilitate our work together:

Reconciliation and Trust

This team that will consist of six (6) members. It will do the on-going work to restore relationships and to build and sustain trust within the Presbytery. LeaderWise will be engaged with this team to help establish an approach to this work and guide the team in the initial phases. Over time, the work of this team will change as the needs of the Presbytery change.

Congregational Networking

This team that will consist of six (6) members. It will work to facilitate relationships between congregations. They will explore the gifts and skills of each congregation and how those gifts can be shared to support each other.

Ministries for Extraordinary Times

This team will consist of six (6) members. They will provide knowledge and skills to assist congregations in whatever ways needed. This will be done by putting together members of the Presbytery with knowledge in specific areas. This team will incorporate the work and function of Program & Grants, New Worshipping Communities & Church Vitality, and the Disaster Response Team. The combined number of members for the three committees was 25.

Companions for the Journey

This team will consist of 12 members. They will work to provide proactive care for pastors and congregations. They will be there to assist in many ways from struggles to celebrations. This team will incorporate the work and functions of Commission on Ministry and Committee on Preparation for Ministry. The combined number of members for the two committees was 24.

Steering the Ship

This team will consist of 8+. It will facilitate effective communication across the Presbytery and coordinate the work of the Presbytery in support of the Presbytery mission. Moving to this new structure creates the need for effective and consistent communication. This team will incorporate the work and functions of Administration and Finance, Nominating Committee, and Presbytery Council. The combined number of members for the three committees was 18+.

Permanent Judicial Commission

This is a Book of Order mandated commission and will remain the same.

You may have noticed that the number of team members has significantly reduced. This was done to accommodate the length of service that someone may serve on a team as well as effectively utilize the gifts and skills of each member of the Presbytery.

Each team will be made up of a small core group of standing members who will be elected for a set length of time. Their central responsibility will be to provide direction and oversight of the activities pertinent to the team's mission. The standing members will also participate in those activities.

The standing members will then invite co-opted members to serve for a limited time. This will be done on an as-needed basis. Co-opted members will be chosen based on their specific gifts and skills relating to a task or project.

Should we move forward with the proposed team structure, we will come to you to help staff the teams and projects. When was the last time you explored the

gifts and skills of the members of your congregation? Has it been a while? It might be beneficial to take some time for you to do this again for your local setting. Once you uncover and reaffirm all those gifts, how can you share that with the Presbytery so that we can all move forward as the body of Christ?

Presbytery Staff

We have many gifts and skills within our Presbytery. The Strategy Team is counting on those gifts to move forward with this new proposed plan. In addition to members who will serve on the proposed teams, the Strategy Team is putting forth the following staffing structure:

- **(NEW)** Facilitating Presbyter - This will be a part-time position working with congregations, pastors, and communities by focusing on cultivating a culture of care and collaboration; assisting in the discovery and identification of strengths; nurture and develop new strengths.
- Stated Clerk - This position will remain the same with the current clerk continuing through 2023.
- Administrative Assistant - This position will remain the same.
- Treasurer - This is a volunteer position.

Timeline

Two years after the Strategy Team started their work, they started the presentations of their proposal.

October 2022 - The proposal was presented to the Presbytery Council.

November 2022 - The Team finalized the plan you see in this document.

November 2022 - The first reading of the proposed plan was presented at the Presbytery meeting.

November 2022 - Presbytery Council selected the Implementation Team. The members of this team are:

- Kris Adler-Brammer
- Joan Berglund
- Alan Brehm
- Brian Johnson
- Steve Piper
- Terri Sherman

February 2023 - The Strategy Team will present the finalized plan to the Presbytery Assembly for a final vote. Pending approval, the Implementation Team will begin their work.

Now What...

THANK YOU for taking the time to read and reflect on the information contained in this guide. The process will be most effective if we move forward together. Moving forward together doesn't mean complete agreement but it does mean that we are willing to come to the table, listen to one another, and discern the way forward. We hope that you will choose to join us as we move forward together through study, reflection, discussion, and prayer.