



Presbytery
of
Middle
Tennessee

VISION FOR 2020

Building Up the Body of Christ

“To equip the saints for the work of ministry,
for building up the body of Christ.” (Ephesians 4:12)

Our Vision:

The Presbytery of Middle Tennessee is a community of churches and church leaders whose role is to guide and support the work of its constituents, striving to build up the body of Christ through connections of mutual support, creating a culture of leadership development and church transformation.

Objectives and Goals 2015-2020

As members of one body, the Body of Christ, in one time and place (Middle Tennessee), we propose a set of three common objectives for building up the body of Christ together, and also offer fifteen goals to be realized within the 2015-2020 timeframe.

(Note: Goals under each objective are listed in alphabetical order.)

2020 Objective 1:

Building Up the Body through Connections of Mutual Support

As Presbyterians, we are connected to fellow believers and congregations in the Presbytery, bound together by a common history, geography, polity, and mission. As a presbytery, we are at our best when we see our bonds of connectedness as opportunities to learn from each other and to lean on each other in the fulfillment of Christ's call upon our lives and assemblies to share the Gospel in word and deed. The Presbytery labors to help broker fruit-bearing collaboration and community among its member congregations, countering isolationism born of geography or parochialism.

Connections of Mutual Support Goals:

We will help broker fruit-bearing collaboration and community through:

1. Annual Neighborhood Meetings

We will meet annually in neighborhood groupings of churches throughout the Presbytery for the purpose of realizing one or more of the following: (a) conducting joint worship services, (b) enjoying a wider circle of Christian fellowship, (c) offering specialized ministry training (i.e., for church musicians, secretaries, treasurers, etc.), and (d) for discussing difficult issues facing the church.

2. Association of Campus Ministries

We will strengthen current campus ministries and utilizing the parish-based campus ministry model we will double the active PCUSA-related campus ministries (from 4 to 8) on public and private university campuses throughout the region. In order to better serve these campus ministries, the Presbytery will promote and sponsor an Association of Campus Ministries, meeting annually for ministry collaboration and mutual support.

3. Guatemalan Partnership and Hunger Action

We will enlarge our Presbytery-wide endeavors at strengthening partnership ministries with the Presbytery of the Peten in Guatemala, and with local community and worldwide agencies that provide hunger relief and advocacy for hunger elimination by involving at least half of our churches in one or both ministries.

4. Sharing of Church Contributions

We will take advantage of times when the Presbytery is meeting in assembly to lift up the life and mission foci of a different local church or parish within the Presbytery, sharing success stories and best practices. Through this process, congregations will be valued and challenged to grow in local and global missions in the name of Jesus Christ.

5. Technological "Think Tank"

We will bring together semi-annually members of the Presbytery across the age and generation spectrum, to explore ways in which we might utilize the ever-changing technology available for enhancing our ability to communicate and connect with our partners in ministry. The Presbytery will identify technological resources (products and professional services) for its congregations, with our first goal that of every congregation having their own website within a year.

**2020 Objective 2:
Building Up the Body through Leadership Development**

As Presbyterians, we are known throughout the global church as a body that loves learning and trains leaders to serve both the church and the world. The Presbytery of Middle Tennessee is widely regarded and well respected as a mid-council of the PC(U.S.A.) that serves its constituent teaching elders and member churches as a learning community. At its stated meetings, and at other times throughout the year, the Presbytery offers nurturing opportunities for ordained leaders and other church workers that help them to grow in their respective capacities as preachers, teachers, shepherds, and stewards of the gifts that God has entrusted to their care.

Culture of Leadership Development Goals

We will encourage, train and equip teaching and ruling elders through:

1. “Barnabas Leadership Group”

We will graduate every other year a class of (at least fifteen) pastors, associate pastors, Christian Educators, and Commissioned Ruling Elders, in their first or second call, in the “Barnabas Leadership Group” training [see www.VitalChurchesInstitute.com], subsidized largely by Presbytery funding assistance and partially paid by continuing education allowances awarded those enrolled from their congregations of call.

2. Celebration of the Resurrection

We will provide opportunities for all active pastors of the Presbytery to retreat together annually for 48 hours at a regional Retreat Center or State Park in the week following Holy Week/Post-Resurrection Sunday, and encourage that this time away not to be counted against vacation or continuing education leave, the purpose of the retreat being for rest, recreation, renewal and fellowship.

3. College of Preachers

We will develop and nurture the preaching pastors and associate pastors of the Presbytery through the hosting of an Annual College of Preachers that brings together the teaching elders and Commissioned Ruling Elders of the Presbytery, in order to renew their minds, spirits, and preaching methods in the presence of God, one another, and the instruction of a distinguished theological and/or homiletical educator.

4. Excellence in Officer Education

We will create an online site for officer education/continuing education for Ruling Elders and Deacons. This will be a learning and leader development opportunity available 24/7 for current officers and for those in training to become officers. This site will be developed and maintained by the office of the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery with resources that will include materials of interest to both newly elected and more “seasoned” officers.

5. Fellowship of the Ordained

We will train and equip ordained persons (ruling elders, deacons, teaching elders) for service to the local church and community in areas of polity, worship, stewardship, missions, and care of disciples by expanding the LEAD Event to a two-day overnight format, featuring a special keynote speaker, workshops led by instructors from throughout the region, seminary communities and wider church, which would also include ample time for fellowship among participants and a significantly streamlined meeting of the Presbytery.

2020 Objective 3:

Building Up the Body through Church Transformation

As Presbyterians, we recognize that God is continually doing “a new thing” in us, in the church and in the world (Isaiah 43:19). The key is discerning what God is up to and joining God there. Transformation is about change that reconnects us to being what God is calling us to be and doing what God is calling us to do. Transformation calls for a listening to God, a deepening of our relationship with God, and a realigning of ourselves as persons and congregations to the purposes of God. Embracing transformation that is already underway leads to new paths being forged in what initially appeared to be unpromising terrain. There is a renewed enthusiasm in the Presbytery for growing the church through creative and innovative means.

Church Transformation Goals

We will work for spiritual and numerical growth through:

1. Annual Celebrate the Journey Reports

We recognize that transformation work is a spiritual quest that is never finished, that has an intentional beginning but no end, a continual journey. At least one Stated Meeting of Presbytery each year will highlight some of the transformational work that is occurring within the Presbytery and with partner congregations of our churches in other parts of the world; the Outreach Foundation and the Presbyterian Mission Agency will be vital sources of information and inspiration during these reporting periods.

2. Creation of a Church Transformation and Growth Strategy

We will prayerfully and carefully craft a church transformation and church growth strategy for the Presbytery that will promote the redirecting of resources to areas of the Presbytery with high potential for reaching the not-yet-Christian and unchurched populations within our bounds.

3. Healthy Congregation Seminars

We will grow healthy congregations within the Presbytery because healthy congregations, no matter the size or locale, are in position to become transformational churches – vibrant and attractive worship and mission centers. Healthy Congregation seminars will be offered periodically within the Presbytery, with certified teaching elders and ruling elders facilitating these seminars.

4. Planting New Churches and Redevelopment of Churches

We will encourage existing churches to plant new churches. We will also implement a variety of non-traditional methods for church planting, and employ radical, yet reasonable, church redevelopment options (such as church mergers, church closures, church relocations), for the realization of this strategy.

5. Prayer Covenant and Prayer Summits

We will be connected as a Presbytery through a Prayer Covenant, whereby a dedicated group of disciples in each participating church agrees to be in prayer for partner churches in ministries of transformation; in addition, we will host seasonal Prayer Summits for the purpose of seeking the vision that God has for this Presbytery in the planting of new worshiping communities and new churches, featuring a special inspirational presenter – a spiritual director, noted author on personal or congregational transformation.