

Appreciative Inquiry Questionnaires – July 15, 2017

Group Notes: “presbytery our ministry table”; voice, color, ethnicity are united with Christ; value each one that comes to the table; local art and religion dialogue for non-Christians; undercover cops; Mike Cole and ELCA bishop came; refugees in mega church?; control of financial and resources; can women govern?; “denomination” is not a bad word; Ramadan with Muslims; one church – Presbyterians and ELCA

How are you connected to the presbytery?

PYCC, Austin Seminary, Presbytery Committees

ECG Committee

Member of St. Paul Houston, member of Pby Nom Com, previous short term worker on PBY staff (2002 or 3), Acts 16:5 coordinator, Pilgrimage participant, Evangelism Committee, Transformation Consultant

Connections with other churches within the presbytery

NA

NA

NA

NA

NA

Former moderator; member of Evangelism and Church Growth committee

Minister member since 2000 AD

Through the meetings, visits, emails to the clerk, and the classes

Minister/Teaching Elder member; pastor of FPC-Bryan; member COM/Calls and Contracts

Teaching Elder, Member at Large, Moderator of St. James in LaPorte, reside in Beaumont, active in Presbyterian cluster, gap filler for little congregations

(GROUP) Various committee representations, teaching elders, PYCC

COM Professional Life

Ruling elder, chair a presbytery committee

NA

NA

Ruling elder; outreach committee; CCE Committee co chair

Clerk of session @ FPC, Bryan, file statistical reports

NA

Teaching elder who has served on several different presbytery committees

Ruling Elder at Northwoods serving on General Council

Member of St. Andrew's Houston; in the past, I've served on the Evangelism and Renewal committee (not sure what it's called now)

Ruling elder. Clerk of session

Presbytery nominating committee member, ruling elder at FPC, Conroe, former member of St. John's, Sugar Land, Kingwood, Humble, and Rosenberg

Pastor who is serving on General Council (currently)

Teaching elder serving as a transitional pastor

Ruling elder at St. Philip, and member of the Finance Committee

NA

Ruling Elder at First, Brazoria; life long member of that church; in this presbytery from the days of Brazos Presbytery – served on COE and as commissioner to GA

NA

NA

TE at St. Paul's in Needville

TE at Houston Seafarers Center, member of presbytery since 1990

Former member of personnel committee, moderator of personnel, vice moderator/moderator of ADSC; search committee for AGPs; commissioner to GA

Ruling elder at Pasadena, First; served on two presbytery committees in the past

GROUP: Elder; COM Exams; Needville; committee elder; elder; Antioch partners; preacher; PYCC; elder on COM; GC; GP search; elder; exams; retired staff; elder; elder; GA/Synod/presbytery NCD; by what we do and the churches we attend

Elder, Clear Lake

NA

NA

NA

NA

Exposure; affirming; Christ's people are working together (?); collegiality

NA

GROUP: ministers. Elders, volunteers on committees; PYCC kept families in PCUSA; connectional; Brenham; APTS- Rose; World Communion of Reformed Churches – vibrant, ecumenical, reformed; PW; PDA; received missional grants from presbytery and synod; officers enrichment (new and old); ministers (triangle symbol) helpful

GROUP: Connections remain even when people/pastors move; some of us do committee work; CPM connects us with people in the process of pursuing ordination; building relationships with people you don't see every Sunday; colleague groups; feel supported by presbytery staff

GROUP: various terms and jobs and areas of expertise

GROUP: several committee members

GROUP: 20 persons

Why presbytery (beyond what is required in the Book of Order)?

Officer enrichment

We have to have a hub for the spokes to fit into so the wheel can keep turning.

NA

Clear vision, leadership

Connectional blessing, hub of wheel

Connections are so important! Community of Faith; Evangelism – presbyter is a big help in showing us to show others our love for Christ; some learning what the presbytery is for; quality control; provide help in how to cut down on expenses

Be able to meet or reacquaint members (networking); share ideas/support/ share resources; helping us to support each other; reminding us we are bigger than just our presbytery (“we are not alone”), provides structure, helping in times of transition; agendas that are common; organize a mission for the group of churches; presbytery guides churches to move forward, nurtures; permission giving

Connecting us to one another as well as sharing resources and energy among individual churches. Also provides structure and leadership.

To have the connections between all our congregations; to build together beyond any individual congregation; sharing

It's where my friends gather to glorify God

Friendships; see others in their congregations (and them in ours); exchange of ideas and styles and theology; get out of town!; source of help in times of disaster

More knowledge of who and what we are beyond our walls

A connected regional body of congregations for support, governance, and mission

NA

Policy making; resource body; structure and leadership; planning and vision; networking

Resource center – examine curriculum, check out videos; PYCC; fully examine responsibilities – are we doing everything right?; need to report back to congregations about decision made at presbytery meetings; congregations are stronger with presbytery support; necessary committees as per Book of Order

Connections with others outside our worshipping community; reliance on one another

Sharing with other congregations; we're not alone at our own congregation; presbytery provides structure to work outside our own community; very “permission giving”

Structure, consistency, networking

Accountability for each other; partnership; sense of community' mutual vision

NA

Different perspectives, backgrounds, stories; wisdom of greater group; shared resources; assist leadership (COM) to discern, discipline, etc.; pastoring the pastors; education

Kristi – youth minister; resource center – videos and curriculum; elders 100% form to function; tell me – every elder attends a presbytery meeting

To connect and resource Presbyterians and Presbyterian congregations; to equip us as we are the body of Christ in the world

NA

In my opinion, the presbytery helps our churches stay connected and helps each of us to be open to others' views that might be different from mine or my church's; we need to ask "What are our responsibilities?"; resources, accountability and challenge

To network with other Presbyterians; support and ideas from other churches; sharing energy and resources and presbytery plays a key role; presbytery provides middle ??? for organization; leadership of large churches is gone so presbytery will lead

Quality assurance, connectionalism, resources, interaction, accountability, friendships, outreach

Connectionalism, diversity, can do more mission together, quality assurance, accountability

Be connected, more faithful, ecumenical; diversity; expand mission; quality assurance in pastors; educational materials; accountability

Interconnected with other churches; help one another in times of need, with ideas; support various ministries; more diverse population, yet people are interested in joining know what Presbyterians stand for and do

Ecumenical relationships; diverse, supportive, commonality

Shared resources, accountability; partnership; community; vision; encouragement; leadership; structure; connections; support; welcome; challenging each other

Connections; resources; perspective; committee on ministry; greater strength and wisdom; greater numbers; interaction; guiding

Community; mutual vision; resource; support; ministry; structure; challenging

Accountability; connectivity; diverse, together, we can agree to disagree

Raised Presbyterian – reformed tradition; connectional and thus ecumenical; do bigger mission programs than a single church group; more diverse than a single church; quality check in being Presbyterian with broadly based accountability

Diversity, resources; support; connections – relationships!!; conflict resolution

Accountability; partnership in ministry, resources and mission; mutual vision, encouragement

Meet other elders; resources and ideas; shared energy; process and structure; organizing forum; we are not alone

GROUP: Focus in what are our responsibilities; it assumes that we are doing all of these great; the youth ministry and conclaves; resource center; it has changed a lot; how much is it used; how many books are checked out – video and curriculum; accountability and challenging one another; we are better together; connection and hearing stories; sharing resources; encouragement in difficulties; shared wisdom; seeing and meeting new people; a rudder for the common good of the church

Coordinate work of individual churches; leverage ministry of individual churches

Maintains awareness that body of Christ involves more than our local congregation; fosters interaction within diversity

Share resources; connection and community; challenge each other in ministry

Accountability to one another; partnership; connection; part of vision; we have a vision all agree on/to; moving forward with missions; providing materials, resources, leadership; reflect the value you see in the presbytery; supports congregations with any need ; being with like-minded people from various congregations

Share resources; accountability; supporting; partnership; sense of belonging; community; vision (mutual); encouragement; moving forward; structure; leadership leaders reflect the value placed on a ministry; support congregations

Denominational; commonality/communion; need the connection

Connects us in mission; connect us to each other and share resources; accountability; belonging, community; when we stand alone we lose sight of body of Christ, joint vision and mission; mutual vision; don't have to reinvent the wheel; seeing that there are more people like us; encouragement; supports congregations when they need help in conflict and strife; share resources, joining together to serve and challenge each other

GROUP: Merge with other presbyteries?; make table bigger; only knew community in 5000 people, then bigger groups found out ??? community; connectional; collegial; pastors and elders; relational and what they teach in seminary; only mainline in town of 40; comparative salaries for PNCs; keeps churches safe from predators

GROUP: Distinct differences being at Presbytery meeting than being at a work conference because the connection is deeper; New Hope and St. John have done joint mission trips; FPC, Galveston – presbytery facilitators helped a session divided to come together post hurricane; connect, resource, and equip Presbyterians; perspective – diversity of churches face similar PNC issues and broad perspective helps us go beyond what has come before

GROUP: Accountability; security; diverse; quality control; education; reformed tradition; coordinate and leverage; not only local/congregation but a bigger pond; more faithful as broader connection; ecumenical – relating to other denominations; connection; support of various different ministries; resources

GROUP: Youth connections; resources and resource center – how much is it used?; pastoral search – examination provides checks and balances; rudder for direction; quality control; accountability; connections

GROUP: Blessing to be connected; structure is [positive and crucial for consistency in theology and practice;
question about difficult struggles due to heterogeneous and heterodox congregations

What do you value about the presbytery?

Tradition, collegiality, connection with the world, a gift to us in service, who needs our love and care

Connection, support, quality control

The connectionalism, expertise, enormous resources of people and media, openness to change

Clearing house for information and help

Their support, concern and love

Resources, encouragement in difficult times; wheel image with presbytery as the hub and congregations as the spokes = presbytery connected to spokes to keep the wheel going

Provides the rock on which we depend in transitions; understanding how to lead churches in the way they need to go even when it's not when we want (PCUSA-PCA); lovingly helping to build/merge churches; provides order in ways to do things that God leads us to do; provides support in difficult times

Forming new churches; helping in the transition when a pastor leaves; helping in mediations of disgruntled congregations and specific members

Support; venue for respectfully sharing differences

Relationships; care and concern for one another; polity and common standards' a "filter" between local congregations and PCUSA

Shared theology yet differing theology so I don't get stuck in my comfort zone; true friends made for a lifetime; identify folks to guide me (as I always like guidance, except when I don't – sounds Presbyterian)

The caring people who always have time to address our concerns or listen to us

Personal relationships related to/growing from presbytery as a connected regional body of congregations for support, governance, and mission

Structure and welcome

Networking; resource; leadership; guidance

Tuesday Connect; other sharing of information about what other churches are doing

Relationships – the opportunity to share, discuss, seek fellowship and guidance from others in leadership

NA

Access to problem solvers; staff resource; rudder for a sense of direction; provides ways for people to have impact through committees; should one of the presbytery meeting include a goal of dialogue/conversation about issues instead of "not talking" (like a dysfunctional family) which will make the presbytery more responsive; revival – meet with all Presbyterian churches for worship @ central location; start local pulpit exchange; ideas need follow through' these questions should be asked earlier so all know what's going on; have

we grieved sufficiently for our loss of churches?; should be a mechanism to guide those who have been “left behind” when churches leave

The feeling of being home and welcome-ness; resources for youth and other areas; the structure

Problem solving, support, regional coordination, “rudder”

Getting answers (Sharon Darden)’ Gracious Dismissal and Reconciliation Policy; Education (Mary Marcotte); finance (Forbes Baker); sounding board for ideas; Tuesday Connect/Connections; level of trust in one another (advocate, etc.); level of compassion and grace; doesn’t say “You are on the other side of the fence from me”; high expectations

Strengthen each other; there is help for struggling congregations; connection by Tuesday Connect; youth/missions; database; ministries as mission

Potential for connections; kindness

Connection with other Presbyterians; quality of pastoral education; accountability’ support for transitional churches; mutual respect; “orderly process” for debating; resources for small churches

As someone from a non-denomination background, I appreciate the accountability in being a larger organizational body. I also value the freedom we have to be who God’s called us to be as individual churches. Communication through Tuesday Connect and Connections gives ideas; shared wisdom; checks and balances

Guiding and nurturing of new churches; help with transitions (moving, new pastors); it is a permission giving presbytery; helping to mediate disagreements in congregations; good lay leadership; the face that we want to be together is a work of God; strong unity during disasters

Because of diversity and exchange of thoughts; orderly process to handle issues; connection with great people

Great people, quality, orderly process, resources

Ability to disagree in an orderly and graceful manner; question each other out of love; governed by rules (Book of Order); great resources; great presbytery meetings.

Personnel who can help congregations in many areas; many volunteers

The fact that we as a church have agreed that we will govern ourselves by a common set of rules that we have agreed to.

Grants and see above

Provides support and pathways for connection. Two are better than one. Compassion; gracious reconciliation; resources; graced with a good moderator; generosity of Spirit; education; level of trust; Tuesday Connect; don’t way that you are on the other side of the fence; provides opportunities

Everything they do

Diversity, friendship, connection; resources; who to call, who to relate

Orderly process on issues of disagreement and struggles for faithfulness; diversity and difference is affirmed; sharing resources

People – volunteers; common goals; opportunities to learn about the PCUSA and about presbytery activities; processes to accomplish goals

Structure to: Resources and leadership; welcome; intentional connections; support congregations in trouble or trying to grow; challenging one another to do better or more

Permission giving presbytery; help for churches

GROUP: it helps strengthen churches if we avail ourselves of it; how do we get that out to them?; communication (Tuesday Connect – the stories); doing mission within our own church

Provides an orderly process for addressing issues when churches disagree in the calling and leading of the Lord; quality assurance in education, wisdom of pastors and accountability; governed by written Book of Order with some “wobble room”

Increased availability of resources; expertise and experience of many of the staff

Structural; resources; experience of staff with TOUGH problems

Financial means (grants) to provide means to congregation for a plethora of things (practical and missionary ways)

Grants have helped missions; lack of education and communication on why or the importance of structure slowing things down

People; community; perspective; openness; connection; faith; ???; compliance??

Newton (?) does a good job providing relational connections, resources and leadership; welcome; sense of home; grant \$\$ which help congregations and individuals in mission and assistance’ imagination, compassion and empathy

GROUP: Conduit for national affairs; connectional; connection with the world – incarnation in body to serve in SE TX – what’s slipping through the cracks in our area, fuller picture of what God is up to; ministry of obscure paperwork; help churches in trouble – mortgage, hurricanes. Prayer; how can we serve and help one another?; culture has always been corporate culture, servant leadership driven ???; Book of Order baseline rules; died long ago without presbytery

GROUP: COM - -discipline, examine, pastors, welcome; Tuesday Connect; “when I has a question (as clerk of session) I couldn’t answer, I would call Mike Cole”; gracious dismissal process; PNC as a HUB (e.g. help with QuickBooks) – connects churches with resources – “I’ll find someone to help you “ = compassion; continuing education because attend small church without speaker resources; Mary Marcotte is well read and serves as a sounding board and knows resources; Sharon Darden’s knowledge; Pinecrest got legal counsel during a staff issue; leadership; moderators

GROUP: Diversity helps with value of each other even in dispute; orderly process with the same rules for everyone – Book of Order; interconnected across presbytery and synod; resources; efficient processing

GROUP: connectionalism; strengthen local congregations; weekly communication; shared programming; relationship/nurture; focus more intently on core functions; do the stuff we have to do well

GROUP: giving congregations access to problem solving and problem solvers; a resource to congregations; a rudder for direction to congregations

How does presbytery get in the way?

Some issues the congregation should prevail over presbytery

It doesn't

It doesn't – our church has often (through the pastor) blocked the light which could have been instrumental in education, awareness, broadening the world of our many (immigrant especially) members.

NA

NA

Not often, but sometimes when a church would want to call a pastor who does not follow Presbyterian principles

Harder for ministers (or members?) to get to the right place; inconsistent leadership (PNC's, ministers for ordination); rules can get in the way, focus in institutions and not mission or vision

Sometimes the rules get in the way. Is the focus on preservation of the "institution" or the "kingdom"?

There is still much that happens within presbytery work that doesn't make it to the congregations; lay people need to be more involved

?

Distributing opportunities to serve to those of us who live outside of Houston. Admit to "in crowd" bias; help streamline processes; reluctance to "young up" and embrace technology and the 21st century kingdom of God

It does not to my knowledge

By controlling; decision making when that happens

NA

Structure and rules get in the way of mission (?)

Presbytery is not just Houston congregations; Saturday presbytery meetings are onerous for pastos – alternate Tuesdays and Saturdays for presbytery meetings; presbytery meetings are too long – why worship and why communion?

Sometimes polity/rules/procedures can create obstacles. We usually find a way around them, but it can slow us down.

NA

NA

Getting change to happen takes too much work if everyone is not listening; disconnect between congregations and presbytery

NA

Too bureaucratic?; big staff wise; more inward focus than outward focus; more efficiency; more financial transparency; us/them (gatekeepers) – perception of “big brother” is unnecessary hurdle with a fear of the unknown; new blood – use some people over and over; busywork of presbytery committees with unclear purpose; committees that don’t make decisions

Meetings convenient to all; V. S. central location; cluster system; retirees being lost; Tuesday and Saturday meetings

Too bureaucratic; presbytery staff is too big; not efficient in the way it does things; the same people do everything

Presbytery tries NOT to get in the way

How do we be a presbytery that serves many churches outside of Houston (since our “big steeple churches left the PCUSA – Grace, MDPC, FPC-Houston). Many very small churches feel abandoned by presbytery. How do we help churches see their value/see value in things beyond their church? Presbytery meetings on Saturday are hard on pastors. Suggest return to alternating between weekday and a Saturday meeting. Helps churches find pastors. What would happen if we were all on our own? Some outside of Houston feel as if there is an “us” vs. “them” mentality. There is too much “tribal” language.

Rules; ineffective committees; institutional preservation vs. work of the Kingdom; no authentic ministry without @ changing hands; inconsistent leadership; too centralized; presbytery structure is too top heavy and demanding of \$ when churches need that \$, too; “us” vs. “them”

Rules, calls of pastors, protocols

Committee protocol and rules that are legalistic

Committee protocols sometimes get in the way. Legalistic with individual egos competing.

Obscure rules, lack of education in those rules (Windwood move, St. Paul move) not having up to date rules; location issue – we are spread out so hard for people to serve in Houston

Through the failure on the part of congregations to educate themselves about the rules and procedures and/or the time required sometimes to get past meeting schedules.

Too bureaucratic (too big); inwardly focused; efficiency; transparent financially; perception that it is a gatekeeper/watching; fear of unknown; committees; communication “cliques”; lack of clarity; “new”

Compromise?; structure; their limits are our limits

Process, travel and distance; not as transparent as needed; “perception of presbytery” of members gets in the way

Rules especially that become legalistic; rules that do not work with dialogue and clear communicating

Committee rules; sale of property; slows down processes with a lack of understanding of the rules; past history of issues not resolved to benefit a particular church

Don't always listen to one another or compromise; most volunteer/committee opportunities occur during the 9-5 workday which limits volunteer service

Process and rules

Too much bureaucracy, too top heavy; it is not just a Houston presbytery – it is also Cho-Yeh and M(?); cluster system or not?; HR pastors feel left behind or undervalued by presbytery, they could be a good resource for the resource bank; Saturday presbytery is hard on pastors – go back to alternating with Tuesday

Because of limited funds, fails to apply modern technologies to accomplish goals

Restrictions in the way people want to proceed; processes can be lengthy and tedious; distances can become a problem

When you/we are out of the loop; when a path forward cannot be identified from many opposing views; when the structure/process that is REQUIRED by the Book of Order is not understood.

Don't allow for opportunity for working folks to serve; perceptions not necessarily in the way; not listening to others; need to compromise; empathy, compassion needed; structure can also "challenge" a congregation (need someone to have knowledge our congregations may not); education/communication may be lacking; disconnection; getting congregations to understand they are presbytery

Not listening and compromise; not good at digital communication

Search and call needs to be improved

Committee meeting times are challenging for day jobs; sometimes struggle to listen to each other and find a common path; lack of compromise, lost sight that we are one, think as individuals, instead; when things take a while, it can seem the presbytery isn't responsive to churches; gaps in communication/explanation/education; us vs them mentality in some churches; commissioners; connecting/educating congregations; lack of understanding of presbytery structure/functions and worth of presbytery

GROUP: Used to be dictators – their way or highway; takes 2 years to find a pastor with red tape; believe in the Trinity, ordination of women, and divorce; used lots of resources that exist rather than ones called to give birth to new (NCD) in northwest Houston; holes in our map of SE TX; can't keep Jesus Christ locked in a box; want to do PNC again; do we need the office? It could be in a church; mission fields; "not less V for us - new ways to reach the zero gone"; ECC decided to serve ?? ?? EPIC ?? ?? diverse church staff, movie theaters/building which were easy for visitors – how get in? 6 different doors made it easy for visitors; free standing congregations ; Robert's Rules

GROUP: bureaucracy – levels of accountability (GA, Synod, presbytery) – couldn't it be like GA to local churches?; it's too big (staff) – more inwardly focused (What can PNC do for you?) = inefficient and above our budget; perception from congregation on that PNC is unnecessary hurdle (Big Brother/gatekeeper) – "this is our church"; nFOG – lack of understanding or discussion about and rules that PNC needs to develop; committee structure – we form committees to make decisions when then don't make decisions; failure to communicate well; cliquish/use same people as resources over and over again; "You don't sit on the other side of the fence than me" – PNC doesn't divide on perspective = high level of trust in one another

GROUP: Rules set up to conflict with ego; Book of Order protocols and restrictions; time process; legalistic rules as opposed directive; need for better education on the newest Book of Order; change perceptions of general members; logistical issues and technology advances

GROUP: too Houston centered; too centralized; taking energy away from local churches; Saturday presbytery meetings – alternate with a weekday; bureaucracy is top heavy; insider/outsider

GROUP: presbytery can communicate implicitly “the deal is done”, if presbytery is not conscious of need or importance explicitly to cultivate communal and corporate efforts

What are when we at our best?

2 failing churches, in my experience, have received great assistance

Communicating

NA

NA

Co-workers, brothers and sisters in Christ

Still loving one another despite differences

Authentic ministry; more communications and sharing of resources; mission oriented; youth development PYCC; presbytery should help us find the people to "go to" to build our gifts/resources; get groups of similar interests together to collaborate (websites, insurance concerns); lay leadership; calling people to discover gifts to serve committees

Facilitating communication; push for mission and youth opportunities

Worship, celebrate communion; when we come together to help in times of difficulty; when we work together on justice issues

A worshipping, caring community of believers

Hurricanes Rita and Ike; presbytery worship; committees that see themselves as Spirit-led teams; doing more with less

NA

When we share mission and pastoral care and affirmation

Providing resources, responding to congregations in crisis, supporting one another, being responsive

NA

When we agree to disagree and stay in positive relationship; Wednesday night dinners for homeless; planting churches

Collaborative, generous, loving

Mission and outreach; get out of our skin

NA

Responding to the need of the community; supporting one another; amazing!!!

NA

Encourages; servants to churches (smaller churches need more than bigger); @ worship; resource (vs. institutional); Presbyterians; in relationship; why not participating?; how we can help theirs; what of churches who don't want help; "haves" and "have not's"

Agree to disagree with respect

Supporting, connecting, caring and collaborating

Mission focus, support for churches in conflict; education support for youth; support for small churches

We need an electronic database of what everyone is doing so we can work together and help each other or be helped by others. We can disagree yet maintain positive relationships. We demonstrate the work, words and ways of Jesus (Tim Phillips). Creative problem solving.

Communicating with each other; missionary oriented; youth development; sharing resources (maybe insurance, website building, pool contracts, mental health referrals); relationships

In discussion and problem solving

Mission focus; working together well; presbytery helps with pastor or church in trouble; facilitate peacemaking resolutions; open discussion and problem solving

Mission focused, faithful, kind and caring, enabling, process oriented; facilitating peacemaking resolutions; open discussion; problem solving.

When we come together to help our church and to help other churches and missions.

A body that works together to spread the Word of God in our daily lives. When we work together to help those who are in conflict. Working together to address and resolve problems and issues.

Loving one another and helping spread the Word; compassionate; focus; serve the churches; encourages

Supporting one another; connecting in ministry; providing leadership; being empowered; things congregations can't do for themselves

Facilitate peacemaking; locked arm in arm in our service and mission

NA

Responding to disasters, conflicts, etc.; supporting in troubled times; mission work

The light of Christ; supporting one another by connecting in ministry; providing leadership and resources when needed; being responsive; helping with grants and loans

Missional and youth; community and lay leadership

GROUP: Agree to disagree; facilitating peacekeeping; joining together in mission and education; planting churches; pastoral care sharing

Helps very small congregations to survive; peacemaking within a congregation

Coordinating and combining resources for service and mission; open discussion and problem solving

Inviting each other to participate; connected and involved; providing leadership; responding to churches in crisis; hopeful and challenging each other

Supporting one another; responding to churches in crisis; connecting in ministry; being responsive; share in programs, activities; exists to serve congregations

Inviting people/congregations to share ideas/resources/missions/etc. to share what's going on and invite; logistics/grants/loans; hopeful

Connect ???; value; openness; risk taking; collegial; ???

Responsive; hopeful; supportive; connecting churches in ministry and resources; inviting; serving missional

GROUP: Community building; collaboration; fellowship; welcome; body of Christ invaluable; disaster assistance; risk taking unity without uniformity; collegial; education; generous; inclusive; (idea of presbytery is different when feel left behind; distance

GROUP: encouragers; PNC is here to serve the churches – what about churches who don't want to be served?; at our best when serving others; in worship (Presbytery meetings); we have a struggle between the “have's and have not's”; we are more than a resource – how do we help members recognize their connection to the PCUSA? It's not “us” vs. “them” but WE

GROUP: focus more intently on core functions; maintaining positive relationship even in disagreement; demonstrating words, work, ways of Jesus; planting churches; meetings building relationships; shared programs; pastoral care

Suggest that outside and democratic development (as per PYCC) can be a positive policy/practice to gain voice and intelligence of RE's and TE's; worship and shared ministry in areas or regions and even presbytery wide on periodic basis; openness vs. secrecy (even perceived secrecy); recognize value of wide cultivated “ownership”; corporate grief experience as important on journey to potential new health; rebuild relationships with “small wins” recognizing journeys of each one – both individuals and congregations; including making certain those PCUSA folks who were part of congregations leaving have home congregations

What do we, as a presbytery, aspire to be?

NA

Better connection, stronger relationship with congregations, pay attention to need of youth

Continue staffing for leadership for youth and young people development

The hub that makes the wheel. Better communicators of information

Loving and supportive, serve ALL ages

GROUP: giving congregations access to problem solving and problem solvers; a resource to congregations; a rudder for direction to congregations

Younger – reaching out to the youth; keep staffing for leadership; asking to be in a leadership position

Combine to share the vision (example Mental Health/Episcopal); continue to inspire us to be out in the community; strengthen Presbyterian Men; continue to be a strong presence in disasters

NA

Relational, missional, social justice, aid to those in need within the region

Continue to be a loving, caring community which stands up for those less fortunate and supports God's people when they experience trials

From this group (#5), "we" want to stay together; find old and new and inspired ways to stay and be together; together! Rising up from the ashes to seek new ways to be

Don't see how it can be improved

Caring, faithful, in the way, Spirit and mind of Jesus Christ

Important to SERVE congregations

Resource pooling; inspire; be the vision, do the vision

Model love of Christ; preach the Gospel

Faithful to the call of the Holy Spirit by nurturing congregations and pastoring pastors and encouraging them

Being more connectational; provide resources to provide structure for common needs and problems (so individual congregations don't re-re-recreate the same "X")

Move to growth focus; need to be externally focused (i.e. international school near church); presbytery to be more missional; dealing with shock and grief; need dialogue and openness; "ask and offer" matching mission with workers in churches

Provide structure, guidance and resources for local ministries to grow and thrive and to do mission individually and together

NA

Web of relationships (strength), community; congregations not 95% white; mission driven

Demonstrate the way, and words, communicate the words of Jesus, works

The body of Christ in the world; the best Presbyterians we can be; enthusiastic, creative and intelligent

Faithful Christians; more communicative; always reforming; mission and serve focused

Maybe we need less bureaucracy and be less top-heavy, but we need a balance. We want to bring life instead of being tied to structure. Being Jesus in our world. To let members of churches be involved at any level (unlike some denominations). Encourage people to be missional and go outside the church building to do ministry and outreach.

Combining and sharing resources (presbytery can build groups for insurance and web building); continue to inspire

Faithful Christian, progressive, mission focus

Best presbytery in the PCUSA; more communication; faithful Christians constantly reforming; mission focused

Good example. Theologically sound but flexible and open to change – constantly reforming; process oriented; faithful to Christ's example of love; mission focused; clear mission and purpose

Faithful Christians who want to show Jesus to those in the world through our actions. We should communicate a clear purpose for our members that will help us fulfill that mission.

A body that takes God's Word to the world

Provide structure, guidance, and resources for congregations and ministries to grow and thrive to do mission individually and together; witness to social justice to the larger community

Be Presbyterian and celebrate who we are

Provide structure, guidance and resources for local ministries, mission, individually or together

More connectivity; better communication; constantly reforming; mission focused; clear about mission and purpose

More broadly connected – mission focused; faithful; constantly reforming

More communication, especially about the Book of Order and by-laws; more connected to each other; making processes more streamlined; led by the Holy Spirit

Provide structure, guidance, and resources for local congregations and individual ministries to grow and thrive and to do mission individually and together

Missional combining resources; continue to inspire

GROUP: a younger group; flexibility in session/presbytery meetings; more faithful to the Word and always reforming; we aspire to connect even when we disagree; to be a resource to each other

Constantly reforming; mission focused; clarity of purpose

More communicative, connected; mission focused; personable, hospitable

Not just a connector/administrator - need to lead in mission/public education/social justice in ways that individual congregations can not

Provide structure, resources and guidance for local ministries to grow and thrive together

Resource center; provide structure, guidance to local ministries; be a voice of being Presbyterian to the greater community

Be Christ in the world – a light; provide structure, guidance and resource for local ministries to grow and thrive and to do mission individually and together; provide opportunities for mutual and community enrichment and learning; lead in mission and social justice in ways local congregations cannot

GROUPS: included with the last answer

GROUP: TO be a community with total transparency who can hold the tension of differing perspectives (not to have a litmus test) that can disagree with love; compassionate, caring and loving; strength by connection; cultivate relationships (like a web) with all our congregations even the ones who feel like they don't "need" us, but we may need "them" as all are called to serve one another; if the presbytery looks outward, then churches can look outward into their neighborhoods; aspire to be a "WE" not "us" vs. "them"; proud to be Presbyterian; educate congregations on the "we" of the presbytery; communication and education (what's in it for me? How do we answer this question well?)

GROUP: faithful Christians constantly reforming to the Word; better communication of rules and process; broader connections; mission focused to the world; clearer mission and purpose; more diversity

GROUP: Set people free by equipping them; better connected to missions that other congregations are doing; a data bank; giving life; embody Word of Christ; is worship required? Could it be later in the day?; less time on business, more time in relationships; mission in our own bounds; resource bank of people, especially retired; weekly feature to endorse resources in Tuesday Connect; meetings be three hours – 1 worship, 1 lecture, 1 everything else; intimacy and conversation @ meetings

GROUP: move from stop-loss to positive growth; God is at work in areas we do not routinely go and we only behold and share in those fields of blessing where we risk and step and reach; become more missional; become more in contact with other congregations for partnership and as a clearing house of ideas/opportunities; "ask" and "offer" about help, assistance, gifts in addition to "celebrations and concerns"; open microphone at presbytery meetings; also electronically

How can we be connected – whether as an entire presbytery or connected across some natural subset, such as geographic region?

Conference calls, is there a social media presence?

Exchange choirs, pastors, get together with other churches

Suggest a mentoring relationship from a church with a strength together with a church that needs a stimulus to develop that strength

NA

Coming together, working together, being, sharing and supportive of each other

Financial support needed for presbytery, need to step up, presbytery needs to reach out to young people – have a Tuesday Connect for youth and give them the responsibility; ask and need to be flexible in terms of time

Presbytery needs to help churches to know about opportunities around that they can combine; video conferencing; more meetings and involvement this way so that smaller/further out churches can participate in presbytery; growing our social media knowledge (youth); doing more conversations like this; clusters to build communities among smaller groups, consolidate missions, outreach

Teleconferencing, using facetime, Zoom, facebook; utilizing technology, also cluster meetings of churches

NA

Meaningful presbytery meetings; promote and support vibrant churches; active and meaningful committee work with diverse representation; social and other media efforts to maintain an exciting and meaningful atmosphere of community around common tenets of our faith in Christ; pray together; continue to partner with congregations in a supportive way

Embrace technological possibilities (there is a theme here!); helping clusters or other connections to play and pray and practice together; encourage “like interest” groups with reports or “greetings” from these groups

NA

NA

NA

More video conferencing; more social media; clusters

How can we share mission goals?; clusters; video conferences

I think physical proximity – face to face relationship – remains important. But I also think technology can make it easier and more productive to be connected.

Clusters

NA

We need more of a social media and traditional media presence

Small wins, ask and offer

Use technology in better way (committee meetings via Zoom); presbytery offices moves every so often; need a central office @ all; satellite offices; face to face relations with congregations; outlying areas feel not invited, or that there is an inner clique

Electronically – Face Time; phone calls, email, text messages; reignite clusters

Communication; presbytery office not in one location – maybe it moves?

Regional groups; connect on passion and interest

One good things about presbytery meetings is the in person meetings, with personal ineration rather than doing meetings online by Skype or other means. Do with, not do for. Do what peole ask for, not what we things they need. Help them see what God’s already doing in and through them. Take resources to smaller churches, instead of asking them to come to the presbytery offices.

Video conferencing instead of traveling. Maybe an online group for clerks of session. Services available through presbytery should be advertised. Social media. Push clusters for entire church. Encourage Presbyterian Men (like Presbyterian Women).

High technology

By interests, and by technology

Technology. Not all meetings in Houston; regional meetings; outreach by interest, passion like yoga, quilting, Bible study, book clubs, task groups without a long term commitment.

We are in an era of hyper-communication and should take advantage of these opportunities

Make better use of technology to facilitate working as committees/bodies for the common good

Electronic communication; clusters; invitation; social media presence

Technology; satellite; why do they need a physical office?

Especially small churches with youth; coordinate programs between churches – generate new ones, look for existing areas; propose major programs of interest to several congregations; remember with millennials that both spouses work; elderly

Modern technology; revive cluster

More high tech in connecting; always in dialogue

Use of technology for meetings; interest groups; YOUTH

Stronger social media presence; offer opportunities to other congregations to share in ministry using presbytery as a conduit; more education about presbytery’ not everyone signed up for Tuesday Connect or knows how

Zoom visual conferencing (40 minute free); social media; cluster PW; Men's group; clusters

GROUP: NA

Technology application especially for communication; more 24/7 similar to huge segment of population

Helping people with common interests/passions to find ways to come together

Get more congregations involved – need committee meetings at a TIME and PLACE where people with jobs can participate; participation in geographic clusters

Provide opportunities for any/all people in an area to get intellectual, information, music; bring youth groups together; identify (invite folks) common interests and invite all of Presbyterian churches in area; review activities from the past which worked and put a new spin; invite other churches from presbytery to participate in activities together small groups, grief group); improve social media for presbytery – be connected for sharing, education, live stream meetings, etc.; get together to bring studies, lectures, etc. that one church can't afford to do

Need better digital/social connections; better clusters

Affirm each other and our passion as call on our being as a community of faith and explore inclusiveness

Passing on presbytery connect to congregation members; officer training in clusters; inviting each other in mission; share our gifts, stories, resources with presbytery so they can disseminate that information to others; timing of committees; more electronic meetings; regional youth groups; joint mission activity; stop seeing each other as competition; big events or activities that can better be done together or hosted by presbytery that church can't do alone; use technology to help busy people

GROUP: regional clusters, some working; TE "another meeting", lay people are not interested; travel is an issue; skype/facetime/conference calls have not really been tried; human touch is better; have presbytery meeting to activate clusters and regions; travel to presbytery is a distance

GROUP: Connect by counties (subsets)? Cluster structure is a weakness; better communication; how do we connect with churches in the "hinterlands" who only see the presbytery as the gatekeepers and disciplinarians and money grabbers?; Houston "clique" who serve on committees; tell small church stories

GROUP: facilitating peacekeeping and resolution of conflict; joining congregations for mission and education; open discussion and problem solving; locking arms in service and mission

GROUP: Regional meetings; better use of technology; finding passion in small groups; mission; leadership; youth involvement; more "WE" and less "THEY"

GROUP: Go there; re-start clusters; building

GROUP: drawing on strengths of majority ethnic congregations and drawing on strengths of different groups such as youth and youth leadership; inviting story narratives exemplifying openness; understanding each other with a clear sense that our challenges have unique characteristics with no easy or presumptive situational contexts – may not be "apples to apples"

How do we structure and organize to do our work? What alternative approaches might be more effective going forward than continuing to do things the same way we have for the last 10 or 15 years”

Intentionally inclusive

There won't be a presbytery (won't exist) in 10 or 15 years if things don't change

NA

NA

NA

Jeff Smith – how to attract – need to reach out to the youth – mid week services, worship not as important as mission, contemporary; communication; concern about that there won't be a presbytery in 10-15 years if things don't change – need to pulpitize (?) with mission newsletter

Clusters – meetings like presbytery; technology like Zoom, Facetime, emails; delegate; smaller, more focused committees, shorter terms on committee; clusters not only geographical but also talents, population, location

Formation of men's group within presbyter; shared missional opportunities at lay level without staff commitment from presbytery; movement toward more cluster orientation

STREAMLINE! Presbytery is too complex to make sense of who does what in structure

We need to agree what we want to accomplish in a practical way to fulfill the great commandment. Organizations should follow and facilitate accomplishing the specific goals for southeast Texas.

Explore long distance learning, tele conferencing; bring in the younger folks in ways they feel comfortable (example – 30s and below raise kids, stay up late, use technology) by getting out of their way and helping them to aspire to lead and support them as this is their time to stoke the fires; real understanding of financial issues

NA

NA

NA

More collaboration; resource pooling

Clusters require lots of energy, but do present a model for decentralization; find a way for electronic data-sharing; how do we create value so churches want to be in clusters?; use HRs and data providers; congregations with smaller numbers could join together to teach confirmands; facilitator model, not CEO model, for General Presbytery who can be a spiritual guide and mentor; presbytery as connector – not as prime mover; more leadership training; use presbytery as clearing house of information and ideas; presbytery must go out to congregation, not vice versa

Smaller committees, use of electronic communications to facilitate meetings – eliminating the difficulty of going to meetings (and \$\$)

NA

NA

Improve communication tools to move forward with the times and generational shifts

Give lay folks an understanding of value of denomination/presbytery

New and different sources of funding

Be more efficient

Willingness to see the possibilities and be creative; more efficient structure with not as many not Book of Order committees; clusters encourage more bureaucracy and slows things down; a better organized presbytery is better able to meet the needs of congregations

Use volunteers; consolidate some committees; spread staff around the churches; technology' task organized rather than committees

Is the presbytery meeting organized poorly? How can we be more efficient? how do we get our commissioners to take information back to their congregations? (these are from Vicky Jones) What should we look for in our new General Presbyter? (from Jim Gill) We need someone to implement our vision who is a spiritual leader and mentor. Our group agreed we don't know where we are as a presbytery, but we need to keep our individual congregations autonomous.

Clusters with regular meetings. Zoom. Collaboration to cover staff decreases invite experts to share ideas for development and churches send people to listen; lay people to cover staff responsibilities; General Council communication

Good leadership

Reduce number of committees, increase voluntarism

Not all meetings in Houston. Increase volunteerism vs. paid staff; fewer committees; streamline processes within committees; close presbytery office and move staff to churches/homes; combine confirmations across churches.

Increase volunteerism; fewer committees; finances will play a role; increase the use of task groups as opposed to committees to accomplish goals; get youth involved

NA

Improved communication, geographic subcommittees, collaboration cluster – need good facilitation; rethink space – do we need the presbytery offices; “sing a new song”; authentic

Virtual presbytery?; across cultures and religions; face to face; support; sell the building

Not “another meeting”; activity?; geographic area ideas

Task forces; working together in different areas (confirmands, etc.)

NA

Smaller staff (breaks my heart); even more focus on “resourcing” vs. “doing it for us”; being able to reach out to non-Houston congregations is needed but I don’t know how

Better communications; working collaboratively with churches to do mission, to have special programs or speakers; local cluster can have officer training, mission together, study together, youth group connections

Not more committees!

GROUP: NA

Web based – more application

Increase volunteerism; more use of task forces rather than standing committees; encourage increase in youth participation

Get out of the building on Lovett; get on to social media; organize some committees around clusters (or sub-committees); have activities (not committees) for clusters

Technology; committees/subs set up geographically which would feed back to committees; activities to draw people together; collaboration needed – presbytery find out what community has going and determine how we can support and assist in those missions/activities; work together to create together to meet needs

Sing a new song; try change, take risks; we have to help communities

Less dependence on the ??? and ??? to be made available for all people and churches

Improved communication tools such as social media and a user friendly website; technology; more electronic meetings; identify and invite good cluster facilitators; presbytery facilitate conversations for congregations to face fears, makes radical choices (triangle symbol); geographic based subcommittees, like COM; better communication with in clusters; rethink space, using \$\$ on space – use of presbytery office; exegeting communities to educate local churches and ministries

GROUP: GP with large travel allowance to be in pulpit every Sunday, what’s working across nation?; resurgence in classical liturgy – world in disarray, ?? stability; intentionally inclusive; family can be 6 different things – not just “Leave It to Beaver”; long history of doing something meaningful; refugee churches have difficulty filling out grant applications, can’t access bureaucracy; organizations flaws with in mission, budget – make some; who is not part of group to be a part of exchange – local for global

GROUP: how could we use technology to better connect? “virtual presbytery” using Zoom, Skype, etc.; maybe the presbytery office is not in one, set location and moves between churches in regions or has satellite offices; face to face connection with congregations to problem solve together; sell the building and strip down the committee structure

GROUP: combine resources with other churches; small groups that have passion; increase volunteerism; rotate communities and committees; fewer committees – use task forces; streamline; more use of technology

GROUP: general presbyter who is prayerful and theological, more than a bureaucrat; how do you hire not knowing the role?; use technology to promote leadership and training; streamline

GROUP: NA

What are you willing to do to support making our presbytery more effective?

I can serve on a committee with presbytery again. Did E&R with Wendy Bailey a few years ago.

Educate my session and the congregation about presbytery's value. Put newsletter on the bulletin board about presbytery. Make a church announcement.

NA

NA

Attend opportunities, use the resources, be involved

Need to report back to congregation what it means to be connected; maybe put in our newsletter; better communication; attend opportunities, use the resources, don't need to be an elder

More volunteers instead of assigning everything to paid staff

NA

NA

Participate on committees with clear responsibility and mission which helps to fulfill the Presbytery of New Covenant's changes or new vision

Second Reformation in a way; be God thinkers; How to welcome – better be welcomed by young thinkers' I'm pondering; STAY PRESBYTERIAN in PNCL; contribute to secure the necessary technology and learn to work it; one time a year, have an overnight presbytery meeting with local hosting, to play, pray and practice.

NA

NA

Keep educating people about presbytery

Be a resource; volunteer to help

I am willing to volunteer for any activity

What do you need/want me to do?

NA

NA

My response will be the same one that I gave my church when asked the same questions ... anything and everything in my power. I will continue to offer physical and mental help to my church and to the presbytery.

NA

What is needed?; Barnabas; "just say yes"

NA

Anything that's needed

Serve on General Council

Empower churches to reach out into their communities. Help churches be the church, catch the vision to be Christ on their local level. Presbytery's job is to set people free to be Jesus where they already are to be missional. We need to encourage, model and connect.

Try to be more educated.

Work on other presbytery committees

Continue to serve on General Council

Serve on a committee or task group; transitional ministry

I volunteer on Finance.

Continuing to serve to spread the Word through the Seafarers Ministry for now.

NA

Just ask; connecting congregation; communication; educate; work heard; affirm; say "yes" but it's ok to say "no"; offer suggestions

NA

Spread information to congregation as it is available; working on a better relationship; help where help is needed

NA

Work on job restructuring/job descriptions; restructuring presbytery; whatever you think I can do

Praying!; continuing to serve locally; willing to serve at presbytery but I work during the day; willing to change as needed

NA

GROUP: NA

Participate in internet based tasks

I might even be willing to enter the information age

Pray; serve on committee at some point

Participate as able with work on strengthening our ministries and congregations; do work in my church to improve understanding of presbytery; mutual forbearance; need a new song; need to come up with ways to aid those wanting or seeking spiritual direction; who are we in Christ? Must be genuine in love of Jesus Christ

NA

Volunteer our time and ??? being a member of the presbytery

GROUP: NA

GROUP: allow smaller amount of people to create impact; social media presence like Facebook; one big goal – courage; get out to the churches and interact with preachers; churches do not exist without ??; tech co – automation, deluxe; losing jobs to robots; bible literacy; know the person; get those that don't get from AA?; local – read it, process book together with elders but not with other pastors ? – read some things; how much change are we willing to accept? Sell property and go to movie theater

GROUP: What do you want me to do?; say “yes” or “no” prayerfully; connect my fellow congregants to PNC's work; communicate; pray; work hard; affirm more than criticize, offer suggestions; we can become the example for the world, especially is we can graciously hold tension on disagreement

GROUP: Pray

GROUP: Pray; please ask; facebook

GROUP: NA

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