

Vision and Strategy Committee Report--May 18, 2024

Actions

Since the last presbytery meeting, the Vision and Strategy Committee has been focusing on 3 items.

1. Discussion with the presbytery moderator concerning how to narrow and re-focus the work of the committee in a way that will better serve the presbytery's needs. The committee is in unanimous agreement with the proposed changes coming before the May 18, 2024 meeting. These will allow us to focus on resourcing congregations, making connections between churches, increasing communication and developing relationships.
2. Holding our monthly meetings in-person at different churches around the presbytery, beginning with an informal discussion with the pastor and leaders of the host church to hear their vision for the presbytery and how the committee might work to accomplish the items in #1 above.
3. Beginning plans for a fall event to include educational workshops based on needs and desires that we have heard from pastors and leaders in our meetings. We are in initial discussion with the Social Justice committee to also provide a possible plenary session at this event on what it means to be a Matthew 25 presbytery. In addition, we are exploring the possibility of bringing in a guest speaker from the Restorative Actions Committee for another event in the spring of 2025. *See below for info on Restorative Actions.

Workgroups

The larger committee has formed several workgroups to function as subcommittees of the whole. They include other people within the presbytery as well as committee members.

a. Worship Workgroup

The worship workgroup continues to plan for presbytery worship with the goal of creating meaningful, educational and spiritually fulfilling worship that honors God. The year-long theme centers on resilience. Members of the worship workgroup are: Neil Rotach, (King Ferry) Mary Heather Harrington, (King Ferry) Karen Wolff, (Isaiah's Table) Lynn Jacques, (E. Syracuse) and Deb Thomas, (member at large).

b. Communication workgroup

The communication workgroup checks in with the presbytery communicator before the committee meets to (a) let us know of any needs or ways in which we can be of support and (b) learn of the progress being made on updating the website. Members of the communication workgroup are Karen Wolff (Isaiah's Table) and Victor Jenkins (Baldwinsville).

c. Fellowship Workgroup

The fellowship workgroup is focused on making connections between congregations and planning fellowship events. The fellowship workgroup is organized by Rita Hooper (Fulton). A "Presbytery Day at Syracuse Mets" outing at NBT stadium is currently being planned for Friday, June 21.

d. Events Planning Workgroup

The events planning workgroup develops educational and training presbytery-wide programs in response to congregational needs. (See #3 above for upcoming plans.) Members of the events planning workgroup are Ashley Gouger (Liverpool), Lynn Jacques (E. Syracuse), Rita Hooper (Fulton) and Deb Thomas (member at large) with help from other members of the larger committee as needed. This committee is still in development of its membership and welcomes others to join us.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Debra L. Thomas, chairperson

* Further information about Restorative Actions from their website. (restorativeactions.org) *Restorative Actions is a grass roots voluntary initiative for churches, individuals, mid-councils, and agencies of the Presbyterian Church (USA) as well as other ecumenical partners and interested organizations, to take a leadership stance in opposition to racism and racial privilege. Its premise is that it would be right and fair for predominantly white churches and affiliated organizations to*

return benefits that have accrued to them directly or indirectly from systemic inequities. The act of gathering and turning back resources that would otherwise benefit others could be redressive to complicity, restorative to conscience, and could represent a good faith step toward broader reconciliation.