

Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse stated meeting, May 6, 2023
Report on Synod Mission and Ministries Commission
Elder Linda Russell, Commissioner

The Synod of the Northeast's Mission and Ministries Commission held a stated meeting on April 28-29, 2023, at the First Presbyterian Church of Albany. Commissioners were particularly pleased to be able to meet in person after several years of Zoom meetings due to Covid. I am assigned to the Mission Working Group.

Highlights of the Commission's work follow.

Mission Working Group:

Innovation Grants

The MWG received 16 Innovation Grant applications, requesting a total of \$285,000. The budget for 2023 was \$95,000. Two applications were denied. (One of these was encouraged to reapply. The other was denied because the recipients of the project were not within the bounds of the Synod.) Thirteen grants were awarded ranging from \$2500 to \$14,000 for a total of \$95,000. Details of these Innovation Grant proposals are summarized and compiled in a separate document which will be available through the Presbytery Matters e-news. They are worth checking out as they may spark an idea for your ministries.

Campus Ministry Grants

The Protestant Campus Ministry at Albany and the UKirk Campus Ministry at the College of New Jersey were each awarded a grant of \$2,500, the maximum for a campus ministry grant.

Youth Leadership Development

The "Korean-American College Student Joint Vision Formation" application from Eastern Korean American Presbytery was awarded a grant of \$7500 (the maximum for this category).

Other

- The following motion was presented to the full commission and voted approved:
Motion: The Mission Working Group will consider grant applications for programs and initiatives that will take place within the bounds of the Synod of the Northeast. Requests for a possible partnership outside of the Synod bounds is different and will not come through the Mission Working Group.
- Competition for grants is increasing in the face of steady or decreasing funds. The MWG will hold a special meeting to review criteria and parameters on how grants are decided and awarded.

New Jersey Missional Communities

As reported previously, the seven presbyteries in New Jersey have been reconfigured into four new presbyteries. Nancy Tindall, Gap Treasurer for the Synod and co-chair of the NJ Missional Communities Administrative Commission, gave a comprehensive report on the process that the presbyteries followed, highlighting both the successes and the challenges encountered along the way. She stressed that they were forming spiritual communities rather than legal/administrative organizations. She particularly noted lessons learned and offered suggestions for best practices for others in our denomination who may be considering something similar, such as the critical need to identify experts to provide counsel in areas such as legal matters, human resources, real estate, etc.; the importance of establishing good communications and lines of authority; and the necessity for building an environment of trust.

Transitional Synod Leader:

Rev. Dr. SanDawna Gaulman Ashley shared a brief, helpful, reflection on "Confidentiality vs. Secrecy." She reported that the evaluation process for the Synod is moving forward and progressing well. The Discernment Team has been formed, and trained, and is beginning a series of Listening Sessions with various groups including mid-council leaders, caucus groups, grantees, presbytery moderators, mission/ecumenical partners, and the coaching/mediation networks. Following dinner, Discernment Team members divided the Commissioners into four small groups and conducted one of their first Listening Sessions, which elicited good conversations and discussion about the impact Synod can have on presbyteries and churches. Rev. Ashley stressed the importance of supporting presbyteries by building bridges through a ministry of "presence."

Report of the Stated Clerk

Rev. Nancy Talbot highlighted the following:

- With the adoption of new software, the application process for all grants is greatly improved. Both applicants and Mission Working Group members will now be working almost exclusively on-line.
- Due to the many changes coming to the Book of Order, training is now required for all PJC's so that they understand and are operating under the new rules. Training includes all members of presbytery PJC's, Stated Clerks, and committees/commissions on Ministry. There will be in-person training in New Jersey. Other offerings will be scheduled on Zoom. However, due to legal advice, Zoom trainings will not be recorded.
- Presbyteries are strongly advised/encouraged to elect an alternate commissioner to the Synod Mission and Ministries Commission.

Other:

The next Mission and Ministries Commission meeting is scheduled for September 15-16, 2023. The meeting will be held at Honor's Haven in Ellenville, NY and will be preceded by a one-day retreat on September 14.

Persons with questions about the work and ministry of the Synod are welcome to contact Linda Russell at lsruss@aol.com or 315-730-6930.

/lsr

Mission Working Group Report and Recommendations

April 2023

Innovation Grant

Innovation criteria:

- Is truly creative, innovative, and entrepreneurial.
- Mobilizes the Presbyterian community to engage with its neighbors and the needs of the world in a way that will bring a fresh experience of Christ's love to both the local and Presbyterian communities.
- Exhibits an experimental edge that will provide a source of learning both for those living it out and the larger Synod community.

INV-23-01-04 Year 1

New York City

Outside/In Words Writing Program

Church of Gethsemane - Project Connect

Recommend: \$14,000

Request: \$20,000

Project Connect seeks to expand its ministry through a writing program for men and women who are incarcerated, and for those who have returned home. The program, called Outside/InWords, builds on our existing ministry to this community, creating a means for participants to process the trauma associated with incarceration. Our ministry meets spiritual needs through the work of the Church and Project Connect, but we have identified that people who are denied access to basics such as housing and employment, have needs that can be met by accessing creativity through the arts.

INV-23-02-04 Year 1

Long Island

Open Door Exchange

Setauket Presbyterian Church

Recommend: \$7,500

Request: \$20,000

Open Door Exchange (ODE) was founded in 2015 by Setauket Presbyterian Church as the first furniture bank on Long Island. ODE connects donated furniture to individuals and families in need at no cost. We believe that furniture is necessary to building a safe and comfortable home for all. We accept donated furnishings from our local community and display them in our warehouse. Our guests are offered the dignity of selecting their own furnishings. No one who visits us is ever required to prove their level of need.

INV-23-03-04 Year 1

New York City

Affordable Housing/Community Center

First Presbyterian Church of Forest Hills

Recommend: Deny

Encourage to Reapply

Our building has a ministry - we need to find out what it is! This grant request is to hire architects and consultants to see how our property can best be used for affordable housing and/or a community center. NYC is in a crisis for affordable housing. The Mayor has gone so far as to ask churches to see if they can help. We are asking for funds to do this. Our church building is ill-prepared to meet the needs of our community. It is

old and poorly designed for community events, and is not ADA compliant. We want to hire an architect and consulting firm to make recommendations to us.

INV-23-04-04 Year 1
Coastlands

[UKirk TCNJ Campus Ministry](#)

MOVED to Campus Ministry

Princeton Presbyterians of the Westminster Foundation

INV-23-05-04 Year 1
Albany

[New Beginnings Christian Academy](#)

Recommend: Deny

Mayfield/Central Presbyterian Church

Not within geographical bounds

Our vision is to continue supporting and expanding New Beginnings Christian Academy (NBCA) providing free Christian education to the poorest of the poor children and providing them with two meals a day. NBCA started with the vision of the Rev. Victor Doe, our student from Liberia, sharing his call to return home to build this school. Our church caught his vision and began walking with him from conception to reality. This ministry will provide funds to help continue construction, to obtain a copy machine, solar panels, water filtration, and procure food, while proclaiming God's presence.

INV-23-06-04 Year 1 [Westminster Community Hub for Mental Health Support](#) **Recommend: \$14,000**

Southern New England

Westminster Presbyterian Church

Request: \$20,000

Westminster Presbyterian Church is creating a safe, secure, supportive space for individuals and organizations by providing a mental health resource hub for the West Hartford community. The role of the Westminster community hub will be to identify gaps that exist in mental health awareness, education, training, and access to services and work to fill those gaps by providing support, education, training, volunteers, and access to resources to strengthen and amplify the work of the many governmental and nonprofit organizations in our community.

INV-23-07-04 Year 1
New York City

[Common Ground Worship Collective](#)

Recommend: \$8,000

Common Ground

Request: \$16,000

Common Ground, a new worshipping community launched in 2019, is piloting a project centered on leadership development & equitable community practices. This project can best be summarized as an intersectional, community-driven nonprofit teaching radical belonging through decentralization & anti-supremacy. We accomplish this through programming - which includes small groups, community events, trainings, retreats and other experience-based learning modules that teach diversity, equity, and inclusion rooted in the Jesus Way. With this project, we hope to create a more just and generous world.

INV-23-08-04 Year 1
Northeast New Jersey

The SHARE Alliance
First Presbyterian Church of Springfield

Recommend: \$14,000
Request: \$20,000

The S.H.A.R.E. Alliance – (Sowing Hope And Reaping Equity) is a consortium of congregations and other interested parties in Springfield, NJ, dedicated to addressing food justice in our county. We believe that no one should involuntarily go to sleep hungry or wonder where their next meal would come from. The SHARE Alliance seeks to approach the issue with a three-prong tactic: Create availability of healthier food, via collection and donations. Coordinate their distribution, via a community pantry and kitchen. Promote their right use, via cross-cultural cooking classes.

INV-23-09-04 Year 2
Albany

Sustaining Congregations through Female Clergy Retention
Albany Presbytery and Antioch University

Recommend: \$3,750
Request: \$17,000
Year 1 Funding: \$7,500

This community research project seeks to build pathways of advocacy for pastors, congregations and church governing structures to collectively support female clergy retention within the PC(USA). Through a 2-year needs assessment, this initiative identifies contributing factors to the rise in female clergy attrition during early and mid-career stages. The vision for this project is to promote congregational vitality by supporting long-term vocations for female clergy as they seek to faithfully serve their local congregations.

INV-23-10-04 Year 2
Eastern Korean

The Lighthouse Counseling Network, Inc.
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Recommend: \$6,750
Request: \$20,000
Year 1 Funding: \$13,500

The Lighthouse Counseling Network (LCN) has a mission to provide accessible Christian counseling services to the greater Northern New Jersey region, led by a network of local presbyterian churches and supported by other denomination affiliated churches.

INV-23-11-04 Year 2
Hudson River

Adopt A Prison
Interfaith Prison Partnership

Recommend: \$4,500
Request: \$15,000
Year 1 Funding: \$9,000

Adopt A Prison encourages community support for incarcerated people. We envision a world in which our neighbors in prison receive opportunities for rehabilitation, healing, and spiritual development so they can return successfully to civilian life. When the community participates in this work, the welfare of the incarcerated improves, as well as the welfare of the community itself. Our unique, innovative approach brings together elected officials, prison superintendents, NYS correctional officials, and local non-profits to share information and expertise for the benefit of all.

INV-23-12-04 Year 2	<u>Hybrid Micro Outreach to Help Small Churches Grow</u>	Recommend: \$2,500
Western New York	John Fong Consulting Agency	Request: \$20,000
		Year 1 Funding: \$5,000

One of my goals for the first year of my Innovation grant was to identify ways to be more impactful. What I learned was that the hybrid relational outreach program can help any size church grow, but I had to help churches establish hybrid authenticity before I could really help them grow. The next thing I learned was that presbytery partnership made the process more effective because churches felt leadership support and initiative. The vision for my second year Innovation grant is to incorporate establishing hybrid church authenticity, church growth practices and presbytery partnerships.

INV-23-13-04 Year 2	<u>First Presbyterian Church of Chili Food Cupboard</u>	Recommend: \$2,500
Genesee Valley	First Presbyterian Church of Chili	Request: \$10,000
		Year 1 Funding: \$4,000

The vision for our Cupboard is built around Matthew 25:35 "I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me drink." The First Presbyterian Church of Chili became aware two years ago of families in our geographical area lacking in nutritional needs. We then set about establishing a Food Cupboard in conjunction with Foodlink of Rochester to end hunger by providing emergency food, hope, and a bridge to self-sufficiency. When we opened our doors in June of 2021 we had between 3 and 4 families taking advantage of our services. This past March, we served 87 households and fed 301 people.

INV-23-14-04 Year 2	<u>Community Outreach Center</u>	Recommend: \$5,000
Utica	First Presbyterian Church of Oneida	Request: \$12,000
		Year 1 Funding: \$10,000

The second phase of our Community Center Outreach Project will be youth centered. This grant request is to obtain funds to rehabilitate a full gymnasium and purchase athletic equipment for area youth to have a safe place to go where connections are made and love is exhibited. Youth are currently restricted to our game room and lounge. The gym floor is unsafe. Having a gym floor will allow us to reach out to 3 organizations we are already partnering with - Oneida City Police, Madison County Youth Bureau, and Bridges - this targeting specific teens who could truly benefit by this.

INV-23-15-04 Year 2	<u>Bending the Moral Arc Courageous Conversation</u>	Recommend: \$7,500
Coastlands	Nassau and Witherspoon Presbyterian Churches	Request: \$15,000
		Year 1 Funding: \$15,000

Imagine a fellowship of small group participants transformed through courageous conversations on race and justice. At annual retreats, group leaders would report actions taken that are bending the moral arc toward justice in their paired churches, in their presbytery, in their cities, and within the larger community. Imagine a growing national fellowship of transformed people acting as agents of change in their communities. This is the vision for this work.

INV-23-16-04 Year 1

Genesee Valley

Digital Ministry Program

Third Presbyterian Church of Rochester

Recommend: \$5,000

Request: \$20,000

Our Digital Ministry program will engage the participants and visitors who occasionally—or exclusively—interact with Third Church online, and will build community in online spaces. The pandemic forced a shift to virtual or hybrid gatherings and communications. Now there are people who regularly interact with us, but never in person. There are also people who do not interact, only passively watching worship or scrolling social media, that we hope to identify and connect with more fully. This innovative ministry will meet people where they are—even if “where” is not a physical place.

Campus Ministry

Campus Ministry criteria:

- **Engage students in deep and meaningful encounters with Christian spirituality,**
- **Develop students as leaders on campus, in their community, and/or in their congregation**
- **Partner with local Presbyterian congregations or other Presbyterian entities**

CM-23-01-04

Albany

Protestant Campus Ministry

University at Albany

Recommendation: \$2,500

The Protestant Campus Ministry at UAlbany is an ecumenical ministry and supported by local congregations. We have over 20 congregational partners including 3 Presbyterian Congregations who work with us to support the ministry financially, via program support and active board members. Delmar Presbyterian Church, Hamilton Union Presbyterian Church and New Covenant Presbyterian Church. Board members include Rev. Katy Stenta and Rev. Kyle Delhagen.

CM-23-02-04

Coastlands

UKirk TCNJ Campus Ministry

Princeton Presbyterians of the Westminster Foundation
Moved to Campus Ministry

Recommendation: \$2,500

Princeton Presbyterians of the Westminster Foundation is a vibrant PC(USA) campus ministry of sixty students in Princeton who are passionate about God’s call to “do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly.” In Fall 2023, the Westminster Foundation and Ewing Covenant Presbyterian Church will launch a new campus ministry at The College of New Jersey. We will gather students for joyful worship and fellowship, address food insecurity on campus with shared meals, and celebrate God’s radical welcome through intergenerational connections between congregational and student leaders.

Motion: To approve the grants recommended for funding at the levels suggested.

Motion: To transfer \$7,500 from the 2023 Higher Education budget line item to fund an additional request to the Youth and Young Adult Leadership Development Fund.

Youth Leadership Development

Youth Leadership Development Grant Criteria:

- **Develop youth as leaders in their community and/or in their congregation**
- **Collaborate across congregations/presbyteries/organizations**

YLD-23-01-04 Year 1 Korean-American College Student Joint Vision Formation Recommend: \$7,500
Eastern Korean American Eastern Korean American Presbytery Request: \$8,000

The Korean American Christian College Student Joint Vision Formation event was designed for Korean students from Korea and the States to grow in spiritual maturity and broaden their Perspective and thereafter create an opportunity for continued fellowship. To fulfill this purpose, participants from both countries will have fellowship and serve in the mission together.

The Mission Working Group wishes the commission to clarify for whom we are able to recommend grant funding. We had an application yesterday that was essentially a pass through for a program in Liberia. We believe the Mission Working Group is intended to recommend applications from churches and programs that propose to operate within the bounds of the Synod of the Northeast. With this understand we propose the following motion:

Motion: The Mission Working Group will consider grant applications for programs and initiatives that will take place within the bounds of the Synod of the Northeast. Requests for a possible partnership outside of the Synod bounds is different and will not come through the Mission Working Group.

Grant Progress Reports

We encourage Commissioners to read these progress reports that share how Synod grants are funding good things throughout the bounds of the Synod.

INV-22-01-04	<u>Starting Out Strong</u> Protestant Campus Ministry at Albany	Year 1 Progress Report
INV-22-02-04	<u>Closing the Digital Divide in Christian Education</u> First Presbyterian Church of Irvington	Year 1 Progress Report
INV-22-11-04	<u>MATE Tiny House Pilot Project</u> Mission at the Eastward (MATE)	Year 2 Progress Report

INV-22-12-04

First 1,000 Days

Presbyterian Church in Geneva

Year 2 Progress Report

INV-21-05-05

Hope's Table

Wharton United Community Church

Year 2 Progress Report