

Introduction of Rob Stewart to Riverside Presbytery

I am excited to accept the position of Coordinator of the Vital Congregations Initiative. Having served as a pastor of three unique Presbyterian USA churches as well as on committees in three diverse presbyteries, I am looking forward to work with leaders in Riverside Presbytery.

As the VCI Coordinator, I will be working with a Team of Facilitators: Sandy Tice, Becky Bane and Kevin Bowers (who have had specific training). We will be supporting presbytery leaders using (and adapting) the VCI process developed by the PCUSA.

For the next three years, I will be available to assist congregations in assessing ministries, creating priorities, setting realistic goals and defining strategies for achieving them. Together, we will be meeting our Presbytery's goals of supporting and nurturing pastors and leaders in our sessions and congregations. Together we will be able to do the strategic work of 1) remembering and celebrating our accomplishments and legacy; 2) realistically assessing our present assets, capabilities and resources; and, 3) discerning the Spirit's movement among us and setting a focus and direction for the future. This work is the work of prayer. With hearts and minds open to God, following the Risen Christ, led by the Spirit, we will accomplish the "New Thing" that God is doing in our midst.

I am thrilled to announce that 12 Pastors and Pastoral Leaders have committed to participating in the VCI Process in 2020. We will form 2 cohorts that will meet monthly beginning in January (with a get-acquainted gathering in December for those who are able). The main focus of the cohorts is to build relationships as we pray together.

I am also excited to report that at least **two additional Prayer Cohorts for Pastoral Leaders** will be formed. Ten additional leaders have indicated that they want to be part of a group that simply prays with their colleagues in ministry. This is an excellent opportunity to support one another as we build relationships in our presbytery. These cohorts will meet throughout 2020, with the option of continuing the following year.

These cohorts comprise nearly half the pastors in called positions within Riverside Presbytery. This is indeed a significant moment for our presbytery!

Anyone who has questions about the VCI process or being part of prayer cohort, please contact me at VCI@riversidepresbytery.com

I look forward to serving God through the Presbytery of Riverside in this exciting new opportunity to strengthen our ministries grounded in Christ's call. May the Spirit of the Living God enrich us through this transformative initiative.

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