

THE MISSION FOCUS OF WHITEWATER VALLEY PRESBYTERY
TELLING THE STORY

Matthew 28: 19-20 *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

Matthew 22:36-40 *“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?”³⁷ He said to him, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”*

WHAT

Founded on the command of Jesus that we go into the world and make disciples, and grounded in the mission of Whitewater Valley Presbytery that God calls us in covenant relationship with the Holy Spirit to connect, resource, and empower disciples in the name of Christ, the Mission and Growth team has established goals for the funding of Mission initiatives.

The first of those goals is to encourage congregations to reach out beyond their own walls in ways that will help to spread the message of Christ. We want to do this by providing resources for planning and startup and by empowering the projects to eventually become self-sustaining. As Christians, we need to be looking at ways that will best serve others, whether they are new ways or ways that have been time-tested.

The second goal is that we want to strongly encourage churches to work together in these efforts; therefore, projects that are brought to us by a member congregation and are developed by two or more churches or a church and another organization working together, whether both be PCUSA or not, will be given priority.

The third goal is to evaluate how currently funded organizations fit into Presbytery’s new goals and to move the funding of organizations that we

have sponsored in an ongoing manner toward self-sufficiency of funding as appropriate within the new framework. We do not want to do this in a way that will leave them drastically under-funded in any particular year, and so, this decrease in funding will be done gradually and resources for training in fund-raising will be encouraged.

It is possible that the Presbytery camps used by our congregations may continue to be funded because they directly serve the churches of the Presbytery.

WHERE

It is important that we see the mission of our Presbytery with the widest of lenses. As we are experiencing a time of enormous change in our society – and societies around the world, these efforts will develop as the changes are felt and we settle into new ways of being and communicating. Our efforts in spreading the word of Christ to the world need to be flexible and ongoing, reaching the metaphorical Jerusalem (where we are now), Judea (the wider region in which we live), and the ends of the earth. We, as individuals or small groups, cannot all do all of those things, so there is room for mission efforts both near and far.

As we consider where our Mission efforts will be carried out and where they will make a difference, it is also important to acknowledge that our efforts are life-changing as much to “us” as they are to “them” (those whom we serve.) When we give and teach and serve, we become more like our Lord, learning to love those who are different from us and learning to receive their gratitude and service to us with grace and love. Without this attitude of humility toward those that we serve, we will remain arrogant, thinking that in some way “we” are better than “them”. We must remain “we” with all of humanity in order to truly spread the message of grace to our world.

WHO

Who then are the PARTICIPANTS? Everyone who follows the greatest two commandments is a participant in mission. Some seek to serve in their own

towns and cities; they go to Jerusalem. Some seek to serve within a larger region around them; they go to Judea. Still others seek opportunities in far away communities; the ends of the earth. Whether we do mission work as individuals or committees or congregations or Presbyteries, we all can benefit and participate in the work of mission. As we move forward in mission we will expand mission by connecting individual congregations through existing mission communities to expand our individual congregations. Together we can *inspire, equip and connect* the Presbytery community to serve Christ in the world through new and existing communities of faith, hope, love and witness. Together we can answer God's call in covenant relationship with the Holy Spirit to *connect, resource* and *empower* us as disciples to participate in mission work.

We can provide leadership through connecting with those who have experienced mission work successfully and then link others using their expertise and knowledge to empower new partners in growing mission work. Working together will inspire and assist new partners to expand giving to others and receiving back from those benefiting from their new mission. Mission can be helping neighbors close to you as well as helping others in a different community, state or country. By brainstorming with new groups new visions can come about and new opportunities develop to grow mission work that was small or nonexistent before. When we are able to answer God's call to love our neighbor as ourselves, we grow in our faith and experience love in a new way as we serve others and seek to learn from those we serve

WHEN

Our move toward the new directions for our Missions has already begun! We want to make this difficult transition as smooth as possible yet efficient in time and effort. We will have a transition plan in place and working by the end of 2016.

We are moving away from our old directions now. It is in motion! It is not our intent to "blind side" our current mission partners; rather we want to have them move with us in this new journey and direction.

HOW

Here we come to the “nitty-gritty” of the plan. As stated above, we have already begun with changes in the budget. The 2016 budget has slightly decreased the funding for our ongoing partners and includes seed money for new initiatives. The work group will meet with each of our current partners during 2016 in order to develop a plan. We will also be meeting with congregations during that year.

That new distribution will allow us to offer “Dream the Dream” planning grants to churches that would like to propose a mission project. It will allow for planning retreats, travel, and communication between churches that are working together to develop a mission project. It is expected that the planning process will, upon identifying need, feasibility, and a specific plan, result in the request for further resources from Presbytery in the following year.

As we move further into the future, the task force and then the Coordinating Council will review applications for funds for new mission projects. These applications will include the project description, a budget, and a plan that will move the new project toward self-sufficiency within a specified time period.

Let us continue to pray together that we will all be open to the Holy Spirit as God leads us to first love God and also to love our neighbors as ourselves and to carry out the Great Commission to the glory of our Lord.