

The Synod of the Trinity

**Regional Connection for
Partnership and Networking**

April 21-26, 2016

Turning the Church Around: One Congregation at a Time

SUMMARY

PROPOSAL RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Can this be done from teams within presbyteries or will it need to be teams from outside presbyteries? Or can they be mixed? Consultant model not as productive.

Can we move beyond planning? Timeline?

How will the “synod” know a team is needed? Will Presbytery inform them or how will connection be made? (We need to define Synod.)

What is the glue to help congregations/presbyteries follow through? How do we deal with resistance to change, fear, anger?

If there is no “cost” (real or otherwise) to participate, will you get people’s attention? If it costs something people will invest in it. (Response: There will be church costs but intent is not to make it unaffordable.)

What does the church hope to accomplish through this? (What is accomplished for the church in this?)

Biblical understanding of hope is a trust for what is going to happen.

How does this conversation relate to 1001 Worshipping Communities? Does it?

How do names get to the right people? Get it to leadership? How does the process work to connect congregations with resources, leaders, coaches, etc.?

How are we going to work with congregations so that they do more than plan, but actually engage and experiment and test new ways? How do we give them opportunities to think differently about themselves? How can we “Be the strategic body of Christ?”

Questions about the terminology – Language will be important and must be carefully chosen. (Quality teams,

local facilitators, etc., people with interest and skill who are trained.) How do we use good language to set this up so that it doesn't sound too linear but more like a smorgasbord?

Will this process apply to or be usable by congregations that do not have installed leadership? (In West Virginia, half of the churches in West Virginia don't have installed leadership.)

What sort of leadership development needs to take place in order to fully implement a proposal like this?

Congregational Disciplines — What are those regular disciplines that growing congregations do well, and how can we evaluate congregations on that basis?

How can this motivate those who want church to be simple? Might camps that are doing well be growth hubs?

How do we define community?

Is there a place for those congregations who need/choose hospice care?

How do we help congregations with fear: do we want to change, do we really want someone coming from... some other presbytery?

Do people want to change or simply have someone (pastor) to maintain things?

TOPICS TO INCLUDE

Start Up:

How do we begin discussion of this at the church level, how does this all begin?

How do we identify that a church is in an opportune time to change? What ways can be used to introduce/engage urgency? A lot of it is about preparation.

How many different on-ramps can be created to begin to engage the process?

How do we create a sense of urgency in our presbyteries re: this proposal and their participation in its execution? How do we ensure that our "on-ramp" model is conducive to the full participation of all involved? (Online, retreats, webinars; "flipping" the classroom)

Area seems to be missing on this list **is talk about story**. How to help churches talk about their story. Not just internal but leading to evangelism. How do we help people get their story out? **Reframing the narrative**

Mission study or say, define their **core values** – why are we here? What are we doing? What do **"we"** uniquely do differently? Ask ourselves **"What does community lose if not here?"** Then why are we here? Start with these questions.

Ask the neighborhood what they know, think about the church.

Strengths, weaknesses, assets, opportunities

Need introductory module/s. Possibly host "Roll out retreat show – what could be" (perhaps a congregation that has already been through change discernment process)

Need a "readiness," track or experience: how do congregations choose to be involved in the change process. Perhaps there might be several different ways to do this (spiritual)

Spirituality

New Mission: mission purpose that you are searching for

Helping those within the congregation to develop into more faithful disciples; go deeper in faith (not just focused on bringing people in)

Possible Resource: "Sizing Up a Congregation" — Alban Institute

Hospitality, assimilation of new people: It's different for every size congregation Spirituality throughout, possible "track"

Is there a place for a congregational "track" that all participate in as well as the work that a Session or team is doing with sporadic congregational participation? Might there be a preaching cycle? Studies? Take home pieces?

Grief: that comes with change Assimilation of new members

Learn how to discern what to hold on to, what to pitch, Standish: Bless and Add

Many kinds of training (sacraments, CE, these teams, Stephen Ministries, etc.) What becomes a part of this menu?

How is this change process rooted in spirituality? Is there a separate piece that focusses on that? Is it woven into each piece? Is there an ongoing congregational piece of work while different aspects of this are happening?

"Healthy congregations" component Spiritual energy

Discipleship: Our love for Jesus ought to be a movement not a structure. Wells up from within

NEEDED FOR PROCESS

Organizational list needed that shows those available and their gifts and skill sets

Discovery of those needed to assist with what kind of training. Might they train others to use gift?

May need a coach to walk with churches. Many consultation processes end just when new beginnings are occurring.

Teams need to be integrated with lots of crossover to be able to cover all areas needed. Could be both linear and smorgasbord...

Discernment work/buy-in must get beyond the session or special task group -- must regularly include the congregation. Needs to be able to include/adapted to the small church

Needs to use covenantal language for the accountability piece. Congregations need to commit. How will the commitment be kept?

Must work with COM and whatever appropriate bodies in the presbyteries! Process needs to be, in part, indigenous to the congregation.

Include the "community" for evaluation and discernment.

Congregations need to hear: "It's not your fault other than not keeping up."

HUGE NEED OF PROCESS: Empowering the laity: They are the church and the leaders of the future church. Laity needs to be among the leaders.

Begin to form engagement teams of those who are already involved in church change work. Empowerment training.

Process needs to have great flexibility and aspect of experimentation, "Free ranging." Some things are absolute? Some things are flexible?

Process flows from identified strengths and grow ministry from these. (Possible use of appreciate inquiry)

Congregations need both trained teams and a person who walks with us from A to Z to ask questions, to gently nudge, be a friend; angels from presbytery – someone who does not know congregations inside out and who is trained and assesses and asks questions. (multiple expressions of this concern).

The role of the congregation coach is different from the role of a trained assessor. Coaches listen and do not judge. Coaches need to catch intentionally and build accountability.

Person who walks with Congregation needs to be a catalyst and able to foster those in congregations or teams who are catalysts.

Need to train ALL of those in coordinating roles of process. As plans unfold need to check signals back with constituents

Needs to be clear that the process is rooted in spirituality and that must be included all along the way. (multiple expressions of this concern)

There needs to be some "grand planning," probably before General Assembly, that takes place before this process gets launched. Among other things, we need to find those folks with the gifts we need. Accountability needs to be hashed out as well; so does the spirituality piece. (multiple expressions of the planning concern)

Need to Mix and Match people on teams, some who know that church and area, some who don't

One option: Teams working with a church should be multifaceted, not different teams for each topic. **We must make decisions at the beginning about this.**

Those connecting with congregations need to be careful not to impose: "this is what you need to do."

OBSERVATIONS

Strength in numbers. Ecumenical movement fine when churches are healthy, harder when things get desperate -- competition heats up and churches less willing to work together. Synod can bring churches and Presbyteries together.

Synod may be able to help churches recognize strengths. Balcony view.

Processes can strengthen connectional nature of church. Often we focus on vertical through structure but Synod could encourage horizontal connection among churches and Presbyteries

Western PA has ethos of wanting to return to 1950. More transient population now.

Often folks concerned about turning back from the plow to the past -- similar to any other organizations rather than kingdom building. Makes the church its own end rather than what it should be. The church isn't a voluntary agency.

Congregations have building dependence -- always thinking "what will we do to save our buildings?" Focus is often on recruiting giving units rather than believers, preservation vs. making disciples. Churches want young people because they seek preservation.

Congregations are shell-shocked, asking what are we going to do? Churches and people are scared -- answers might be simple but not easy.

The church is currently experiencing a "dark night of the soul." This is an "in-between" time that will be written about by future church historians.

For younger leaders in the church "looking back" is not encouraging; it's a discouragement, because they can't look back far enough to see the "glory days" that older leaders remember. For them, looking forward to something better is the focus.

Reduction of emotional intelligence and relational competence in our society; just as prevalent in the church as it is in society. We need to be intentional as a church to be therapeutic in helping people to increase people's emotional intelligence.

In those places (like Western PA) where people “stick around,” they aren’t “looking for friends,” because they are ensconced in their social situations. This affects the way we live as disciples in the world.

It is important that our work be about reclaiming the narrative; reframing hope. Mission partners at a recent gathering EXPECT us to live in hope.

Church needs to celebrate the church of past but “get on plow” for new ways.

Despair of smaller churches; doors open instead of mission. Reach out and then reach in. Moving toward more racial diversity in our faith.

Change to laity rules is coming.

Critical mass of leadership is being lost/changed at this time.

This is a real possibility in place of expensive consultants with one-size-fits-all solutions

The difference between having an experience and growing through an experience is huge. **

We spend too much time focusing on weakness rather than opportunity. Overdone strengths also need to be reexamined.

We rarely talk about more than forming plans and executing them.

Working from “within” the Synod, instead of hiring outside consultants, may lend credence to those who come to help — they are “one of us” and they “know our needs” better than outsiders would. They would also be available longer term, in order to help with execution of plans (which is where many consultants don’t follow through)

Partnering between churches for doing this work and sharing gifts can lead to partnerships in future (multiple comments

| RESOURCES FOR CHANGE AND FUTURE | Financial and Material | Spiritual | History |
|---|--|--|--|
| Human Critical Mass of people Common interests which might include age Coming alongside Education (high) Neighborhood PDA volunteer Colleges and seminaries Immigrant population | Tech Facilities and Community use Special offerings Social networks One Great Hour Pentecost Generous givers | Celebrating success Permission giving Jesus Mission projects Location of camp Cloud of witness Open door attitude Never locked door Young adult volunteer Visioning Creativity Overcoming | Acute awareness of mistakes Age (wisdom), experience Innovation Welcome Music Connecting Flexibility Multi-cultural |

APPENDIX

(Notes taken at regional meetings)

THURSDAY, APRIL 21 – at Allentown Presbyterian Church

Note-Take #1

- a. Intro to who we are, context
 - i. One thing to say out loud is what it means to be church.
 - ii. One thing that comes to mind when doing church today.
- b. There's a growing consensus to need to do something different.
 - i. Phenomenal stories of transformation daily
- c. Concerns
 - i. Split off echoing the church (Bethlehem)
 - ii. Reclaiming the narrative; reframing hope
 - iii. Church needs to celebrate the church of past but "get on plow" for new ways
- d. Church in discernment – keeping church
 - i. Identity in Christ and Christ first
 - ii. Signs of hope, possibility, future – experience hopelessness for some that grieve. The what next looks different.
 - iii. A lot to getting heads/hands around as we look toward Christ.
 - iv. Church only culpable source in renewing this terrifying world.
 - v. Self-identify church. Connect the dots to move forward.
 - vi. Despair of smaller churches; doors open instead of mission. Reach out and then reach in.
 - vii. Mission partners last night expect us to live in hope
- e. Church body (home)
 - i. Hoping to lead and help church become missional (Asian)
 - ii. Lost pastor after two years.
 - iii. Trust and obey
 - iv. We will be fine
 - v. Reading our history of here (Presbyterian) leadership patterns, stories/struggles; feels current. History is helpful.
 - vi. Leaders respond – how they.
 - vii. Looking back seemed scary.
 - viii. Pain in those struggling tension, fears to look ahead, use scripture
 - ix. What is needed is right here – transitions.
 - x. Church is a gift, blessings, focus on Jesus
- f. Sue Wonderland – the Synod Transitional Exec.
 - i. Consultants paid for by Synod – in the past.
 - ii. To look at church in new ways
 - iii. Ended due to finances.

- iv. Some congregations turned around; some didn't
- v. Continue to work with congregations to help them move forward in new ways.
- vi. How to do so and connect with God.
- vii. How to work together to help gather resources – support, vision, work, etc.
- viii. To see where God is calling us.
- ix. Regional leaders
- g. In 1985, one pastor remarked:
 - i. New Church Development with two nearby churches.
 - ii. In 2013, purchased building
 - iii. Financial base died.
 - iv. Thriving but differently with half-time
 - v. "Reformation every 15 years."
 - vi. What do you think it was like for John Calvin (200 years ago) in Geneva to create a different church in a different context? Imagine us today with that context.
 - vii. Asset-based
- h. What are human resources in our context?
 - i. Financial resources (property finance)
 - ii. Spiritual resources
 - iii. Historical resources – pieces to hold on to
- i. Real things – imagining/creating church; creating anew
 - i. Better usage of our facilities, neighborhood and communities.
 - ii. Building – shelters, natural disasters; think creatively, resources
 - iii. Spread out or locked in generationally – common interests and goals. Will help give you a target to grow and reach out. Accept the church as it is.
 - iv. Go out into the community as well as open folks in
 - v. Identify the vision of the church
 - vi. Spiritual – doors always open space – risk but witness safe haven to the community with lights on.
- j. Identify strengths
 - i. Parking; faithful, older people; go forward. Maybe it is called to serve the older folks.
 - ii. Coordinate with other programs of churches (programs, Bible School, combine flexible spiritual services)
 - iii. Emphasize greeters, welcomers
 - iv. Affirm outside ministries. We are all ministers, elevate sense of calling to others. May not grow the numbers but doing God's work.
 - v. Encourage all that they are ministers.
- k. Moving toward more racial diversity in our faith
- l. Reformation now like Calvin
 - i. Different but so
 - ii. How to bridge the gap to those that know and those that don't know about the present reformation?
 - iii. Needs to come from this group

- iv. Look at the questions – what can church, presbyteries, synods do to help each other?
- v. Gathering teams of researchers from different regions to help work with congregations
- vi. Feeling of different presbyteries (Past was – new beginnings)
- vii. Need of every church to do a mission study – knowing demographics can help the church (preschoolers) adjust to survive
- viii. What can we do to help each other?
- m. Task – Consider how to help churches flourish in their ministries. What comes to mind? What might we do to lead churches into the 21st century?
 - i. What is flourishing?
 - 1. Flourishing is maintaining, expansion of numbers or a combo.
 - ii. Mission study or say, define their core values – why here? What are we doing? What do “we” uniquely do differently? Ask ourselves “What does community lose if not here?” Then why are we here? Start with these questions.
 - iii. Then use areas of evaluation and go back and ask again about the community. This may help us determine who you need as your leader.
 - iv. Study ourselves, our core values. Ask neighborhood what they know, think about your church.
- n. What seeds of past – to core questions
 - i. Transitional study – past presbytery and/or Synod paid
 - ii. Some light studies – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities. What actions to take, little follow-through.
- o. Common Roadblocks of New Beginning, Acts
 - i. After mission study (some did it, some did not), then what? Lack of leadership to move forward. What can be done to provide those to the next steps?
- p. How to motivate those that want church to be simple.
 - i. What would simple church look like?
 - ii. Suggestion: Two churches together to dialog and discuss what works and does not. Do mission study together (of the two).
 - iii. Marry, baptize, bury
 - iv. Is church too much of a corporate model?
 - v. Youth draw: participating, not joining
 - vi. Safe place
 - vii. Ask questions
 - viii. Church is doing something outside the church – their mission
- q. Mega church growth
 - i. Little expectations
 - ii. members can “hide” the rest of the week
 - iii. low demand responsibility
 - iv. direct parking while wearing T-shirt
 - v. instant connection with others similar and can still have little responsibility
 - vi. Greeters outside -- parking lot, outside door, inside door
 - vii. Person never feels lost

- viii. Assets – plenty of money, others can then do the other work, or not?
- ix. Time and talents
- r. Mission Insite Programs
 - i. Synod provides money. Check with presbyteries.
 - ii. Synod will look for different ways of funding.
 - iii. Demographics help the church identify themselves and build their program around that (attending seminars, then give seminars)
 - iv. Initial components
 - 1. Readiness – spiritual component
 - 2. Grief – owning grief of change and look forward to the new
 - 3. New mission – mission purpose you’re searching for
- s. Leadership
 - i. Change to laity rules is coming
 - ii. Critical mass of leadership is being lost/changed
- t. **Note-taker #2**
 - i. Need a “readiness,” track or experience: how do congregations choose to be involved in the change process. Perhaps there might be several different ways to do this
 - ii. How is this change process rooted in spirituality? Is there a separate piece that focusses on that? Is it woven into each piece? Is there an ongoing congregational piece of work while different aspects of this are happening?
 - iii. Discernment work/buy-in must get beyond the Session or special task group- must regularly include the congregation.
 - iv. Needs to be able to include the small church
 - v. Use covenantal language for the accountability piece. Congregations need to commit.
 - vi. How will the commitment be kept?
- vii. RESOURCES for Change and future
 - 1. Human
 - B. Critical Mass of people
 - C. Common interests which might include age
 - D. Coming alongside
 - E. Education (high)
 - F. Neighborhood
 - G. PDA volunteer
 - H. Colleges and seminaries
 - I. Immigrant population
 - 2. Financial and Material
 - B. Tech
 - C. Facilities and Community use
 - D. Special offerings
 - E. Social networks

- F. One Great Hour
 - G. Pentecost
 - H. Generous givers
3. Spiritual
- B. Celebrating success
 - C. Permission giving
 - D. Jesus
 - E. Mission projects
 - F. Location of camp
 - G. Cloud of witness
 - H. Open door attitude
 - I. Never locked door
 - J. Young adult volunteer
 - K. Visioning
 - L. Creativity
 - M. Overcoming
4. History
- B. Acute awareness of mistakes
 - C. Age (wisdom), experience
 - D. Innovation
 - E. Welcome
 - F. Music
 - G. Connecting
 - H. Flexibility
 - I. Multi-cultural

FRIDAY, APRIL 22 – at Krislund Camp and Conference Center

Challenges: Aging population. Money. Ministry from different cultural time. Culture of disengagement. Spiritual, not religious. People not joining churches (or other organizations) any more. Different ideas of community: Facebook, virtual communities? Buildings – cost of upkeep. Secular culture. Fees for services. Volunteering is like “designated giving.” Sense of entitlement.

What gives us hope: Krislund, in a growth period. Synods: Living Waters for the World, Solar Under the Sun. VBS: expanding to follow-up summer camps. Working with individuals within a congregation. Capacity of people to give when there is a need. Young people looking for meaning. Spiritual longing. Our faith.

The proposal, for “what’s next?” In place of expensive consultants with one-size-fits-all solutions. Tapping internal expertise makes more sense. Perhaps retirees? Shared leadership among Presbyterians. A local person will know the area better. Nurturing person to walk WITH the church. To work with Presbyteries’ Committees on Ministry? Or Presbyteries’ Councils?

Hoped-For Outcomes: Helping churches break out of old models. Getting to know neighbors. Reconnecting with communities. Ability to have new eyes. Way to have resources “ready to go.” Have an introductory

module? Congregations must be included.

Empowering the laity for ministry. For example, Eucharistic ministers to do communion, baptisms. Stephen Ministries programs have worked well; people respond to being empowered!

Quality teams and local facilitators. People already involved in communities. With a “healthy congregations” component? Churches with certain gifts could partner with other churches.

Needs framework: People need training. Could be a partnership with Synod, Presbytery, and churches. How do we define community?

This proposal requires the laity. Strengths must be identified. One person should be a coach to a particular church. Not necessarily an expert, but someone with some training who can ask the questions. The role of the coach is different from the role of a trained assessor. Coaches listen and do not judge. They can be catalysts.

What things are absolute? What things are flexible?

The difference between having an experience and growing through an experience.

Newsprint

Challenges

Aging population

Money

“Culture of disengagement” = unfamiliar to church folks/spiritual, not religious

“Why don’t they come and be like us?”

Bowling alone

“New feeling” of community/communicating

Buildings = an issue (asset, not albatross)

Secular/not cool to talk about faith

Fees for services at same time

Volunteer “short term”

Designated giving

If free, we don’t value, others feel entitled

Hopes

Krislund!!! = in growth mode

“benchmark opportunities” to look at

Synod of Living Waters – VBS

“Living Waters for the World”

Synod of the Sun

“Solar under the sun”

Another camp as mission hub

Camp for kids who went

Pastors offering skills to greater “their own”

Working with individuals and families as they “get it”

The joys (plus struggles) of a small church

The capacity of people to give when there is a compelling reason to give (meat canning, ect.)

Young people turning to Christ, looking for meaningful experiences

The Holy Spirit still at work

When people die, folks still want a pastor
People who are curious about Christianity
Our faith!

What makes sense?

Internal, volunteer, expertise (especially with retirees)
“Mix and match people from presbyteries on teams
Need for data
Local people know the area, the culture, the church(es)
A nudge to walk with help
Bridge from data to “what do we do?”
Training local folks and sending
Ability to have fresh eyes
This can be a way to have resources when they ask/are ready

Needs framework

Northumberland, Huntingdon, Beaver-Butler, Synod talking
As we train people to go out, we have to be careful that we don’t impose “this is what you need

to do.”

How do you define “community?”

If member’s primary community is not geographic, how does this relate to the church?

Free ranging

This proposal requires the laity.

This proposal has to identify their strengths and grow ministry from these.

Congregations need both trained teams and a person who walks with us from A to Z to ask questions, to gently nudge, be a friend; angels from presbytery – someone who does not know congregations inside out and who is trained and assesses and asks questions.

Being a catalyst or fostering those in congregations or teams who are catalysts.

Add: train people for coordinating role. Before any “roll out” take back to groups such as today’s group.

What add?

Work with COM! (and councils)

“Roll out retreat show – what could be”

Indigenize in the congregation

Include the community

“It’s not your fault other than not keeping up”

Empowering the laity: They are the church (Grady’s question)

What do we hold/pitch?

Many kinds of training (sacraments, CE, these teams, Stephen Ministries, etc.)

Engagement teams of those who are already involved

Empowerment training

A “Healthy Congregations” component (be better as the people who already are the church)

Partnering between churches

MONDAY, APRIL 25 – at Crestfield Camp and Conference Center

- a. PROPOSAL: The proposal is to take advantage of talent already existing throughout the Synod. To form and train Quality Teams and Local Facilitators who will assist individual churches as they evaluate critical issues, form a plan, organize for success and execute a reasonable strategy.

- b. When I visit “everyday” congregations, spiritual energy feels very low; distracted by concerns like money, etc. I wonder, “do we have eyes to see?”
- c. Sometimes as Christians we say one thing, but do another. In my congregation, I’m seeing the consequence of that. For years, we did *this*, but now we’re in a different reality; but I don’t have enough “dry wood” to get a fire going.
- d. Our love for Jesus ought to be a *movement*, rather than a *structure*. It dwells within you and wells up from the heart.
- e. The Missional Church movement and modern mysticism has something in common. The church is currently experiencing a “dark night of the soul.” This is an “in-between” time that will be written about by future church historians.
- f. For younger leaders in the church “looking back” is not encouraging; it’s a discouragement, because they can’t look back far enough to see the “glory days” that older leaders remember. For them, looking *forward* to something better is the focus.
- g. We need to remember that *two generations* of people are not in our churches.
- h. The mainline churches have been seduced into following the culture (business patterns, corporate leadership patterns, etc.).
- i. We no longer *lead*, we now follow.
- j. There is a loss of vision; this is what makes it difficult to *lead*. You can’t lead if you don’t know the way.
- k. Drastic reduction of emotional intelligence and relational competence in our society; it’s just as prevalent in the church as it is in society. We need to be intentional as a church to be therapeutic in helping people to increase people’s emotional intelligence.
- l. In those places (like Western PA) where people “stick around,” they aren’t “looking for friends,” because they are ensconced in their social situations. This affects the way we live as disciples in the world.

WHAT GIVES YOU HOPE?

- m. Jesus has not left the church (some of the churches may have left Jesus, but Jesus has not left the church).
- n. Our hope is in Christ. It’s not merely “wishful thinking.”
- o. The gates of hell will *not* prevail against Christ’s church.
- p. The church is *not* going to look like it did before; we must continue to look *forward* to what the church is becoming.
- q. “I have hope because we are in a time when people are honestly seeking their spiritual selves. This offers so many opportunities to the church to speak about Christ!” The harvest is ready!
- r. There are resources being developed that offer people opportunities to grow in emotional intelligence and relational competence, which leads to greater spiritual intimacy and Christian fellowship.

EVALUATING THE PROPOSAL

- s. Working from “within” the Synod, instead of hiring outside consultants, may lend credence to those who come to help — they are “one of us” and they “know our needs” better than outsiders would. They would also be available longer term, in order to help with *execution* of plans (which is where many consultants don’t follow through).
- t. When peers come for conversation, they are able to say things to congregations that their pastors can’t (even though they may want to).

Suggested area of evaluation:

Congregational Disciplines — what are those regular disciplines that growing congregations do well; and how can we evaluate congregations on that basis?

- u. “Sizing Up a Congregation” — Alban Institute
- v. *About how congregations of various sizes assimilate new members.* And speaks to the notion that one size does *not* fit all, and cookie-cutter answers are not helpful when “consulting” with churches in varying contexts.
- w. We need to welcome people in such a way that they feel *valued* — and not just for the job they may be willing to do!
- x. Our Synod has resources that want to be used; we also have some that want to be developed. What sort of leadership development needs to take place in order to fully implement a proposal like this?
- y. Rather than constantly strive to bring people in, let’s do something with the people we have: helping them to develop into more faithful disciples!
- z. How can churches reinvent themselves in order to achieve “critical mass?” And in order to answer that question, congregations must be *willing* to change, and also willing to trust that the Synod is not trying to impose its will.

DO WE BELIEVE THAT THIS PROPOSAL IS WORTH THE SYNOD’S TIME AND ENERGY: *Yes.*

- aa. A little bit of fear: do we really want someone coming from... some other presbytery?
- bb. This proposal is lacking a *spiritual (theological? Biblical?) basis*. While this is not a “policy”—it is a *process*—it will be *far* more effective if it is rooted in spirituality.
- cc. How do we create a sense of urgency in our presbyteries re: this proposal and their participation in its execution? How do we ensure that our “on-ramp” model is conducive to the full participation of all involved? (Online, retreats, webinars; “flipping” the classroom)
- dd. There needs to be some “grand planning,” probably before General Assembly, that takes place before this process gets launched. Among other things, we need to find those folks with the gifts we need. *Accountability needs to be hashed out as well; so does the spirituality piece.*

TUESDAY, APRIL 26 – at Morgantown Presbyterian Church

- a. Began with executive forum, found that substantial time, energy and investment was involved in each consultancy. Why not combine these as a Synod?
- b. What might that look like?
- c. Two questions to consider -- what needs overcome? What are the hopes?
 - i. What are the concerns or challenges that need overcome?

- ii. Lots of redevelopment work needed yet faced with aging church population, financial resources drying up
- iii. Not the same needs in every place, and past redevelopment attempts haven't always been successful.
- iv. Congregations are shell-shocked, asking what are we going to do? Churches and people are scared -- answers might be simple but not easy
- v. We have allowed the perception of Christians to be defined by others -- judgement style, there is a struggle to define ourselves as "not them." Struggle to demonstrate that it is not about who screams the loudest but about compassion
- vi. Congregations have building dependence -- always thinking "what will we do to save our buildings?" Focus is often on recruiting giving units rather than believers preservation vs. making disciples. Churches want young people because they seek preservation.
- vii. Half of the churches in West Virginia don't have installed leadership. Is redevelopment an approach that lends itself to such churches in need of leadership -- Will this apply to them?
- viii. Often folks concerned about turning back from the plow to the past - similar to any other organizations rather than kingdom building. Makes the church its own end rather than what it should be. The church isn't a voluntary agency.
- ix. Church not reaching young people on their level. Instilling faith not just the future of a congregation.
- x. Western PA has ethos of wanting to return to 1950. More transient population now. Are we doomed? Challenge of focusing on trying to do ministry.
- xi. Reality that people of all ages need Christ -- not just young people. Going out to the people and learning to identify opportunities for ministry to the demographic the church is planted in.
- xii. Perhaps the next two generations will struggle with this question: Do people want to change or simply have someone (pastor) to maintain things? Honoring ministry but called to go into the world. What about needs for dying churches?
- xiii. Is there intentional hospice care for dying churches -- is it a legitimate or intentional ministry?

d. HOPES

- i. Synod may be able to help churches recognize strengths. Balcony view.
- ii. Processes can strengthen connectional nature of church. Often we focus on vertical through structure but Synod could encourage horizontal connection among churches and Presbyteries
- iii. Vision originated with God and God has been there. Missional
- iv. Strength in numbers. Ecumenical movement fine when churches are healthy harder when things get desperate- competition heats up and churches less willing to work together. Synod can bring churches and Presbyteries together.
- v. There are Amazing gifts waiting to be coordinated. So much potential in our region. Hope because we are connected.

- e. Reactions to PROPOSAL
 - i. We spend too much time focusing on weakness rather than opportunity. Overdone strengths also need to be reexamined.
 - ii. What are our unique roles within Synod that can help us do this? A quick read sounds as if this proposal skips over the presbytery -- Assurances given that Synod would help the presbyteries.
 - iii. The first round of this was done on synod and presbytery levels. Networking to allow people to work in their gifted areas. Demographics can tell us what is really true rather than what we assume
- f. Questions about the terminology – quality teams, local facilitators, etc. People with interest and skill who are trained -- Don't want this to be too linear but more like a smorgasbord.
 - i. Teams need to be integrated with lots of crossover to be able to cover all areas needed. Could be both linear and smorgasbord.
 - ii. May need a coach to walk with churches. Many consultation processes end just when new beginnings are occurring.
 - iii. Business world has the notion skills need certification. Here we are saying we have the resources within our synod. The new pastors' idea sprang from this notion. Using those who already do things well to assist training new folks.
 - iv. Area seems to be missing on this list is talk about story. How to help churches talk about their story. Not just internal but leading to evangelism.
 - v. West Virginia has overabundant ethos of humility. There is reluctance to talk about the things we are doing well. How do we help people get their story out?
 - vi. Organizational list needed that develops and shows those available and their gifts and skill sets.
 - vii. Rarely talk about more than forming plans and executing them. How are we going to work with congregations to facilitate more than just plan and execute but teaching them to think differently about themselves? Be the strategic body of Christ
 - viii. Process questions -- consultants are seen as someone who uses your watch to tell you what time it is. Can this be done from teams within presbyteries or will it need to be teams from outside presbyteries or can they be local. Got to move beyond planning
 - ix. How will the synod know a team is needed? Will Presbytery inform them or how will connection be made?
 - x. Coaches need to catch intentionality and build accountability. What is the glue, how do we deal with change, fear, anger? If there is no cost, will you get people's attention? If it costs something, people will invest in it. Response: There will be church costs but intent is not to make it unaffordable.
 - xi. How do we begin discussion of this at the church level, how does this all begin -- what does the church hope to accomplish through this? Biblical understanding of hope is a trust for what is going to happen.
 - xii. How do we identify that a church is in an opportune time to change? When are we ready? A lot of it is about preparation.
 - xiii. How does this conversation relate to 1001 Worshipping Communities? In most places, it probably won't apply.
 - xiv. How do names get to the right people? Get it to leadership?