

Synod 3-Presbytery Task Force

9/19/2022

Thanks to everyone who participated in our “dots” exercise at the last Presbytery meeting, and special thanks to Bonnie Lind who used her analytical gifts to help us understand the results. We asked what you valued in the “ideal presbytery”.

Here’s some of what we learned.

Role of the Presbytery

There was strong consensus that the Presbytery needs to focus on the needs of our communities. There was also pretty good consensus about using the Presbytery to create structures that help churches partner together. These results were consistent with our consensus that the Presbytery should be funded to go beyond the essential functions.

However, there is less consensus about contributing money to fund the activities, with half of the respondents neutral, and most of the rest only moderately favoring more spending.

***We wonder...** is God calling us to some form of collaborative ministry, and how much are we willing to invest to make it happen? What would cause us to work together across congregational or city or presbytery lines?*

Staffing/Structure

Most people agree that the Presbytery needs to rely on volunteer committees with limited staff support, although almost 40% of respondents were in the middle, not favoring either over the other. 72% favored empowering small groups or individuals to make decisions. Only 12% leaned toward giving everyone a say in decisions.

While we lean toward empowering committees generally, we don’t agree how those committees will be organized. The item with the least consensus asked whether we should “allow committees and groups to operate independently, reporting to the presbytery as needed” or “use a coordinating council to align the direction of our committees and groups of all of the items.” Of interest, this pairing also had the lowest percentage in the Neutral category. So it isn’t that we don’t have an opinion on this topic, it is just that our opinions are spread evenly across the spectrum.

***We wonder...** what were the positive and negative aspects of our previous use of a Coordinating Council, and could it be reshaped better going forward? What staff functions are important to us?*

Presbytery Meetings

We have a slight preference for locations within an hour’s travel. Few people had a strong preference for locations that required an overnight stay. That works fairly well in our current

geographic configuration. Almost no one favored fewer, but longer meetings. This is in line with the previous item, favoring shorter travel. Efficiency seems to be valued.

***We wonder...** if we find other ways to streamline our business, would we still want to gather and for what purposes?*

More Musings

As we consider how we might collaborate with our neighboring presbyteries, Kendall and Eastern Oregon, we invite you to ***wonder with us...***

- *how could finding new ways to engage with our neighboring presbyteries help us with these dreams/goals;*
- *what strengths/resources do we have to share beyond our borders;*
- *how might we reimagine our Presbytery in a way that would facilitate some of these desires;*
- *what forms of collaboration would strengthen our mission and ministry;*
- *what could we do together that would make God smile?*

We invite you to imagine with us. Please contact any of the task force members with your thoughts or wonderings:

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