

Invitation to Participate
in New Jersey
New Missional Communities

February 2019

NJ Missional Structures
Working Group

Table of Contents

Cover Letter.....	2
Invitation to Participate.....	3
OUR KAIROS MOMENT FOR MISSION	3
ASPIRATIONS OF OUR NEW PRESBYTERIES	4
CHALLENGES TO PREPARE FOR	5
THE NEW QUALITIES OF LEADERSHIP NEEDED FOR SUCCESS.....	6
WHAT DO WE SUGGEST THE NEW MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES IN NJ LOOK LIKE?.....	6
Covenant.....	6
Optimal Size and Geography	7
Together We Are Strong.....	7
We Recommend Each of the New Presbyteries Have the Following Features.....	7
Regional Ministry Opportunities	8
STEPPING OUT IN FAITH, TOGETHER.....	8
Appendix I: Terms.....	9
Appendix II: Rough Map of Proposed New Presbyteries.....	10
Map Notes	11
Guiding Intentions	11
Appendix III: Working Timeline	12
Appendix IV: Overture.....	13
Overture to the Synod of the Northeast.....	13
Rationale.....	13
Next Steps.....	14
Concurrence to Monmouth Overture New Jersey Boundaries	14

Cover Letter

February 2019

Dear Leaders of New Jersey Presbyteries,

This Invitation is the product of years of prayer, reflection, and consecrated dreaming by representatives of the seven geographic presbyteries of New Jersey. Our call to this work originated in the New Way Forward process that successfully reconceived the missional structure of the Synod of the Northeast. It was the conclusion of that working group that the Synod's presbytery structure did need to be reinvented to advance the mission of our congregations, but that first the Synod itself had to discover and implement its own new way forward.

We are convinced that the *kairos* moment for that vital work of reconceiving and reordering presbytery mission is now upon us. In our consultations with Presbyterians from around New Jersey, we have heard again and again that now is the time for change.

The document we are offering to you is called an "Invitation" because that is what it is. Although it's a fundamental principle of our governance that "the larger part of the church, or a representation thereof, shall govern the smaller" (F-3.0203), from our very first meetings our Synod working group has been determined not to follow a top-down approach. The Form of Government charges each synod with "developing, in conjunction with its presbyteries, a broad strategy for the mission of the church within its bounds" (G-3.0401a). One practical outcome of that holy dreaming together is "organizing new presbyteries, dividing, uniting, or otherwise combining presbyteries or portions of presbyteries previously existing" (G-3.0403c). In issuing this Invitation, our goal is to offer a comprehensive, creative way for New Jersey Presbyterians to say, "We're in!" as we move forward together in mission.

We are asking that you present this invitation for information at the spring meeting of your presbytery. We advise that you coordinate with our Working Group so that we might provide support for presenting this work with your presbytery. Once presented, we suggest a second "read" of this invitation at your fall presbytery meeting. At that time, we would ask a decision by your presbytery if you will accept the invitation to move forward in the direction proposed.

Reaching consensus and a common way forward, we will then enter a further process of refinement. The Synod will convene a new working group that will dig deeply into the details. We are certain there are some adjustments that will need to be made, for example, allowing certain congregations along the new borders to belong instead to the neighboring presbytery. There are also important legal and financial matters that must be addressed. An affirmative vote from the presbyteries will give this new working group a mandate to move forward – using this Invitation document and its proposed map as a guide.

What we need to hear from your presbytery is whether or not you are on board with the overall concept. Do you agree that the *kairos* moment is indeed upon us, and that the vision as presented in the Invitation – broadly speaking – is our common way forward? Are you willing, in the spirit of Presbyterian connectionalism, to look beyond your present borders and make certain adjustments for the sake of the larger church? If your presbytery is in the central or northeastern part of the state, are you willing to say goodbye and Godspeed to some of your former friends and co-laborers in God's vineyard – knowing you'll still see them at statewide and larger events – in order to forge relationships with new friends and fellow-workers?

We will continue to hold each of your communities in prayer as you consider these questions, and we will eagerly await hearing back from you!

With anticipation and hope for the future,

~ [The New Jersey Missional Structures Working Group](#)

Invitation to Participate

**“No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment,
for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse.
Neither do people pour new wine into old wineskins.
If they do, the skins will burst; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined.
No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.”
~ Matthew 9:16-17 (NIV)**

OUR KAIROS MOMENT FOR MISSION

There are special times appointed by God for turning and transformation; for a new thing to spring forth. These times, called *kairos* moments, are characterized by a stirring of the Spirit that invokes fear, hope, and excitement. We believe that the Church broadly-speaking, and the PC(USA) in particular, is living through one of these moments in regard to our corporate life.

Fresh expressions of faith are springing up all around, even as older expressions are passing away. The Church at every level, from individual congregations to national denominational bodies, is examining anew what it means to be and do church. “As the Church seeks reform and fresh direction, it looks to Jesus Christ who goes ahead of us and calls us to follow him. United with Christ in the power of the Spirit, the Church seeks ‘not [to] be conformed to this world, but [to] be transformed by the renewing of [our] minds, so that [we] may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect’ (Rom. 12:2)” [F-1.0401].

For decades, our congregations, and thus our presbyteries, have been declining in membership until, like a tiny congregation in a huge old building, most of our time, energy, and resources are spent maintaining outdated and inefficient structures and systems, to the detriment of our mission as the body of Christ in the world.

Through listening sessions in each of New Jersey’s presbyteries, we have heard from you the confirmation that this is indeed the time to radically change the structure and function of our presbyteries; to embrace an understanding of mid-councils as spiritual communities rather than legal and administrative organizations. We now invite you to prayerfully consider entering into the new missional communities we will propose and explain in the following pages.

As we begin this new work and rejoice in the moving of the Spirit, we celebrate a long history and the good and faithful work of our current presbytery structure. The old wineskins have been wonderful containers for the old wine, but the new movement of the Spirit in this *kairos* moment calls for a new sort of structure. Like wineskins, the new structures we propose are containers, designed not for their own sake, but to hold and preserve their contents. In this instance, the contents are Spirit-filled missional communities that remain responsive to changing contextual realities and the leading of the Spirit.

ASPIRATIONS OF OUR NEW PRESBYTERIES

From the conversations and listening sessions, prayer, and reflections during the past six months, a picture is emerging of what New Jersey congregations (“Gospel communities”) and presbyteries aspire to become. As one person put it:

“I envision the presbyteries in New Jersey being transformed into the kind of communities that provide the blue sky for people to thrive in their call to living the gospel in their communities.”

Here is a list of aspirations put in the present-tense intentionally to claim the “new wine” God is pouring into us at this *kairos* moment:

- ❖ When the presbytery community gathers, there is a transformational shift: Joy and trust are present; we learn from and inspire one another.
- ❖ We have space and flexibility to follow where God is pushing/leading us.
- ❖ We are relevant to the public, boldly proclaiming and demonstrating life in Christ, which is inspiring people to seek and follow Christ.
- ❖ Through the reconciling work of the Holy Spirit our Gospel communities have broken down the barriers that were keeping us apart (fear, money, distrust) and have reignited our common life as a connectional denomination.
- ❖ We have stepped fully into modern technology, maximizing communication throughout our presbyteries and out into the world around us.
- ❖ Each presbytery provides the “new wineskin” container for a wide variety of ministries (urban, rural, suburban, racial-ethnic, home church, New Worshiping Communities, chaplaincy, etc.). Each leader and ministry is cherished and supported, creating a space of safety, respect, and honor; no part of the body is marginalized. (1 Cor. 12:21-22)
- ❖ Leaders and Gospel communities share responsibilities and have shifted from regulatory oversight to mutual accountability.
- ❖ We now work with better efficiency and broadened resources.
- ❖ We make sometimes-painful decisions based on our effectiveness for the Gospel, which has led us to leave behind some ministries and ways of doing things, retaining our best, and inventing and embracing new ways.
- ❖ We are entrepreneurial – change is constant, so we adapt, trusting and relying on our solid-rock foundation of Christ and none other. (Mt. 7:24-27)
- ❖ Our presbyteries are healthy, functioning with joy, and are known by the public as inspiring, relevant, and engaged faith communities of New Jersey.
- ❖ Our Gospel communities are self-sustaining, and contributing their per capita as a sign of their commitment to the connectedness of our denomination.
- ❖ We provide pastoral support and cutting-edge training for all lay and clergy leaders.
- ❖ A wave of collaboration between Gospel communities has deepened our joy and witnessed to the world God’s reconciliation, wholeness, and unity amidst diversity.
- ❖ We as individuals and gospel communities share a sacred resource: our stories – being vulnerable to reveal who we are, what we are up to, our needs and hopes, and how the community can support us as we “run with perseverance the race marked out for us” (Heb. 12:1).
- ❖ To the glory of the Triune God, we are living into “God’s preferred future” secure in God’s faithfulness.

CHALLENGES TO PREPARE FOR

**“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses,
let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.
And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus,
the pioneer and perfecter of faith.”**

~ Hebrews 12:1-2 (NIV)

From the outset, there are a number of challenges we anticipate and concerns we have heard from you, that are part of our deliberations and planning. By keeping these challenges and concerns in focus throughout our work, the processes and outcomes will be just, equitable, faithful, and fruitful.

One of the foremost concerns we have heard, and which we share, is that this transformation be an adaptive reorientation rather than a technical reorganization. In other words, what we’re proposing should really be a new thing and not “more of the same.” We recognize how easy it is to rehearse familiar patterns when we’re confronted with the anxiety of a new and uncertain future.

Of particular concern are the voices and communities that have been marginalized and under-represented in our presbyteries because of size, language, race, or community-type not be similarly marginalized in the new missional communities.

We are also very cognizant of the power dynamics and conflicts of personality that have led to dysfunction in several of our presbyteries, and are committed to a process that will minimize the replication of these dynamics and promote health, transparency, and accountability in the new communities.

Both of these potential challenges will to some degree be ameliorated by the simple fact of there being fewer, larger presbyteries. And one of the great gifts of creating new communities is that we will have the opportunity and resources to establish ground rules, boundaries, and shared commitments for how we will live together.

But larger presbyteries will pose their own challenges. Poor attendance at meetings is a problem in our current system, and could prove even more challenging with geographically larger presbyteries with greater travel time from one end to the other, especially for people without easy access to major highways. But we believe that people will travel for things that are important and worthwhile to them, and that corporate life in these new communities will be vibrant, engaging, and affirming so that participation and attendance will be priorities for their members.

We also intend for these new communities to engage the power of technology so that in-person gatherings, while remaining indispensable, will not be the sole means of participation. And as the new communities take shape, we will be asking when, where, how often, and for what purposes gatherings are called.

We recognize that per capita is a complex issue that is beyond the scope of this working group to fully address. We look forward to receiving guidance from the General Assembly’s Per Capita Review Team, and recommend that the implementation team closely examine per capita giving to ensure that none of the new presbyteries are saddled with unsustainable financial burdens.

We know that there are and will continue to be questions about the technical details of creating new communities, including legal and financial considerations. As we continue to move through this process, a design and transition group will be assembled. This group will ultimately be authorized as an administrative commission of the Synod. We will also engage consultants to help us navigate technical concerns.

THE NEW QUALITIES OF LEADERSHIP NEEDED FOR SUCCESS

New ways of being the church will require new ways of thinking about leadership, and new proficiencies for leaders, both paid staff and volunteers. Specifically, we see that effective leaders in these new missional communities will be: imaginative, adaptable and open to change, self-aware and emotionally mature, collaborative and relational, community-builders, and faithful risk-takers. Leadership in the new missional communities will prioritize relational and emotional intelligence, and adaptive capacity over administrative technical proficiency.

New roles and categories of leadership will also be essential for the new communities to succeed. In particular, we have identified coaching, servant leadership, and resourcing as the most essential leadership roles.

One key function of the new communities will be training, nurturing, and resourcing leaders at all levels – commissioned, ordained, paid, and volunteer.

WHAT DO WE SUGGEST THE NEW MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES IN NJ LOOK LIKE?

The Church's ministries and methods in the 21st Century are changing, and we discern that God's provision for our ministry is taking a new form: fewer separate entities and greater collaboration, bringing about a new state-wide missional community.

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

~ Hebrews 10:24-25 (NIV)

Covenant

To make the aspirations of our presbyteries possible, some basic agreements may be made throughout the missional communities. For example:

Leaders and Gospel communities covenant together in mutual accountability to...

- ❖ Share responsibilities of the greater missional community, the synod, and national church.
- ❖ Shift from a regulatory emphasis to an emphasis on resourcing and support for our missional communities.
- ❖ Proactively cultivate community and pastoral care for and among leaders, Gospel communities, and presbyteries.
- ❖ Share our stories, resources, needs, and time with one another (Acts 2:44-47).

Optimal Size and Geography

The NJMS working group was commissioned to explore several considerations as they imagined ways of redrawing the boundaries of our seven presbyteries. Here is a list of the considerations:

- ❖ Geographic size
- ❖ Balance of the number of overall membership and number of churches in each new presbytery.
- ❖ Traffic and other transportation challenges unique to the regions.
- ❖ Diversity and inclusion.
- ❖ Access to and maximization of shared resources.
- ❖ Sensitivity to regional affinities among New Jerseyans (North/Central/South Jersey and orientation toward metro areas of New York or Philadelphia).
- ❖ The unique organizational cultures of our various presbyteries.
- ❖ The importance of county lines, in terms of missional opportunities and interests (including engagement with local communities and entities, e.g. local government, counties, non-profit agencies, etc.)

The Working Group experimented with maps, drawing new boundaries to create three and four presbyteries. Cultural, geographic, and staffing considerations led us to realize that the option of three presbyteries would create new organizations that were simply too large to meet our aspirational goals. We have drafted a map of what four presbyteries may look like (south, middle, northwest, and northeast). The boundaries are soft, and presbyteries will have time to determine the final boundaries based on what will maximize health and effectiveness.

Together We Are Strong

We envision that, shortly after the four new presbyteries are initially established, they will cooperate in a New Jersey missional community to accomplish goals no single presbytery could achieve on its own. These could include:

- ❖ Shared support services, such as accounting/financial management and website management.
- ❖ Statewide resources for leadership and congregational development.
- ❖ Advocacy with State government.
- ❖ Enhanced relationships with Camp Johnsonburg, Bloomfield College, and Princeton Seminary.
- ❖ An annual gathering of New Jersey Presbyterians for worship, education, and mutual support.

We Recommend Each of the New Presbyteries Have the Following Features

- ❖ A full-time presbytery leader.
- ❖ Ecclesiastical officers as required by G-3.0104.
- ❖ Excellent support staff who, among other roles, will resource COMs and assist congregations reach their greatest missional potential
- ❖ Diversity of congregational sizes.
- ❖ Diversity of community type (urban, suburban, rural).
- ❖ Cultural (racial-ethnic) diversity.
- ❖ Access to interstate highways, the Garden State Parkway, or the New Jersey Turnpike for convenient transportation to presbytery meetings.
- ❖ As much as possible, keeping entire New Jersey counties within a single presbytery, to facilitate cooperation and witness with government agencies and NGOs that are structured on the county level.
- ❖ A sufficient number of congregations and members to provide sustainable financial support (through per capita and mission giving) and other resources (volunteer pool, etc.) to provide for a thriving life together.

Regional Ministry Opportunities

In considering state-wide cross-presbytery partnerships, we envision ministry areas or focuses. To support these shared ministries we may want shared, state-wide staffing and shared funding. As a starting point for shared collaborative work, it could begin with:

- ❖ Committees for Preparation for Ministry (CPM)
- ❖ Urban Ministry
- ❖ Immigrant community support and advocacy
- ❖ Communication resourcing for congregations
- ❖ Leadership training / development
- ❖ Boundaries training and accountability
- ❖ Fundraising and stewardship resourcing
- ❖ Discipleship resourcing for congregations
- ❖ Collaboration for mission projects, retreats, pulpit and teacher swaps
- ❖ Camp Johnsonburg
- ❖ Music and other artistic endeavors for worship and service
- ❖ Other areas of particular need where we've identified a way to work together
- ❖ Regional staff
 - Resource coordinators
 - Antiracism trainers
 - Missional practices consultants
 - Financial managers

Some of the sharing may not be across all four presbyteries, some may be addressed by just pair relationships. There may be partnerships beyond the state we want to explore as well:

- ❖ Prioritizing learning the lessons learned from our “1001 New Worshiping Communities” and other unique models of ministry
- ❖ Developing mutual “standards”
- ❖ Where there are the greatest burdens, exploring how we can support work on this together
- ❖ Denomination websites being more accessible and easy to navigate
- ❖ Educating all members about the denomination's inner workings
- ❖ Mission projects and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA)

STEPPING OUT IN FAITH, TOGETHER

New Jersey's committed, Gospel-driven, and creative faith communities have voiced their hopes and vision for a future where we are the new wineskins for God's new wine. As the psalmist sings, we “open our mouths wide to receive God's gifts!” (Ps. 81:10 NIV)

Appendix I: Terms

Missional

This is an adjective describing Christ's church in the world. Because "mission" and "missions" used to refer to evangelical outreach in foreign lands, and church conduct "mission studies," there can be confusion about the term "missional" as used in the church today. Here is a helpful quote from Paul Hooker:

Mission is not an item on the "to do" list of the Church; the mission of God is the reason for the Church. Congregations in particular and the Church as a whole do not exist to serve their own aims or even to guarantee their own survival. We exist solely to participate with Christ in expressing the love of God to the world, a love that "empties itself" for the sake of the world, even to the point of death.¹

Structures

The New Jersey Missional Structures (NJMS) working group has evolved from language of "structures" to "communities." It has become clear that in today's culture, our need is not language about structures "carved in stone," but rather language that generates and supports organic, committed communities with "hearts of flesh" (Ez. 36:26). Just as laws don't change hearts (e.g. the Civil Rights Act), so regulatory "structures" do not create encouragement, awareness, and support for our common call. Thus, the NJMS working group has changed the term "Missional Structures" to "Missional Communities." This is a call to all of us – clergy and lay – to use our gifts more broadly: not only for our immediate ministry, but for the entire presbytery and beyond.

Gospel Communities

This is an umbrella term that includes church congregations as well as worshiping communities that are not [official] churches, as well as communities who do service in the name of Christ but who do not technically worship together, [what else?]

Missional Communities

Gospel communities (the most common type being a church congregation) have always lived in missional communities. That is, we have had the potential of fellowship and collaboration, which is what missional communities do. Facing the reality of shrinking Gospel communities, partnerships have become more sought after. As we determine which Gospel communities are grouped into which presbyteries, this is not only a change of lines on the map: this is a renewal of missional community life.

¹ "What is Missional Ecclesiology," by Paul Hooker 2009. See full paper here: www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/missional-ecclesiology09.pdf

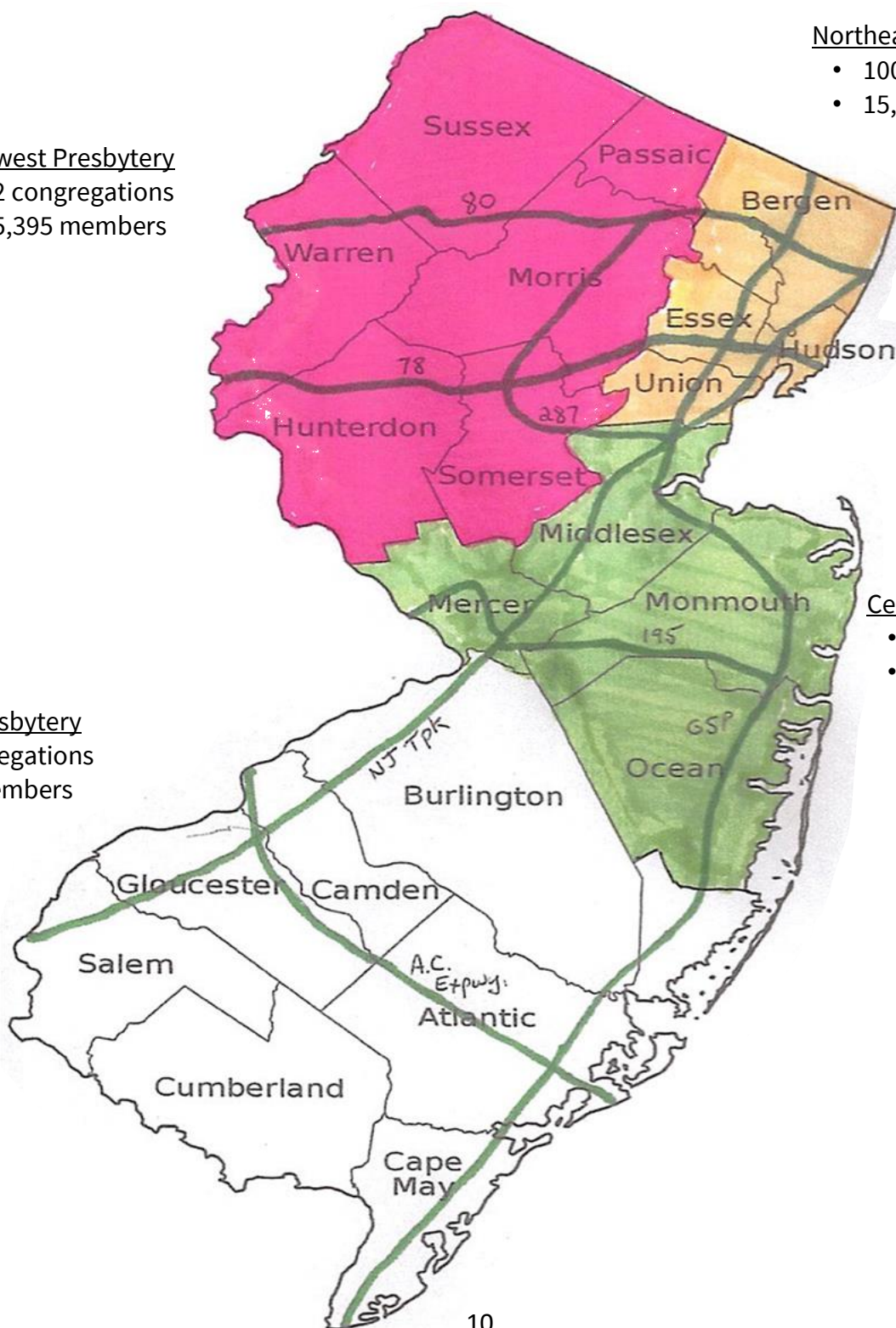
Appendix II: Rough Map of Proposed New Presbyteries

Northwest Presbytery

- 82 congregations
- 15,395 members

Northeast Presbytery

- 100 congregations
- 15,627 members



Central Presbytery

- 73 congregations
- 15,908 members

Southern Presbytery

- 65 congregations
- 9,843 members

Map Notes

This map is a preliminary proposal from the Working Group in order to advance discussion. It is subject to change, in dialogue with the presbyteries. If there are adjustments your presbytery would like to see made, please share them as soon as possible after your presbytery studies the Invitation this spring. We anticipate negotiating minor changes to the proposed presbytery boundaries – such as transferring individual congregations along the borders from one new presbytery to a neighboring one – from now until the time when the Synod's overture to the General Assembly is ultimately crafted.

The labels for the new presbyteries indicated on the map are descriptive only. As the new presbyteries are organized, they will have an opportunity to choose a name – whether a historic name or something new.

Guiding Intentions

Where geographically possible, overall church membership of approximately 15,000 is optimal to restore the per capita and mission funding base the presbyteries once enjoyed.

For purposes of mission, the presence of at least one urban area in each presbytery is desirable.

Where possible, keeping entire counties within a single presbytery builds common identity and enhances opportunities for interaction with government and non-profit agencies.

Offering ready access to interstate highways, the New Jersey Turnpike and the Garden State Parkway is desirable.

Sharing a common geographical identity - North, Central or South Jersey - helps congregations relate to one another.

Cultural affinities – such as a predominant orientation towards either the Philadelphia or New York metro area – likewise helps congregations relate to one another.

Appendix III: Working Timeline

2019

January – **Editorial Process**

- In-person Working Group discussion (January 9th)
- Editorial team drafts official invitation document
- Working Group reviews and finalizes invitation (digital meeting)

February – **Stakeholders Review**

- February 13th from 12:00-3:00pm at New Brunswick Theological Seminary
Official invitation to go out after January 9th meeting of the Working Group.
- All Presbytery Moderators, Leaders (EP/GP etc.) and Stated Clerks as well as one or two others the Presbytery Moderators feel would be helpful to include.
- Working Group members to present their recommendations.
- Working Group seeks insight and feedback from stakeholders on the new invitation in advance of sharing it with the presbyteries.

February – **Fine Tuning**

- Working Group incorporates feedback from stakeholders meeting.
(February 13th directly following meeting with stakeholders)

March 1st – **Invitation Shared with Presbyteries** (likely sooner)

Spring – **Presbyteries Receive and Study Invitation**

Fall – **Official Responses by Presbyteries & the Synod**

- Presbyteries vote on accepting the Invitation
- *NJ Missional Structures Working Group*: work is concluded but not yet disbanded, just in case they are needed for consultation during the implementation phase
- *NJ Missional Structures Design & Implementation Team*: convened with input/nominations from each presbytery. Ideally team members will have strong credibility within their presbyteries, skills in church order and finance, as well creativity and flexibility for thinking outside the box.

Next Steps – **Implementation**

- Completion of design details and navigation of logistics
- Adoption of recommendations from the Design & Implementation Team by each presbytery and the Synod's Mission & Ministry Commission
- Approval process by the General Assembly

Life in our New Missional Communities is fully begun!

Appendix IV: Overture

Overture to the Synod of the Northeast

Unanimously approved by the Presbytery of Monmouth

September 26, 2017

The Presbytery of Monmouth overtures the Synod of the Northeast to create a working group including representatives from the seven geographic presbyteries of New Jersey to:

1. Work with those presbyteries to ascertain their needs and goals,
2. Examine the present boundaries and structures of those presbyteries,
3. Consider the possibility of redrawing presbytery boundaries, and
4. Make recommendations to the Synod.

Rationale

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been steadily losing members for the past generation. Our membership is less than half the combined membership of our predecessor denominations at the time of our heyday in the late 1950s and early 1960s. This is especially true among the presbyteries of the Synod of the Northeast, where the secularization of American culture has been proceeding at a more rapid pace than in other regions.

This is not a situation any of us are comfortable with, nor should we be. Downsizing is not the norm for the church of Jesus Christ. Our self-image, based on our founding narrative from the Acts of the Apostles, is that of a steadily growing community.

Our polity reflects this self-understanding. The Book of Order provides scant guidance or encouragement for reducing the number of governing councils.

Yet, that does not mean we should refrain from the work of organizing our presbyteries in a realistic way, based on present demographic realities. Our present map of presbyteries in the State of New Jersey — and, indeed, throughout the Synod of the Northeast — is largely unchanged since the Synod was established in 1973. We are simply not the same church we were back then. Many of our presbyteries, within their present boundaries, are struggling to marshal sufficient human and financial resources to effectively support their congregations in fulfilling the Great Commission.

“The Mission of God in Christ gives shape and substance to the life and work of the Church,” says the first foundational section of our Constitution (F-1.01). There was a time when Christ’s mission dictated that the most sensible way to determine presbytery boundaries was the location of railroad lines — which is how a number of our present presbytery boundaries were established. Many of those boundaries are still in place, exactly as they were conceived in the 19th century, long after the original rails have been torn up and removed. Those archaic boundaries have, over time, become so familiar that we have lost touch with the missional impulse that dictated the original design.

We believe it is time to recover that missional impulse, and ask certain fundamental questions anew. These include:

- What is the purpose of a presbytery?
- What is the optimal size of a presbytery, based on both overall membership and the number of congregations?
- What resources and expertise should a presbytery provide its congregations to enable effective work and witness?
- What geographic, cultural, and demographic realities impact decisions about presbytery boundaries?
- What is the unique organizational culture of our various presbyteries, and how may differences in culture affect future cooperation and/or boundary configurations?

Informed by the answers to these questions, the working group would then seek consensus about a new configuration of presbyteries within our State, right-sized for mission in the present day and into the foreseeable future.

Next Steps

It is our intention to share the text of this overture with the other presbyteries within the State, inviting them to concur by sending similar overtures to the Synod. While concurrence with this or a similar overture is not a prerequisite for participating in the discussion, we believe it is beneficial for presbyteries to engage in discussion and vote at this time, so their members may be fully informed. Approval of the overture indicates merely a desire to be included in the conversation, and does not imply consent to any conclusions that may ultimately be reached.

Concurrence to Monmouth Overture New Jersey Boundaries

Nancy, both Newton Presbytery acting at its stated meeting on 11/14/17 and Elizabeth Presbytery acting at its meeting on 12/12/17 voted unanimously to concur with the overture from Monmouth Presbytery asking for a team to study and make recommendations about realignment in New Jersey.

Elizabeth Presbytery respectfully asks the Synod to consider asking the moderators of each presbytery to select their representatives for the process.

In peace, Jeremy

Teaching Elder Jeremy T. Campbell
Stated Clerk
Presbytery of Elizabeth