



June 7, 2018

Dear Presbytery Friends & Colleagues,

When you created the position of Resource Presbyter and called me to serve you, it was clear that the position was going to evolve over time. The needs you presented were varied and beyond the scope of one person's ministry and the ability to financially support a position beyond a few years was dependent on continued work together. Yet what spoke most loudly to me in my discernment was a collective voice that said, "Come and let's move forward together!"

This winter, after 18 months on the ground with you, I began to feel the need to offer a tangible way for us to live more fully into the work God has begun since I arrived to serve you. There was immediate work to do resourcing committees, pastors and sessions, but there is also continued soul searching and discernment that I believe we need to do together as churches and as a presbytery.

So, I came up with a **two-part initiative called "Moving Forward Together."** The **FIRST PART** offers [guidance and support for congregations willing to explore revitalization and redevelopment.](#) Through the repurposing of several small presbytery funds and a grant recently awarded by the Synod of the Northeast, we now have the ability to come alongside churches personally and financially to help discern the next steps God is calling them to take. Please take a moment to read more about this opportunity on the pages that follow or at this [link.](#) **Your Church's COM liaison and I are awaiting your invitation to come and share more!**

The **SECOND PART** is a [shared movement designed to help us discern what God is calling us to be and do as a presbytery to support and promote faithful ministry in our 21st century context.](#) Starting this Saturday, June 9, continuing at the Presbytery Retreat September 27-29 and finishing at the November 13 meeting, I will be leading you all in a time of exploration designed to help us identify our key priorities for the next 3-5 years of ministry together. More information about the three movements can be found on the following pages or at this [link.](#) **Please make every effort to be with us for as many of these meetings as possible.**

With God's help, my prayer is that we would indeed move forward together in exciting and life-giving ways, all to the glory of God!

Faithfully Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

➤ Moving Forward Together - Part 1

Objective: To come alongside churches open to and willing to work towards revitalization. Recognizing there is no “one size fits all” approach, the following opportunities have a proven track record of stimulating movement and growth in congregations willing to ask hard questions and take risks. Given the challenges facing the Church in the the 21st century, these opportunities do not promise solutions, but rather offer tangible first steps and much needed encouragement in the midst of the struggles most if not all of our churches are facing in our presbytery.

- Four Options for PNNY Churches to consider:
 - ❖ ***New Beginnings*** - Originally developed by the Disciples of Christ, the Synod of the Northeast recently established a network to provide a subsidized version of the program. The program requires at least 2-3 churches in relatively close proximity to participate in training together. Each church is then visited by a trained New Beginnings Assessor, followed by leadership training, house meetings and a group decision making process. The cost for New Beginnings in the Synod is \$2,800. [see [Elements of New Beginnings](#)]
 - ❖ ***Holy Cow! Church Assessment Tool (CAT)*** - Accessible through the Clergy and Congregational Consulting group led by Keli Rugenstein, LCSW-R, PhD. The assessment gathers valuable insights to help a church decide how to address current challenges and move forward in ways more likely to succeed. The cost of the CAT, with interpretation, depends on the size of the worshipping congregation and ranges from \$400-1,200. [see [CAT Description](#)]
 - ❖ ***Pastor/Session Coaching*** - Individual and combined coaching where a pastor and session are led to discern how they can best focus their time and energy for the sake of building up the church. It is NOT consulting, where an expert gives insights to follow. Coaching is a process by which a group determines its own next steps and provides the support and encouragement leaders need to innovate and follow through each step of the way. The cost of coaching is determined on an individual basis and depends on whether an onsite visit is required. A rough estimate is \$1,200-\$3,600, for 6 months of coaching for a session and pastor. [see [Sample Coaching Scope of Work Agreement](#)]
 - ❖ ***Synod Innovation Grant*** - The Synod of the Northeast has shifted resources to support movements within the synod that foster innovation that results in transformation. Churches that have ideas to reach new people, serve an emerging need, and help them grow as a Gospel Community can apply for funding to support these types of efforts. The presbytery needs to endorse all applications and typically provides a small seed grant to each grantee. [see [Synod of NE Innovation Grants](#)]

- Presbytery Funding for Part 1:

- ❖ Churches that seek to revitalize must commit resources of time, energy and finances. The presbytery, through its “Emerging Ministry Fund” will offer up to 50% assistance up to \$1500 to come alongside churches that demonstrate a desire to utilize one of the four options.

➤ **Moving Forward Together - Part 2**

Objective: To lead the presbytery through a “shared decision-making process” to help us discern the best possible future for our presbytery. In a way, this process began in the groups that first envisioned and searched for a Resource Presbyter. But a staff position alone is not enough. Now is the time to consider what we want our presbytery to be and do as we move forward together. The steps of this process will be as follows, led by David, with the assistance of his coach. Below is a summary of the three movements.

- ❖ *Packing for the Journey...* Through a brief historical survey, and opportunities to share in small and large groups, we would identify what has been important in our shared life together. What from the past do we need to carry with us into the future? What must we take with us? What must we leave behind?
- ❖ *Identifying Trends...* This time would be devoted to identifying the current trends and cultural realities that are likely to share the future (local, national, and global trends). What is unique to our context as a presbytery in the North Country? What is common for all churches in the United States? We may not know the answers, but we can name the trends and realities we are currently facing and very well may face in the years ahead.
- ❖ *Naming the Key Features...* In light of the things we’ve packed and the trends we’ve identified, this time would be spent naming what we believe to be the key features of the presbytery as we move forward together. What will be our key priorities? What will be our main foci to keep us grounded and effective as a regional body of churches we need to not only face the challenges that lie ahead, but also be effective in the work we must continue or start doing?
- ❖ Then, after the key features are named, a group of willing participants will *develop a plan* to help us implement the changes necessary to move forward together in this newly revised version of presbytery... or as some say, Presbytery 2.0.