

# **Futuring Team Report to Presbytery**

## **November 2019**

### **Background:**

The Futuring Team was formed by the Coordinating Committee and approved by the Presbytery of Lake Erie in June 2018. Its purpose was to explore actions needed to support ministry in local congregations over the next few years. Among the topics explored were the increased need for adaptable pastoral relationships in a post-Christendom culture, how best to enhance forward focused ministry, and addressing pro-active presbytery leadership needs in a time when “church” has significantly different meanings to different people. The committee is composed of: Robin Cuneo, Don Hall, Drew Himes, Tina Kaye, Larry Myers, Katherine Randall, Don Worthington, and Emily Zeig Lindsey.

### **Process:**

Over the last year and a half, the Futuring Team has met nine times. The group has drawn on a number of resources, including:

- Synod Transitional Executive Sue Wonderland, who helped us think about changes in leadership roles throughout the synod; cultural shifts and implications for the traditional, local church; connecting with communities grounded in a profound faith in Christ; and implications of living in a post-Christendom world when most have been raised in a Christendom culture.
- Previous discernment on the priorities of Lake Erie Presbytery, including resourcing and education, connections, new worshipping communities, adaptive change and viability, mission, and leadership
- Exploration with congregations through a survey on imagining how God was calling churches into the future, even without significant change in resources and membership
- Discussion at presbytery meetings – how the presbytery can best support congregations over the next 5 years, the use of technology, and ecumenical connections
- Significant conversation around the nature of presbytery staff leadership and how it might look in the short term and longer term future
- Reports/Resources/Discernment information from other presbyteries who are doing similar “futuring” work

### **Observations:**

- There is a great deal of lament in conversations/feedback from churches and presbytery commissioners
- There is a frequent framing of the need for more people as a support for church survival, particularly related to finances
- There seems to be significant tension for churches in doing what needs to be done, faithfully following Christ, change, and older vs. younger generations – and the framing of younger generations in terms of abandonment (i.e., they don’t come to church – vs. the church going to them)
- There are a number of congregations in the presbytery who are “living on the edge” of viability and are already struggling with leadership – what will the presbytery need to be able to do both now and over the next 10 years?

### **Conclusions:**

- Advocate to the Coordinating Committee and the Administrative Committee the use of electronic communications for meeting attendance where appropriate – some but not all congregations have useful internet access. There was an emphasis on the importance of face to face conversation and relationship building in addition to convenience or access in a rural, spread out presbytery.

- Concur with the proposal of Administrative Committee to retain the leadership of David Oyler in an adjusted part-time capacity to allow a longer transition toward his retirement, with a recognition that full time leadership could/would likely be required after his retirement
- There is a need to encourage churches to initiate conversations with churches of other denominations in their communities to nurture ecumenical relationships that will strengthen both churches. To help facilitate an ecumenical environment, the Futuring Team encouraged the Worship Committee to include pastors of other denominations to be present at presbytery meetings, help lead worship, and create opportunities for ecumenical connections to be made at meetings. Many congregations have existing presbytery, ecumenical and interfaith partnerships – what stands in the way at times is differences in theology, fear of change, and reciprocation on the part of other communities of faith.
- There is a need to help prepare struggling congregations for alternate futures – related to buildings, ministries, and leadership.
- Consider the possibility of forming some kind of quick response team – a kind of “multidisciplinary” approach from multiple presbytery committees and array of gifts to help churches in crisis discern needed studies and options.
- There is a need for continued and better communication between churches and presbytery.
- There is a need for resourcing and continuing education for church officers and multiple forms of church leadership.
- Presbytery pieces that need to be supported going forward (based on conversations at the June Presbytery meeting): relationship building among churches and commissioners, sharing of ideas among churches (like open space), staff support in General Presbyter, opportunities for shared worship and learning, opportunities for shared events and mission (e.g., youth events/conferences, mission trips, Ghana Partnership), and financial support of new projects via loans, grants, and the budget.

### **Suggested Actions:**

#### **Vision**

In the book of Acts, the early Christian community gathers in prayer, worship and sharing of the sacraments, actively witnesses bold actions by people of God, collectively and generously shares and distributes all resources. By both their clear following of Jesus in all aspects of their living and bold action on the part of its leaders, the church grew. In a recent blog post, Rev. Dr. Jan Edmiston describes the church today as a collection of healthy and unhealthy dinosaurs (see <https://achurchforstarvingartists.blog/2019/08/28/healthy-and-unhealthy-dinosaurs/>):

**Maybe all of our congregations are dinosaurs headed for extinctions.** Or maybe the ones able to fly above it all will evolve and live on. But clearly something totally different is emerging, and not only is this okay; it will be a blessing because God is all about blessing us when we at least try to follow the way of Jesus.

The First Century Church looked very different from what we know today. No pews, stained glass, or Sunday School. The people *were* the Church everyday. There were prayers every day. There was healing every day. There were acts of mercy every day. There was worship every day. There were holy experiences every day by the water, on the highway, in the field, throughout the marketplace. Every Day. But, she says, we can emerge as something new.

Recognizing that everything - everything but the faithfulness and grace of God we know in Jesus Christ - has changed is challenging. It is not unexpected to feel grief over what we have known and anxiety in the uncertainty of what the future may be. And yet, we are people who profess faith in the resurrection. God has often made a way where there is no way. God is always doing something new. It often does not look like the way things have been. It is often not the way God’s people expected it to be. But life has always come.

Trusting in Christ, the futuring team envisions something new. It will require us daily to practice living our faith in all we do - as disciples, as congregations, as a presbytery, and as the people of God. It will require bold action. It will require us to be willing to try changes, fail, and try again, grounding ourselves in the practices of faith and promises of God.

Our vision for the presbytery includes transformation in the following areas:

- Walking alongside congregations in the time and place they find themselves to revitalize, transform, or move to a gracious end of ministry, with actions that reflect our trust in the promise of resurrection in Christ.
- Renewed emphasis on ministry with children in youth at the presbytery, church, and community level, supported by cooperative ministry and financial resources.
- A shift in the number of total presbytery meetings per year and an expanded use of technology for meetings.
- A transformation of the way in which we resource congregations from a physical resource center to targeted and collaborative resourcing by contracted staff, members of presbytery, creative sharing of resources, and the use of technology
- Alter our existing committee structure to do our collective work, through the utilization of commissions, fewer committees, and shorter term task forces.
- Prepare to hire a full-time, temporary, transitional General Presbyter in 2020.

### **Walking Alongside the Life of Congregations**

A church is a living, breathing entity just like every plant and animal in God's creation. As such, it has a natural life course. It begins, it lives, and eventually it may die. But we are a people of hope and resurrection. We know, as Paul testifies (I Corinthians 15), that death carries no weight in our lives of faith nor in our bodies of faith. That being said, we have concluded that there are several areas relating to the lifecycle of individual congregations for the Presbytery and local congregations to understand.

#### *New Life/Revitalization*

One of the vows taken by Pastors, Elders, and Deacons in their ordination is to “pray for and seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love” (W-4.0404h). In the modern era of church population shifts, technological explosion, and demographic changes in our communities, we must seek to follow this vow to the fullest extent. To that end, the Presbytery has endorsed and supported the use of the Unglued Church project to assist local congregations, of any size, with their big thinking, big planning, and big living. We must realize and embrace that we are no longer going to be the church of a bygone day. Instead, we are being called to be the church of today and the church of tomorrow.

As church populations shrink numerically and their community engagement efforts may also follow course, they need to examine their ministry and efforts and ask themselves, “If our doors closed tomorrow, would anyone notice?” This question goes to the heart of their connection and importance to their local communities. If the answer to this question is “No,” or “We’re not sure,” then a process of intentional prayer and discernment should follow. A community needs assessment which seeks to understand missional opportunities that should be undertaken. This should be followed by strategy, vision, planning, and implementation of a missional approach to their work. Such a process will assist local congregations to understand the needs of their community and also how they can become vital partners in ministry and life. This idea is inspired by the prophet Jeremiah when writing to the exiles in Babylon: “But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare” (29:7). As people of faith, we live, work, and worship in a particular locale. While we may not (or may) feel that we are sent there in exile, the basic premise of Jeremiah's words still stand: pray for and care deeply about the welfare of the geography and people around you because while you are present there, we are present there and we are, “the light of the

world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid” (Matthew 5:14). As God’s representative people in that place, we cannot ignore our sacred duty to bear witness to the Kingdom of God and share the Good News of Christ our Savior in thought, word, and deed.

The Presbytery, throughout its committees and staff, and through partnerships between the various congregations, can and must covenant together to find ways to be energetic, intelligent, imaginative, and loving in all that they do. Sharing mission activities; joint youth groups; special worship services; sharing the cost of a specialized staff member (youth minister, for example); buying curriculum and sharing it as a resource; holding joint worship/fellowship opportunities, etc. are but a few of the ways in which churches can partner together to share their resources, time, talents, and skills to further the Kingdom work.

For some churches, this may look like a complete re-tooling of their common life together by celebrating and remembering the past while pressing forward in faith to an unknown, unseen future. This may mean a complete 180 degree movement and seeking to become part of the 1001 New Worshipping Communities movement of the PCUSA to completely reinvent what ministry means and will look like in their particular context for the future.

For others, it will be a slight course correction and long-term vision and strategy process that allows their current work to be bolstered and expanded while also making hard decisions about programs, staff, and events which have stood in the common life of the congregation for generations.

It should be kept in mind in a revitalization process the words of our Lord Christ, “He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit” (John 15:2). The process of allowing new growth involves intentional pruning. As with a rose bush or tree, dead tissue must be cut away immediately as it removes vital resources from the rest of the organism. Further, at times, even live tissue must be removed so that even more strong and viable growth can occur. The process of revitalization and decision making is a difficult one for certain. However, knowing that our Christ calls us to this holy work should allow us to realize the necessity of such tasks and to know even more deeply that we are participating with Christ and not merely making quick decisions.

### *Gracious Ends*

When human lives approach the end of their days on earth before moving on to glory, there are several approaches which can be taken. Two of the most person-centered approaches in current use today are hospice and palliative care. Hospice is utilized in what is believed to be the final six months of a person’s life to bring comfort, dignity, and closure to both the dying person and their closest loved ones. Palliative care is a longer term option available which follows the basic premise of hospice; however, it is utilized to live the richest and fullest life possible for the amount of time a person has left on their earthly journey, usually considered to be much longer than six months.

Such models do not need to be reserved only for the life of individual humans. Instead, this mindset can be taken in the life of a particular congregation as well as it nears the end of its earthly journey. All focus should be on gracious death and the promise and joy of resurrection life.

In the hospice model, the church would be appointed an end-of-life team consisting of the COM Advocate, a pastor who has gifts and talents for grief and loss care to serve as Chaplain, and a representative of Trustees to help with making final plans (dissolution of worldly assets; clearing titles and deeds to physical property; understanding the wishes of the congregation, etc). The focus of this time should be on gracious death and celebrating a life well lived while also planning to contribute to the ongoing life, ministry, and work of resurrection of the whole church.

In the palliative care model, when a Session and congregation have discerned that the current model of church life is not sustainable long term and that they will eventually depart, a similar team as that of the hospice model will be appointed to assist them in living out their final days with dignity, respect, and celebration. They will be encouraged to continue being as vital as possible in their earthly ministry while also beginning the process of long-term planning to their eventual gracious end.

#### *Resurrection Fund*

In either of the above models, one major focus to be taken should be on Resurrection. For Christians, life does not end with death. Each of the Gospels in their own powerful way remind us that the tomb stands empty and that Jesus has returned to Galilee to continue his work of healing, proclaiming, and life bringing. Life for Christians who have gone to rest with the saints await the joy of the return of our Christ to celebrate and experience resurrection in its fullest. This mindset should not be reserved merely for individual people of faith but instead for entire bodies of faith. The ending of one church's life should be utilized to further the life of the whole body of Christ.

To this end, the funds available from the liquid assets of the church and the sale of any and all church property (after all outstanding debts have been satisfied) should be placed into trust with the Presbytery to serve as a Resurrection Fund. This Fund would then be made available to any and all remaining churches of Lake Erie Presbytery to continue engaging, expanding, and revitalizing their ministries. This money could be used, including but not limited to, the building of new worshipping communities; funding Bold New Initiative Grants; assisting a congregation which is experiencing numerical but not financial growth to off-set the costs associated with pastoral leadership (either Teaching Elder or Commissioned Pastor); and more.

#### **Children and Youth: The Greatest in the Kingdom**

The PC(USA) is often seen as an older denomination due to the steady decline of young families in the church. Statistical reports from the office of our General Assembly show that the largest group of worshippers in the Presbyterian Church are mostly members age 65 and older, while the younger members, age 25 and younger, continue to make up the smallest group. Unfortunately, this is not only a growing trend seen in our congregations, but in colleges as well. According to Cru.org, a growing trend reveals that college freshmen aren't just preparing a goodbye speech to their families, but to their faith as well. Most students don't come to college thinking they'll lose their faith. But unfortunately, the challenges of trying to live out their own faith in an environment that has grown critical toward Christianity, is causing 66% to 70% of students to either put their relationship with Christ on hold or say goodbye all together. These are very concerning statistics especially when we consider that children and youth are vital to the present and future of the church. People are asking, "What can we do to bring young people back in the church?" Well, maybe a better question is, "What can the church do to reach young people in the community?" Although we haven't spent much time in conversation focusing specifically on children and youth, here are a few ideas that may be helpful in encouraging us to think outside the box and move forward with fresh ideas.

*Become a stronger community partner.* The saying "it takes a village to raise a child" is an old African proverb that simply means "an entire community of people must interact with children for those children to learn and grow in a safe and healthy environment." We, the church, have been called to serve a "village" of children alongside their parents and the school. Too often we expect children to just walk through the church doors on Sunday mornings on their own accord, but realistically this is probably not going to happen. But if we step outside the walls of the church, build community relationships with parents, and become a familiar face at school, local events, etc. then we are more likely to have a few families respond to the invitation to come and give church a try.

*Be a welcoming church.* We can easily see in Matthew 18 and Mark 10 how Jesus felt about children. He didn't view them as an annoyance or an interruption. He never considered them unworthy of his time or attention. But rather, he treated them with kindness and love. He welcomed and blessed them. He valued and used them as a great example of honesty, humility, and faith. What kind of message is the church sending out to the youth in our communities? Are we like Jesus who was welcoming and treated the children with kindness and love? Or are we more like the disciples who rebuked them and made them feel unwelcome? Are we a church who is concerned about nurturing, guiding and teaching those whom Jesus called the "greatest in the kingdom?" The church should be a safe haven where children feel welcome to worship and actively participate in the church' ministry. If a child feels loved and valued, then chances of them returning are good.

*Make children a higher priority.* It is no secret that the majority of churches are struggling financially and have had to cut back on their budgets. But unfortunately, it seems the first line items cut are children, youth, and Christian education. Without the resources needed to teach the children, their spiritual maturity could be at stake. How often do we talk about our children and youth programs at our session meetings? Are we unnecessarily hanging on to old traditions that increase our financial costs? Where are children and youth on our priority lists?

While there are many challenges, without easy solutions, we should not grow weary but continue to seek God's solutions to the rising decline of children and youth attendance in worship, focus more on being a stronger community partner, and take an honest look at the church to see if we are spending too much time on what we think we should be rather than who God has called us to be. Jesus never promises that serving would be easy, but if we are obedient to the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit, then everything becomes possible.

*Recommendation.* A recommendation to the Presbytery to consider forming a Children and Youth committee consisting of members whose primary focus would be on the needs and challenges of youth ministry. A second recommendation is to make children and youth a higher priority by reflecting the need in the Presbytery budget.

### **Presbytery Meetings**

Presbytery Meetings are an ordered function of the Book of Order. Each Presbytery must have at least 2 meetings per year. (BOO G-3.0304) It is a place where participants can learn about and participate in the Presbytery of Lake Erie. In the year 2021, the Presbytery of Lake Erie will change to having 4 meetings per year. With Administrative Commissions (G-3.0109b), the ongoing work of the Presbytery should not be disrupted. There is the option of calling a special meeting. It is envisioned that Presbytery meetings will be conducted in the same manner that current meetings are conducted. The Presbytery meetings will continue to have Worship, Open Space time, a meal, and the business portion which will continue to include the Omnibus motion. When the technology is developed within the Presbytery of Lake Erie, more than one location may be set for Presbytery meeting. Any secondary location must be in accordance with the BOO and Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised.

### **Use of Technology**

The Presbytery of Lake Erie comprises seven (7) counties in northwestern Pennsylvania and one (1) in New York with an estimated population of just under 500,000 and a land area of approximately 5,600 sq. miles. With only 8 cities within our borders, the presbytery is largely rural. To highlight this fact, the driving time from the Adamsville Presbyterian Church to the Coudersport First Presbyterian Church is over 3 hours. The rural nature of northwest Pennsylvania is why most of the folks have chosen to live here but the vast size and rural nature of the presbytery also presents barriers.

The average attendance at presbytery meetings continues to decline. The aging of presbyters is a factor, but distance, travel time, and potential for poor winter road conditions are also contributing reasons.

To address the decline in participation at presbytery meetings along with presbytery committee meetings, the Futuring Team is advocating for the use of technology to help mitigate the effect the distance to meeting sites plays in reduced attendance.

Use of low-tech options, such as teleconferencing, have been utilized successfully but on an infrequent basis and usually only when a key person has a scheduling conflict and their attendance at both meetings is essential. Some committees have begun to utilize video conferencing when it really makes sense, such as conducting a 20-30 minute interview with a potential pastoral candidate who is physically located 1,000 miles away. This same technology can be used to link elder commissioners who are interested in being active in presbytery business but are unable to travel to meetings. Video conferencing technology requires the use of high-speed internet service which is not currently available in all areas of the presbytery. An interim solution could be the use of churches located around the presbytery that have the space, equipment, and the availability of high-speed internet service and are willing to serve as regional meeting locations.

If the use of video conferencing technology (Skype, GoToMeeting, Webex, Zoom, Facetime, Microsoft Teams, etc.) is pursued, it is highly recommended that presbytery develop staff that have the technical skills to assist with both selection of the appropriate software but also its setup and use at the remote sites. There is nothing more frustrating than depending on the use of technology when it can't or won't work properly.

### **Resource Center**

Presently the Resource Center has been open for business from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm on Mondays and Tuesdays. At other times the Center's resources could be searched electronically or the Director could be contacted by telephone or electronic mail. The Director has been very helpful to address any questions, advertise materials through the Presbytery's newsletter, and showcase materials at Presbytery gatherings. The Presbytery is in the process of negotiating a two-year contract extension with the Elmwood Avenue Presbyterian Church where the Resource Center is located.

It has been noted that currently the Resource Center has had very limited use by the churches in our Presbytery. Local congregations are finding other means to obtain their required materials such as the internet, borrowing from larger congregations, or sharing existing resources within a local group of churches. Another looming fact is the current Director is looking ahead to retirement in the near future.

As monies available to the Presbytery are declining, how can we remain good stewards with the funds that are available but still supply the congregations with cost effective resources to meet their respective requirements for local Christian ministry?

One concept that was suggested to physically close the Resource Center and operate the ministry on an electronic basis. A retired Christian Education individual could be available as a resource person by electronically answering questions, making material suggestions, circulating a newsletter, or addressing any specific situations.

It was concluded that we solicit comments from the people on this issue as the Team continually moves forward toward making our final recommendations.

### **Presbytery Committee Structure**

In Paul's letters to the early church, he emphasized the communal nature of the work to be done. It was never one single individual's responsibility to continue the work of Christ. A community gathered together to be the one body of Christ, with each part - each arm, leg, head, and hand - contributing and working together. That shared responsibility is still vital to our ongoing work today. In presbyteries and churches, many people come together to support the ongoing work of following Christ and sharing God's love with the world. The purpose of the presbytery committee structure is to support the work of the presbytery. There are essential functions that must be covered and a few committees and tasks required by the Book of Order. However, it might be time to re-evaluate the committee structure and right size it for the current size and needs of the presbytery.

*Recommendations:*

- Move CPM under COM as a sub-committee. That 6-7 person sub-committee would continue the functions currently housed in CPM: nurturing call, supporting inquirers and candidates, and working with those considering lay training. It could be combined with the care of commissioned pastors sub-committee.
- Eliminate Congregational Life and move its functions into other committees. Mission studies could move to COM, potentially the care of congregations sub-committee, and might add continuity to the pastor search process. Energy efficiency grants could move to the Administrative Committee. BNI grants could move to Mission and Social Witness.
- Eliminate the worship committee/make it into a yearly task force appointed by the moderator. Shortens expectations from 3 years to 1 year and could be more flexible in meeting time and more focused on just a few services. Hopefully that would increase creativity in our presbytery worship services.
- Task forces could be further encouraged for ideas and projects where there is energy -- the Ghana partnership group, the youth events group, etc.
- In light of these changes, restructure the Coordinating Committee slightly. Committee chairs would continue to make up the majority of the Coordinating Committee, and 2 at-large members would be added. These 2 at-large members may or may not be serving the presbytery in other ways, but should have skills to help with implementing futuring ideas and continue further visioning.

### **General Presbyter Position**

For over a year the Futuring Team has been meeting to develop a strategy for how the presbytery should best position itself for the future, especially in this time of transition that almost all mainline denominations seem to be experiencing. The pending retirement of General Presbyter Rev. David Oyler and how the presbytery should proceed with filling this position was the subject that the Team spent more time discussing than any other by far.

It is impossible to overstate the impact that the leadership of David Oyler has had on the Presbytery of Lake Erie. Since being named General Presbyter, Rev. Oyler has become intimately familiar with both the pastors laboring within the presbytery and the 58 congregations which they serve. His experience has allowed him to routinely handle many issues that would likely have been elevated to one of the standing presbytery committees in other presbyteries. Within the past year, David made known his plans to retire and negotiated a revised contract that allowed him to reduce his hours to three-quarter time. It should also be noted that he is currently working part-time as Executive Presbyter of the Beaver-Butler Presbytery, a temporary assignment.

The Team's discussion on options for executive leadership moving forward included the following points:

- The discussion regarding the status of the general presbyter's position has been on-going for approximately 2 years.
- David voluntarily reduced his work hours to three-quarter time and there have been no noticeable issues that have arisen as a result
- David has refused to take an annual salary increase
- In a related issue, the hours of the rest of the presbytery staff have also been reduced
- The number of presbytery committees have already been reduced. Is there support and momentum to reduce/combine the committee structure further?

To assist the Futuring Team in resolving this issue, Rev. Emily Zeig Lindsey arranged to have MaryAnn McKibben Dana facilitate a discussion at a meeting in late September in Warren to specifically focus on the general presbyter position. History on the issue was discussed, options were brainstormed, members advocated for options that they could support and the end result was that three options were identified as potential solutions.

Three options identified are as follows: 1) Fill as a full-time position but advertise it as a temporary, transitional position; 2) Fill as a full-time position; 3) Fill as a part-time position (  $\frac{3}{4}$  time or  $\frac{1}{2}$  time)

### **Full-Time, Temporary Transitional Position (Preferred Option)**

This option assumes that the position will be a full-time, temporary position (assume 2-3 years max) to provide the leadership required to transition the presbytery from its current model to a model that addresses the many challenges outlined in the Futuring Team's report. Some members of the team felt this was a compromise between the full-time and part-time options.

Pros – Continues to provide the full-time leadership that pastors and churches have come to expect; the budget should support a full-time position for the 2-3 years expected to be needed to complete the transition; acknowledges upfront that the presbytery is transitioning to part-time leadership and its committee structure is changing

Cons – The temporary nature of the position may limit the pool of candidates for the position; may be seen by some that presbytery is just delaying the inevitable.

### **Full-Time Position**

This option assumes that the position will continue to be full-time as it has historically been prior to David Oyler transitioning to part-time. David's many years of experience in the position and his familiarity with the presbytery has allowed him to perform the required work in less than full-time. A new hire would logically need a period of time to gain the experience needed to be fully functional in the position.

Pros – Provides continuity of staff leadership; presbytery budget may support a full-time position for 3-4 years before becoming a financial issue; allows time for a person from outside the area to become familiar with the presbytery

Cons – The budget may not support a full-time position for more than 3-4 years and we will be in the same position we are now; this is a safe option but doesn't acknowledge the reality of our financial situation

### **Part-Time Position**

This option assumes that the position will continue to be part-time as it is now with David Oyler. Early data indicates that the responsibilities can be accomplished at 75% time but this may be slanted due to David Oyler's skillset and years of experience.

Pros – The budget will support the position at 75% time; an option would exist for increasing to full-time if circumstances require and the budget will support

Cons – Part-time position may limit the number of candidates interested in the position; a part-time position may require the candidate to pursue a part-time pastoral position to supplement his/her income (this actually may not be a con)

The Futuring Team supports Option #1 as the preferred option and recommends that the Coordinating Committee endorse filling the General Presbyter position as a full-time, temporary position. This would be a 2-3 year assignment and the candidate would be expected to develop a plan to transition the presbytery from its current model to a model that incorporates other changes recommended in this report and the many challenges facing the presbytery.

### **Prioritized Recommendations:**

In conclusion, here are our prioritized recommendations from our report:

- Prepare to hire a full-time, temporary General Presbyter in 2020
- Support new model for Resource Center in 2020
- Restructure Presbytery committees in 2020-2021
- Change from 5 to 4 Presbytery meetings a year in 2021
- Prioritize Presbytery budget dollars for children and youth in 2021
- Create/open to others interested the Children and Youth Task Force in 2021
- Encourage revitalization in congregations through missional thought in 2021
- Encourage churches to become a stronger community partner by reaching out to families in 2021
- Utilize technology more frequently for committee meetings in 2021

- Utilize technology for at least one Presbytery meeting in 2021
- Creation of teams to walk with congregations to gracious ends in 2022
- Creation of a resurrection fund for churches to continue engaging, expanding, revitalizing in 2022