

VII • Presbytery Mission & Program

7.01 New Ministries & Congregational Development

INTRODUCTION

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." With that commission Jesus Christ sends believers into the world to proclaim Good News in the power of the Holy Spirit. From earliest days, worshipping communities have been the foundation of the Church. The Presbytery of Wyoming, a governing body of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affirms that developing and supporting healthy worshipping communities is a major responsibility of the presbytery. Although the presbytery may work cooperatively with other Christian communions in these efforts, ecumenical cooperation will not take the place of a Presbyterian and Reformed witness to the Gospel.

In order to be good stewards of available resources, the presbytery establishes policies and guidelines for developing new ministries and congregations. In so doing, the presbytery affirms its intention to be faithful to the Gospel and to the Church's mission in the world; and to be pro-active, creative and flexible in responding to the needs of ministry in Wyoming.

DEVELOPING NEW MINISTRIES

The Presbytery of Wyoming develops new ministries in accordance with the following guidelines:

Development Strategy

1. **The presbytery will pursue demographic and other relevant studies to determine areas of growth with a view toward establishing new ministries or congregations.**
2. **The presbytery also may respond to direct requests from residents in a given area.**
3. **The presbytery will consider factors specific to Wyoming, giving particular attention to:**
 - Communities with growing populations
 - Communities not served by other churches, or by other Reformed churches
 - Native American communities
 - Communities that reflect racial ethnic diversity
 - Communities marked by a variety of socio-economic groups
 - Communities that have significant seasonal changes in population
 - Communities created by short-term business ventures
4. **The presbytery will cooperate with other denominations wherever possible and wherever advantageous to the whole Church.**
5. **The presbytery will encourage a variety of leadership alternatives to meet the**

needs of different situations (e.g. evangelists, commissioned lay pastors, tent making pastors).

6. The presbytery will consult with the Synod of the Rocky Mountains in developing mission strategy, and with other synods and presbyteries when appropriate.
7. The presbytery will seek to involve local residents in the development of new ministries.

Presbytery Structure and Ministry/Congregational Development

The responsibility for planning, strategy and oversight shall be vested in the council. It shall coordinate its work with the committee on ministry; and financial concerns shall be referred to the budget and finance committee.

Resources for Developing Ministries/Congregations

1. General Assembly
 - Office of Evangelism and Church Development (or its successor)
 - **Resources for stewardship development, capital fund campaign assistance**
 - Program grants and capital loans
 - Demographic studies and published resources
 - Staff services
2. Synod
 - Loans and program support
3. Presbytery
 - Mission and designated support
 - Staff services
 - Resources available through Percept
 - Project review and evaluation
 - Facilities (when and where available)

Identification and Selection of New Ministry Areas

Demographic studies will be completed and evaluated, and presbytery will have opportunity to review the data, before funding development of any new ministry by the presbytery. The evaluation process and subsequent recommendations will include:

- The type of ministry to be developed
- The nature of leadership required for the project
- Financial projections for development of the ministry, source of development funds, and projections for long-term support of the ministry
- Projected timeline for establishment of the ministry

Presbytery will approve the final development proposal before funds are committed.

Types of Ministries

1. **New Church Development:** A new church development project is undertaken when demographic and other studies indicate that the community can sustain a new, long-term, self-supporting congregation.

2. **Mobile Parish Development:** A mobile parish is developed when the population in a given area is temporary, usually for business reasons (e.g. mining operations or pipeline construction), but sufficient to constitute a viable worshipping community in the short-term. If a long-term community is established, a mobile parish may become a new church development.
3. **Extension Parish:** An extension parish serves sparsely populated areas. (The ranch ministry of First Presbyterian Church, Gillette, is an example of this type of ministry.) The ministry may be undertaken by an existing congregation or by the presbytery itself. If an existing congregation undertakes the ministry, the session will consult with the congregational development work group and other appropriate presbytery units, and will exercise oversight of the ministry. If the presbytery itself undertakes the new ministry, project development and oversight provisions will apply.

Project Development & Oversight

The following process applies to all new ministries developed by the presbytery.

1. **Steering Committee:** A steering committee recommended by the congregational development work group and elected by the presbytery will coordinate the project and develop a design for mission. The steering committee and congregational development work group will consult regularly; and the work group will report quarterly progress reports and evaluations to the presbytery. Presbytery must approve the mission design before a search for pastoral leadership commences.
2. **Pastoral Leadership:** Following approval of the mission design, presbytery will elect a search committee comprised of representatives from the project steering committee and the presbytery at-large. Depending on the type of ministry being developed and the design for mission, the search committee will conduct an open search process for pastoral leadership, exploring alternative forms of leadership as appropriate. The committee on ministry will provide liaison services to the committee. Presbytery will approve the call extended for pastoral service in accordance with established procedures. The pastor, evangelist, commissioned lay pastor or other person in leadership will become an employee of the presbytery. The organizing pastor of a new church development may subsequently be called to become the pastor of the new congregation, subject to provisions of the *Book of Order*.
3. **Chartering of New Congregations:** New congregations will be organized/chartered in accordance with provisions of the *Book of Order*, and under the guidance of the presbytery. In each instance, presbytery shall determine requirements for the number of members necessary for chartering during the development stage of the project.