

God's Preferred Future for Albany Presbytery Is....

- Relationship to other Denominations
- More Spiritual Depth, Less Institutional Attachment
- More reaching out to an underserved population
- How to bring churches into the 21st Century?
- Willingness to use new ways for communication and media
- Be in meaningful communion with other Christians
- To be a Presbytery that is flexible and invites and trains new leaders
- To be open to new idea and new ways of doing things
- Organic groups within Presbytery nurturing individuals within groups
- Be open to accepting differences and including outsiders
- God's preferred future might be to be proactive in local denominational mergers and cooperation
- More theological reflection
- Bring those churches on the very fringes of the Presbytery into active involvement
- Teaching
- Growth
- Less focus on congregations, structure and gimmick and more focus on study of scripture and prayer
- Maybe God wants Albany Presbytery to hold onto both conservative grounding and liberal imagination
- Having to face Presbytery in a different, maybe smaller way
- There is more beyond the way it has already been
- That we don't worry about our individuality but join communion to pray together
- Being a good witness to the lost. Bringing people to Christ. Teaching God's word
- Invite energizing speakers on racism like Cornel West
- More involvement in the "halls of power" within our bounds, the State Capital etc.
- That we continue to listen to Him and stand on His word
- God's preferred future is a restoration of original Shalom
- Light in the darkness
- Share resources freely as each need
- Laity really feel part of Presbytery
- That Christ be formed in us. That we are one mind in Christ. That our willingness to disagree is done with humility of Christ.
- Involvement in things that matter
- Less focus on structure, paperwork and committee meetings
- How to be a tabernacle people when the temple is falling
- More interactions with nearby Presbyterian churches
- Create acceptance of new ways of being church and support them

God's Preferred Future for Albany Presbytery Is....

- Social justice
- Joining our bounds with other Presbyteries, sharing staff and resources across existing Presbytery lines
- New worshipping communities
- A heart for the lost
- Those who have been in leadership for a long time letting go and allowing others to pick up the reins.
- Trusting the younger generations. Power is concentrated.
- Freedom to follow the Holy Spirit, trusting in God's sovereignty
- A heart for the lost
- Attract our youth
- Grow or plant a couple new churches
- Love one another and care for each other
- "Investing our talents" greater outreach to spread the word of what Presbyterianism is all about to the greater community
- More mission
- Play
- That the Presbytery's reputation is as active engagement in our society in Jesus' name
- Churches finding new/renewed vision
- Relevant
- Social action
- Giving care of creation top priority
- Repentance that draws us into deeper communion with God and community with each other
- Racially diverse with awareness of white privilege and systemic racism
- That we seek not to please man but to please God in all the Presbytery agendas
- Helps us to determine what will draw people to our congregations
- Theological
- Compassion for all perspectives
- Mission
- Greater empowerment of people as servant leaders and strategic use of professional leaders
- Open to more changes even after we move through this time of "transition"
- Joy and freedom
- For us to be in shared ministry with our neighboring Presbyteries. To think beyond our borders.
- Living out of abundance not scarcity
- That we don't worry about our individuality but join communities together to pray and worship
- Growing in wisdom and faithfulness
- Faithfulness

God's Preferred Future for Albany Presbytery Is....

- To be a Presbytery that intentionally reaches out to new communities, especially immigrants
- Decrease hunger
- Realize that we will not need huge edifices to worship in
- To help our churches think with the changes in society
- Journey: where are we headed?
- Getting past the issues that divide us and focusing on the ones that unite us
- Greater inclusiveness and less elitism
- To know what "season" we are in—signs of the times and respond
- Provide tools for stretching understandings of faithfulness and know how to explore ways to express them
- To serve but not dictate to the churches of the Presbytery
- Sharing Jesus' love in our communities
- More support for pastors study and support groups
- Mission minded
- Read Bible stories
- Experiment all over even if it doesn't work
- Active conversations worshiping and leadership development on racism and sexism
- We look different because new people have made us different
- A more diverse body with ecumenical cooperation
- Sticking together no matter the path
- More togetherness that actually includes all willing. No more in-groups and out-groups
- Help those churches that do not accept new ideas develop an understanding and sense of cooperation
- Find ways to reinvigorate the weary, fill the pitcher up, we cannot always be pouring out
- Empowerment
- How to bring younger people back to church
- Decrease joblessness
- To care for those in need, our neighbors. Care is physical and spiritual.
- Finding one great common goal for us to all engage in.
- Fewer meetings
- Facilitate healing among us and around us. Radiating out beyond denominational bounds too.
- Decrease homelessness
- Find new ways to engage "disengaged" those who are spiritual but not religious
- God preferred future is revealed rather than created
- Form a responsive plan for when something happens like Ferguson. Coordinate responses, hymns, worship, prayers, food, and trips to site.
- Beatitudes...continuing to promote the social justice agenda of Jesus

God's Preferred Future for Albany Presbytery Is....

- Strengthen the churches that are in trouble. Keep them going
- Encourage newness of worship and ways of being church
- Affecting the wider society, the un-churched
- A greater understanding of the needs of congregations
- Less formality and more joy and love
- Someone who didn't feel welcome in church comes to know they are accepted by God
- All are welcomed
- Greater inclusiveness continues, like our latest steps nationally
- To be a fellowship of believers
- To share goodness in word and deed
- Energized
- Expanding invitations and welcome. Innovation in connecting community
- Doing hands-on, hands-dirty ministry together when we meet. And to meet more often into more diverse congregations.
- Evangelism
- Compassion for all
- Bravery
- More shared ministries
- Follow His Word
- To be flexible in what we do to have churches that accept change
- Repentance
- Ecumenical
- True Engagement with the world, our cities, towns and neighborhoods
- Farm Church or House Church
- Celebrate together
- Merry
- A deepening of prayer and contemplation
- New ways of fostering our community and increasing our relational fellowship
- More flexible Presbytery structure
- Provide leadership training
- Share stories of faithfulness by churches to embody grace in ways that touch people outside of church
- God's preferred future is hidden in the present
- Collegiality
- The Presbytery that lets go of old ways of doing things in order to reach new generations with the Gospel
- Fewer children are in poverty in our communities
- A community of congregations actively engaged in ministry and mission in our region
- People freed from pews

God's Preferred Future for Albany Presbytery Is....

- That the church will become more concerned with the life of the world and not of our own survival.
- Clarity and vision and eager participation
- Community more important than being right
- That our churches make people smile when they hear our name
- That the church will be an authentic multicultural tapestry mirroring God's world
- Meet once a year for three days
- Assistance to congregations. A positive happy spirit
- Look to the future faster
- That we notice that our way of "doing church" no longer works
- Technology assisting connections
- To be a fellowship of believers
- Celebrations, communion, less structure
- Teaching—PCUSA, 1001, Ecumenical
- Fewer meetings
- Social Justice, decreasing hunger, voice for the community, advocate, raising minimum wage, decrease in homelessness, joblessness
- Know what season we are in and respond
- Evangelism—drawing people in, helping churches grow, young people care for neighbors, reaching out
- Receptive to change—smaller, more flexibility, less hierarchy
- Are we open to a smaller staff? Smaller buildings?
- More interactions with local churches in seasonal celebrations
- Common goals for common engagement
- Uniting issues, not dissolution
- Church to people not vice-versa
- Who do we love, how do we love them?
- Where are we headed?
- Loud Celebration—Visible public relations, marketing, invite into the community
- Joy of the Lord
- Greater understanding of congregation's needs
- Publicizing the good work of committees like COM
- Find a creative way to welcome new people and be open to whom we are sent
- Knowing/following the Word, witnessing and telling our story
- Boundary pushing, care of God's Creation
- Scripture and Prayer time together (contemplation and conversation)
- Leadership to RE and professionals
- Emergency (pastoral) response
- Unity and inclusion

God's Preferred Future for Albany Presbytery Is....

- Ordinary language, connecting churches
- Safe place and community
- Joy, freedom, expansive vision
- Resiliency
- Racism conversations
- Society engagement
- Truth-telling
- Covenant faithfulness to God and to each other
- Gather in a different way than we do today, longer retreats together. Some see this as a burden while others do not
- Supportive—involved in the broader community, not isolated but involved with other churches
- Compassion for all—wouldn't it be great if this were what people thought of when they think of Albany Presbytery?
- Mission—being drawn out in surprising ways, relationships between congregations, hands on mission
- Preference towards action and experimentation, if it fails, move on
- Risk! Be willing to risk and to fail!
- Assuming God is already at work in Albany Presbytery, we need to find these places
- Partnering intentionally with community structures
- What structures can be augmented or empowering. The problem is us vs. them or Presbytery vs. the congregations
- Liberating structure
- Knowing one another's stories
- Sharing stories, opening up about fear, "success story" and talk about struggling spots and stories
- We have a "barely surviving" mentality, this is not a good thing
- Socio-economic reality of getting people together. We cannot do without guilt
- Goal: Fellowship of Sharing. Structure doesn't allow for that.
- Is our concept of success wrong?
- Presbytery: Where you can meet the Risen Christ, when you come
- What feeds us
- Community, fellowship, sharing, stories, inclusive governing (not us vs. them), partnering with community groups
- There is a tension of demands for us
- Can Presbytery meetings be a joyful collaboration?
- 6 hours is a long day, shorter meetings?
- More integral worship
- Long travel time for meetings
- Two by two
- Decentralized, structure-less

God's Preferred Future for Albany Presbytery Is....

- House Churches
- Leaders are lonely
- Officer training-support
- Pool resources, fellowships
- Cross-pollination
- Presbytery role: Care for Teaching Elders or Congregations? These are two different considerations