

Second Draft for Albany Presbytery Mission Statement

Presented at Council, March 8, 2016

Who We Are:

We are a community of faith, united in the love of Jesus Christ, committed to feeding the least of these in body, mind and spirit.

We seek to nurture and support our worshipping communities and their leaders; We believe in God's power to transform individuals and communities into the new life in Jesus Christ.

We commit ourselves to ministries that feed all of God's people, and proclaim the love and justice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Context:

We have as our mission field the Capital Region of New York State and regions beyond it along the Mohawk and Hudson rivers.

We acknowledge that we live in a new era for the church. Where once our congregations were at the center of our communities, we now exist on the periphery. As residents of the Northeast United States, we live in a post-Christendom society where churches are more counter-cultural than pillars of community life.

This has monumental consequences for the worshipping communities of Albany Presbytery. Our mission field is filled with people for whom church life and liturgy are a foreign land. Our congregations now exist as mission outposts on the frontier of Christianity. We are missionaries to a largely un-churched region.

Our new context presents both challenges and opportunities. We need to discover new ways of being the church; new methods for proclaiming the Gospel; and new ministries to reach out to our neighbors in love.

Questions:

Feedback on proposed changes to our mission statement for the Presbytery.

What does it mean for you to be a part of a Presbytery that claims its role in a post-Christendom society?

What resources from the Presbytery do you need to serve as a mission outpost on the frontier of Christianity?

What are the opportunities and challenges for ministry we have as a Presbytery?

Mission Partners of Albany Presbytery

Capital Region Theological Center--began in in 2001 as an ecumenical partnership in theological education. We are transforming people in the Capital Region through God-centered, relevant and diversified educational opportunities. We help congregations find and use resources to support and further their ministries. Our mission is to: Equip with tools for developing and expressing faith; Connect people and resources, creating community; and Inspire a commitment to renewed discipleship and spiritual growth. The vision team is proposing moving CRTC in the 2017 budget to a resource partner, as it is not a mission service agency.

Troy Area United Ministries--TAUM serves all of Rensselaer County, and beyond. Anyone who walks in the door can receive hot, nutritious meals 4 times a week. TAUM mobilizes congregations to do the work of ministry. For example, congregations prepare food and eat with guests of the center. TAUM's Furniture Program gives good, used essential furniture free of charge (about \$250,000's worth each year) to recently homeless families, women and dependent children fleeing domestic violence, those suffering catastrophic event like fire or flood and to low-income families. TAUM's Troy Damien provides holistic supportive and prevention services to persons living with HIV. Our Computers for Kids Program serves as a meaningful summer youth employment program through which low income students throughout Rensselaer County learn to integrate computer technology skills with problem solving and career development. Campus Ministry at Sage is also a TAUM Program.

Schenectady Inner City Ministries--is an ecumenical partnership, founded in 1967, of 54 congregations (15 denominations) for ministries of social service and social justice. SICM, with and for the churches, addresses current issues such as food insecurity, affordable housing initiatives, health and fitness, various economic development initiatives, and collaborations such as the Committee for Social Justice, Community Crisis Network, and Schenectady County Embraces Diversity.

Union College Campus Ministry--has been a pioneer maintaining a Protestant identity while hosting an interfaith presence. We are engaged in strengthening Campus/ Community relations through Campus involvement in community service and church. We provide opportunities for enhancing the ability to reflect and process experiences to give life meaning while offering opportunities for student communities of care and support. Dinner and Discussion around Diversity is one of our main program opportunities.

SUNY Albany Campus Ministry--We bring students together by offering on-campus weekly worship, Bible study and social events. We equip them to make a difference in the world through our on-going hands-on service projects and advocacy work for social justice. The ministry is inter-denominational. The Protestant Campus Ministry shares facilities and programming with the Interfaith Center at UAlbany providing an opportunity to study, share and serve together with a variety of faith traditions.

Sage College Campus Ministry--welcomes those who seek quiet prayer and meditation; which encourages a space for felt experience: a place where older, honored traditions can be re-created to bring richness and depth to the present; which fosters individual development of belief systems through intellectual investigation and personal reflection; which is tied to the community beyond. The Sage Colleges, leading to concerted action for others in our city, country and world.

Our campus ministries are co-funded through a grant of \$5,000 from the Synod of the Northeast which supplements our mission budget of the Presbytery

Rural Migrant Ministries--works for the creation of a just rural New York State through: Nurturing leadership; Standing with the disenfranchised, especially farm workers and rural workers; and Changing unjust systems and structures. Rural and Migrant Ministry Inc. acts to overcome the prejudices and poverty that degrade and debilitate all members of our society by building communities that celebrate diversity, achieve true mutuality and offer dignity and opportunity to all. Rural and Migrant Ministry is an interfaith organization whose members believe that inspiration comes from participation in the creation of a just world.

Oakwood Community Center (phased out at end of 2016 as per founding agreements)--Our mission is to provide a welcoming place for activities that bring neighbors together and build bridges among grassroots organizations in the City of Troy, New York. We are best known for our Soul Café, monthly pay-what-you-can dinners that bring people together to cook, eat, and connect with one another. We also have a busy food pantry and we host a wide range of meetings, lectures, youth activities, and other community events.

We also give a mission gift to our two higher bodies in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

One to the Synod of the Northeast
One to the Presbyterian Mission Agency
Both of these are unrestricted

Questions:

Which of these ministries interacts with the life of your congregation?

Do you feel that the primary role for the Presbytery is in mission funding?

Are there particular ministries of the Synod of the Northeast or the Presbyterian Mission Agency that interact with the life of your congregation?