

Throughout the spring we have worked at honing our context/vision statement for the Presbytery. We discussed at Silver Bay that this was a context/vision statement we could “live with” and move forward into the next steps in our seeking together of God’s preferred future through our transitional journey. A descriptor that we have removed from the statement is “post-Christendom” but an alternative “definition/idea” about the phrase “post-Christendom” was offered for information at Silver Bay and seemed to have a clearer understanding than past ideas around this concept. That is presented here for information only.

Current Mission Statement

Congregational Vitality
Missional Living
Healthy Relationships

Our Context

We have as our mission field twelve counties in capital region of New York State and regions beyond it along the Mohawk and Hudson rivers.

We also encompass:

- The foothills of the Adirondacks
- Many places that are defined by mountain ranges, rivers and their watersheds
- Albany/Troy/Schenectady as a major metropolitan area with
- Glens Falls and Amsterdam as secondary metropolitan areas
- One country, in Vermont: Rutland
- The valley between the Berkshires and the Adirondacks
- The base of the economy in our region is agricultural (old and new) with a growing tech sector
- Diversity of many types of locations is present in the bounds of the Presbytery (geographic, economic, cultural, etc.)

We acknowledge that in the midst of this diversity we also live in a new era for the Church. Where once our congregations were at the center of our communities, in most places we now exist on the edges and are called to stand with the marginalized. As residents of the Northeast United States, we live in a pluralist and increasingly secular society where traditional mainline congregational life is less the pillar of community life and more congregational life is more a counter-cultural expression.

Our Vision

This ever-evolving context has monumental consequences and impact 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 & secular region.

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

We see this as a time of transformation and change, with the opportunity to be made new and to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ in fresh and creative expressions.

In this new time we seek to proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and to resource our life together as a Presbytery community of congregations that seeks to unite in love and to transform our communities in the spirit of reconciliation.

Alternative Definition of Post-Christendom as presented at the 2016 Silver Bay Retreat:

Christendom...

Attractional (if you build it...)

Dualistic (separating holy from profane...)

Hierarchical (structures drive expressions)

...To Post-Christendom

Focus on the journey of faith and the experience of God

Desire for less structure and more direct involvement by participants

Sense of flexibility in order and a distinctly non-hierarchical structure

Recognition that the experience of church is about the sustaining of disciples.

From mass evangelism to relational evangelism

From tribal education to immigrant education

From surrogate missions to hands-on missions

From reasonable spirituality to mysterious spirituality

From official leadership to gifted leadership

From segmented programming to holographic programming

From secondary planning to primary planning

-C. Jeff Woods, *Congregational Megatrends*