

Muskingum Valley Presbytery

The following slides were presented by Matt Skolnik on 03-08-22 at the Church of the Covenant with about 30 people in attendance. There are some key points that Matt shared during this gathering that are not written down and which should be remembered:

- This ministry model is not for every church (nor every pastor). The model is not about finding a next pastor nor keeping church doors open. The goal is to help congregations thrive instead of just survive while they learn to be stewards of the faith—handing the faith off to the next iteration of church life. Admittedly, considering the long arc of history, we do not know how church life will be structured 20 or 50 years from now.
- Nothing in this slide deck is written in stone. It is merely a formal starting point for the conversation. In formally, this presentation was preceded by several conversations with sessions, online meetings and a lunch gathering with elders and pastors from several churches. Concerns and feedback from ruling and teaching elders during the previous 3 months have helped to shaped the details and trajectory of this presentation.
- Matt joyfully participates in this conversation, and leads when and as appropriate. However, for a model like this to work, pastors and elders will have to take more ownership by the week. Remember, “presbyterian” means elder. Ruling and Teaching Elders are the spiritual leaders of the local congregation.
- Currently we have churches who range across the geographical north of the presbytery. We may have enough churches to create two cohorts/teams of churches.
- A key member of the ministry team needs to be an outreach/local mission specialist—and not every outreach/local mission needs to be “staffed” by current congregation members.
- The Mentor Pastor does not necessarily need to be a pastor, and could be called to full or part-time work.
- The Ministry Team could be comprised of Ministers of Word and Sacrament, GREs, ministry students, and non ordained/commissioned staff.
- Taking a next step is always paramount. At the close of the meeting, we offered several next steps for leaders to take ranging from scheduling conversations with potential church partners to inviting speaking to visit your church or session.

Church Partnership

Starting Point

Muskingum Valley Presbytery

To Thrive

Not *Just Live*

Past Questions

Attendance

Building

Cash

Better Questions

The Great Ends of the Church

1. The proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind
2. The shelter, nurture and spiritual fellowship of the children of God
3. The maintenance of divine worship
4. The preservation of the truth
5. The promotion of social righteousness
6. The exhibition of the kingdom of heaven to the world

— *Book of Order* (2017–19), F-1.0304

Better Questions “Marks of Success”

Worship

Sharing God's Good News

Worshiping with heart, body, & soul

Grow

Providing nurture & spiritual care

Teaching & learning the life of Jesus

Serve

Demonstrating God's Kingdom

Building healthy & whole towns/cities

Church Onboarding

- Demonstrate 6 months of session focus from structure & ministry, to relationships and vision (car, life-cycle, 2nd loop)
- Demonstrate 6 months of at least a monthly outreach to the community.
- Demonstrate 6 months of the blessing, sending, debriefing cycle
- Have an elder preach once a month for 6 months
- Build relationships with a church community who has a different socio-economic perspective than the majority of one's own church
- Participate with potential cohort churches in events in 3 of the 6 "Great Ends of the Church" themes

Ministry Team Profile

- Pastors and other staff must be team players
- Pastors and other staff must have the ability to work with individuals from a variety of viewpoints
- Pastors and other staff must be able to guide change together without being a wrecking ball
- Pastors and other staff must be able to take direction and guidance from a mentor pastor, and guidance from the Parish Elders
- Pastors and other staff must be willing to demonstrate, lead, and participate regularly in ministry that is in the trajectory of “The Marks of Success” & “Church Onboard”

Early Process

- Determine a Mentor Pastor
- The MP will work with potential sessions and the Parish Elders to design a ministry team profile.
- The MP will work with Parish Elders and potential sessions to get feedback and screen potential ministry team members.
- The MP will bring a slate of ministry team candidates to COMMITTED session, and the Parish Elders to be called for a DESIGNATED period of time. The ministry team will have designed ministry goals that are inline with “The Marks of Success” and “Church Onboarding” practices
- The MP will help the congregations and ministry team develop a covenant of ministry.
- The MP will work with the ministry team and COMMITTED sessions to implement a formal ministry start.