

## **Presbytery of Newark – New ministry structure**

### Rationale

*Whereas* recent changes to the constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the unique challenges faced by our presbytery present the presbyters and congregations of Newark Presbytery with the opportunity to improve our effectiveness in ministry, the supportive quality of our life together, and our shared witness to the love of Jesus Christ; and

*Whereas*, our presbytery's vision for our shared ministry is founded on our core values as a Gospel community of trust, collaboration, and servant-leadership; and

*Whereas*, with the Holy Spirit's inspiration, Newark Presbytery seeks to focus its work on defined goals and strategic objectives, provide for accountability in mutual ministry and in staff oversight, foster healthy communication, and better nurture our shared spiritual life together; and

*Whereas*, in response to years of difficulty reaching clear and authoritative decisions through a "flat" structure that seems to fragment the presbytery's work, with the floor of presbytery itself the only forum for mutual discernment and authoritative decision-making, Newark Presbytery has often found itself unable to align the work of its staff, commissions, and committees; and

*Whereas* the Newark Presbytery senses a call from God to a new way of doing ministry and a new structure to support that ministry; and

*Whereas*, aside from matters of paramount principle (Biblical authority and the Lordship of Christ, the unity and interdependence of the church, majority rule, participation and representation, and particular concern about sexual misconduct), our new Form of Government in the 2013/2015 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Book of Order leaves it to each council to order its affairs in response to God's call to faithful ministry in their particular setting; and

*Whereas* presbyteries in our Book of Order are required to "develop a manual of administrative operations that will *specify the form* and *guide the work of mission* in that council" [G-30106, emphasis added] and, furthermore, presbyteries are now granted considerable freedom to create subordinate structures: "A council may delegate aspects of its tasks to such entities as it deems appropriate, provided that those entities remain accountable to the council" [G-3.0106],

### Motion

**The Working Group / Implementation Team, appointed and at the direction of presbytery, hereby moves that Newark Presbytery establish, and delegate authority in governance and ministry to, a Vision Accountability Board (VAB)** as an authoritative and responsive leadership body, representative of and in covenanted relationship with the whole presbytery, as well as a new presbytery structure, according to the following terms:

## 1. Governance Philosophy Statement

The Newark Presbytery, as a covenant people called together by the Holy Spirit as the body of Jesus Christ, seeks to create and maintain a streamlined and responsive structure that supports and celebrates its member congregations and the mission of Jesus Christ through the larger church through faithful stewardship of all of its resources. These policies are motivated by the following principles:

- 1.1. That the presbytery fulfills its responsibilities as a council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) under the Book of Order.
- 1.2. While the full presbytery council is the ultimate holder of authority within the presbytery, it can exercise its authority as the Church of Jesus Christ most effectively by delegating that authority, and reserving for its own deliberations only the most critical and far-reaching matters.
- 1.3. For this purpose,
  - (a). **Governance** is defined as the work of discerning God's will for the future of the presbytery, making major strategic choices about how the presbytery's ministry will be carried out, setting major annual goals, delegating authority, providing nurture and guidance, and holding itself and others accountable for the use of the authority entrusted to them.
  - (b). **Ministry** is defined as the work of program leadership, management of staff and volunteers, and management of property, funds, and other resources necessary to the achievement of presbytery goals.

## 2. Vision Accountability Board

Thus, in faithful response to God's call to ministry and witness in the name of Jesus Christ, the Newark Presbytery hereby creates an authoritative body to be known as the **Vision Accountability Board** (aka the "VAB"). This VAB shall be representative of the congregations and presbyters that make up the Newark Presbytery and be accountable to the presbytery as a whole

- 2.1. Delegation of authority: Except as specifically limited by these terms, the Newark Presbytery hereby delegates all authority to manage its work and resources to the Vision Accountability Board.
- 2.2. Duties and powers of the Vision Accountability Board: On behalf of the presbytery, the VAB shall
  - (a). Nurture, equip and train the gathered presbytery in its life of worship, mutual care and leadership in Christ's name;
  - (b). Engage the full presbytery in continual reflection, prayer, and conversation about the presbytery's mission, vision, and strategy;
  - (c). Discern and articulate the presbytery's mission, vision, and strategy, subject to guidance and oversight by the full Presbytery;
  - (d). Direct, align, and evaluate the work of staff, leaders and constituent entities in support of the presbytery's mission, vision, and strategy; and
  - (e). Hold all constituent entities, staff, and leaders accountable to the presbytery's mission, vision, and strategy;
  - (f). Serve as the Human Resources Team of the Presbytery of Newark;
  - (g). Serve as the Board of Trustees for The Presbytery of Newark, a New Jersey corporation, in accordance with the laws of the State of New Jersey.
  - (h). Develop and adopt specific presbytery policies and guidelines for the carrying out of both governance and ministry, including, but not limited to, policies concerning personnel evaluation and support, committee and Ministry Team responsibilities, investment policy, mission priorities, etc.
- 2.3. Guidance and limitations for the Vision Accountability Board: Newark Presbytery reserves to itself the power to take the following actions, normally after receiving a recommendation from the Vision Accountability Board:
  - (a). Adopt the presbytery Mission Statement.
  - (b). Adopt the presbytery's annual Vision of Ministry.
  - (c). Adopt the presbytery's Standing Rules and By-Laws.
  - (d). Ordain, admit and dismiss members of presbytery.
  - (e). Establish, merge, and dissolve congregations and other worshiping communities, and approve merger and consolidations among them.
  - (f). Adopt the annual budget, upon recommendation from the VAB.
  - (g). Buy, sell, or encumber real estate.

- (h). Elect, dismiss, and set terms of office for the Moderator, Vice Moderator, Treasurer, and Board members.
  - (i). Hire, dismiss and establish terms of employment for the Director of Presbytery Ministries (DPM) and Stated Clerk.
- 2.4. Presbytery oversight of the Vision Accountability Board
  - (a). Monitoring. The VAB shall submit regular written reports on its work to the full presbytery. These reports will include adequate detail for members of Presbytery to determine whether the presbytery's mission and goals are being fulfilled, its funds and property managed responsibly, and that its congregations, ministers, and staff supported, cared for and ministered to in accord with Christian values.
- 2.5. Evaluation. The VAB shall convene an annual evaluation of its own work, inquiring into how well the VAB and its members have fulfilled their roles as set forth in the Book of Order and in these policies, and to what degree the presbytery's mission, vision, and goals have been achieved through the work of the VAB. The VAB results of this evaluation shall be presented and discussed at a meeting of the full presbytery council.
- 3. Standing commissions of Presbytery: In addition to the VAB, the presbytery shall create the following standing commissions:
  - 3.1. **Permanent Judicial Commission.** Three classes of three members, elected by Presbytery in for six-year terms, for the purposes defined in the Book of Order. (D-5.0000)
  - 3.2. The presbytery may create other standing commissions by adding them to these policies. It may also create temporary commissions or committees by majority vote.
- 4. Standing committees of Presbytery
  - 4.1. **Credentials Committee.** Reviews, evaluates and affirms credentials of Teaching Elders (G-2.0501, G-2.0502), Commissioned Ruling Elders (G-2.1002) and others in certified church service (G-2.1102) within the bounds of Newark Presbytery. Provides the covenant relationship, oversight and evaluation of Inquirers and Candidates preparing to become teaching elders and with their Sessions and congregations (G-2.0605).

- 4.2. **Committee on Representation.** Advises the Presbytery regarding its expression of the Reformed and Presbyterian principles of unity and diversity. [G-3.0103]
  - 4.3. **Nominating Committee.** Nominates persons to serve in all positions requiring election by the Presbytery (G-3.0111), including the six at-large members of the Vision Accountability Board and the following officers of Presbytery who also serve on the Vision Accountability Board: Vice Moderator of Presbytery, Presbytery Moderator, and Past Moderator (moderates VAB). The Nominating Committee shall also nominate persons to serve on the following committees: the Credentials Committee, the Capital Assets Committee, and the two constitutional-required presbytery entities, the Committee on Representation and the Permanent Judicial Commission.
  - 4.4. The presbytery may create other standing committees by adding them to these policies. It may also create temporary commissions or committees by majority vote.
5. The Work of the Vision Accountability Board (VAB)
- 5.1. VAB roles and procedures: The Vision Accountability Board will focus on discerning God's will for the presbytery, long-term strategic-planning and discernment rather than on administrative oversight of every aspect of presbytery life. To the extent possible, the VAB shall delegate management decision-making to others, balancing authority, guidance and accountability. The primary roles of the VAB shall be to
    - (a). Establish an annual Vision of Ministry for the presbytery, specifying top-level strategic objectives to be accomplished through the efforts of the Ministry Teams and paid staff;
    - (b). Lead the deliberative work of the full presbytery body, ensuring that their primary attention is given to discernment of God's will for the churches and people under their care, with particular attention to ensuring full participation and access to representation in decision-making and employment practices;
    - (c). Approve the presbytery's annual budget and recommend the budget for adoption by the presbytery.

- (d). Function as the presbytery's Board of Trustees, complying with all relevant New Jersey state corporate laws.
- (e). Function as the presbytery's Human Resources Team, establishing goals on behalf of the presbytery and evaluating performance of all paid staff with respect to the achievement of presbytery goals and the requirements of particular staff positions;
- (f). Monitor, evaluate, support and guide the work of the Director of Presbytery Ministries, holding her or him accountable for the performance of paid staff and Ministry Teams in their work of ministry.
- (g). Monitor, evaluate and guide the work of the Stated Clerk, holding him or her accountable to the constitutional mandate to record transactions of the council, keep is rolls of membership and attendance, maintain required registers, preserve its records and furnish extracts of records when required by another council of the church. (3.0104)
- (h). Advise the Nominating Committee of the presbytery's current strategy, goals and vision so that leaders' gifts and skills can be recruited and aligned most effectively.

## 5.2. VAB officers

The PC(USA) Book of Order requires only two presbytery officers: a Moderator and a Stated Clerk, and defines their duties in broad terms, adding that "Councils may elect such other officers as the council requires." (G-3.0104) Thus, in accordance with this proposal, Newark Presbytery shall receive nominations from the Nominating Committee to elect the following officers of the Vision Accountability Board:

- (a). **Moderator.** The moderator's primary responsibility is to preside and moderate at presbytery, ensuring that its meetings are productive, spiritually enriching, and appropriately focused on top-level missional and strategic matters. He or she shall be elected by the full presbytery for a 1-year term with voice and vote on the VAB, and shall work closely with the VAB to plan and facilitate presbytery meetings.
- (b). **Vice Moderator.** The vice moderator shall be elected by the full presbytery for a 1-year term with voice and vote on the VAB and shall work closely with the Moderator to plan and facilitate presbytery meetings. In the case of a vacancy in the office of Moderator, the Vice Moderator shall become

Moderator and the presbytery shall elect a new Vice Moderator for the remainder of the unexpired term. An outgoing Vice Moderator, if willing, shall have priority consideration to be nominated for the role of Moderator.

- (c). **Past Moderator.** The Past Moderator's primary responsibility is to chair the Vision Accountability Board, ensuring that its meetings are productive, spiritually enriching, and appropriately focused on top-level missional and strategic matters. The Past Moderator shall be elected by the full presbytery for a 1-year term with voice and vote on the VAB
- (d). **Stated Clerk.** The Stated Clerk's primary responsibility is to ensure that Presbytery records are kept in order, to maintain its roles, and to communicate officially regarding actions of the Presbytery (G-3.0104) and its Permanent Judicial Commission (D-50200). The Stated Clerk shall be elected by Presbytery for a 3- year term and shall serve as an *ex officio* member of the VAB with voice but no vote.
- (e). **Director of Presbytery Ministries (DPM).** The DPM shall serve as an *ex officio* member of the VAB with voice but no vote.

Note: The VAB shall elect from among its members a President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer.

The Treasurer's primary responsibility is to carry out the VAB's duty to ensure that the financial operations of the presbytery are directed according to its mission, vision, and goals and that presbytery resources are appropriately safeguarded and appropriately reported. The Treasurer shall be elected by the Vision Accountability Board from among its members for a 1-year term and shall serve as the Moderator of the Capital Assets Committee.

5.3. **"At-large" VAB Members:** In addition to its three officers, the Vision Accountability Board shall include six "at large" members, with voice and vote, representative of the congregations of Newark Presbytery. The presbytery shall receive nominations from the Nominating Committee to elect these "at large" members, each of whom shall serve a 3 year term.

5.4. Standing committees of the VAB:

- (a). **Capital Assets Committee.** Advises the Board regarding the stewardship and deployment of the Presbytery's capital assets, including invested funds

and real property owned directly by the Presbytery (but not including real property under the care of congregations).

- 1) Investments – The Capital Assets Committee in consultation with the Presbytery Accountant/Bookkeeper monitors, reports on and makes recommendations to the VAB regarding the stewardship and deployment of the presbytery’s invested funds and spending policy. Provides annual reports to the Finance Team, VAB and the presbytery. The Capital Assets Committee shall provide to the VAB, quarterly financial reports to show the overall financial position of the presbytery, including fund performance, real property valuations, etc.
- 2) Real Property – Advises the VAB regarding the stewardship, care and maintenance, use, insurance, security, sale of real property owned directly by the Presbytery (including Presbytery Center) (but not including real property under the care of congregations) and provides all necessary care of real property.

6. Delegation of ministry authority to the **Director of Presbytery Ministries (DPM)** and the **Ministry Leadership Team (MLT)**.

- 6.1. Except as expressly limited by this proposal and policies that it may adopt, the Vision Accountability Board hereby delegates its authority to *manage* the work of ministry and resources for ministry of the presbytery to the Director of Presbytery Ministries (DPM) and the Ministry Leadership Team (MLT), which shall be comprised of the acting chairpersons of all Ministry Teams (see below). In partnership with the MLT, the DPM’s main responsibilities shall be to fulfill the presbytery’s mission by achieving the Annual Vision of Ministry established each year by the Vision Accountability Board and approved by the presbytery – and to be held accountable to that vision.
- 6.2. Overall leadership. The Director of Presbytery Ministries shall encourage equip and support the lay and professional leadership of the presbytery, its constituent entities and its churches in all aspects of the ministry of the presbytery, particularly as that ministry relates to the pursuit and realization of the presbytery’s goals and annual Vision for Ministry.
- 6.3. Staff supervision. With oversight by the VAB in its Human Resources function, the DPM shall be the supervisor of the paid presbytery staff in their respective roles and responsibilities in support of the MLT and the Ministry Teams.



Note: the Stated Clerk, whose focus is on governance and supporting the work of the presbytery, constituent presbytery committees and the VAB, shall be supervised directly by the Vision Accountability Board. With the exception of the Stated Clerk, all paid presbytery staff serve both the governance and ministry functions of the presbytery. The Director of Presbytery Ministries (DPM) and Stated Clerk will evaluate the work of the paid staff as it relates to areas of work—ministry and governance, respectively.

- 6.4. The Director of Presbytery Ministries (DPM) shall be the leader of the **Ministry Leadership Team (MLT)**, comprised by the chairpersons/moderators of the principal **Ministry Teams** of the Presbytery:
- (a). **Congregational Vitality Team.** Encourage healthy, forward-looking ministry and witness through particular congregations.
  - (b). **Ministry Relationships Team.** Nurture healthy relationships between congregations and pastors and other ordained or certified leaders, guide congregations through times of transition in pastoral leadership, provide support in covenantal relationship during times of challenge in ministry relationships.
  - (c). **Leadership Training Team.** Plan and implement targeted educational opportunities for ministers, elders, deacons, teachers and leadership entities (sessions, etc.) in congregations.
  - (d). **Service and Witness Team.** Support, resource and coordinate ministries of mission and service to the community and world carried out by congregations and partnerships within Newark Presbytery. [Existing Working Teams at the time of transition will be coordinated by this team but may be assigned to different teams by the Ministry Leadership Team as the transition progresses.]
  - (e). **Property Management & Support Team.** Provide guidance, support and resources to congregations as they maintain properties held in trust.
  - (f). **Finance Team.** Monitors presbytery expenditures and income. As part of the MLT and guided by the vision, strategies and goals as set forth by the Vision Accountability Board, develop the annual presbytery budget for

adoption and recommendation by the VAB for approval by the presbytery.

- 6.5. The DPM shall be accountable to the VAB for the performance of the Ministry Teams as that performance relates to the pursuit and realization of presbytery vision and goals. In consultation with the VAB and advised, where appropriate, by the Committee on Representation, the DPM shall recruit and nominate Ministry Team leaders for appointment by the Vision Accountability Board. In order to maintain accountability and the pursuit and achievement of presbytery goals and vision, the DPM may recommend to the VAB at any time that a Ministry Team leader be removed. Such removal shall require the concurrence of the VAB.
- 6.6. In carrying out the ministry of the presbytery, the DPM shall consult with the MLT on all major decisions, and from time to time shall recommend to the VAB any needed changes in the makeup and structure of the MLT.
- 6.7. The DPM shall convene the MLT at least 10 times per year to collaborate and consult, coordinate activity, make plans, and advise with one another.
- 6.8. Members of the Ministry Teams shall be recruited by the DPM and relevant Ministry Team Leaders, with guidance by VAB and the Committee on Representation, along with the presbytery goals and criteria of effectiveness established by the VAB.
- 6.9. Through his or her work with the MLT, the DPM shall encourage and support the lay and professional leadership of the presbytery and its churches, equipping and enlisting them in support of the presbytery's mission and vision.
- 6.10. Guidance and Limitations for the Director of Presbytery Ministries (DPM):  
The DPM, in her/his directing of the Ministry Leadership Team (MLT) and support of the Ministry Teams, shall be accountable to the VAB for adhering to all relevant policies and guidance regarding conduct of ministry in the presbytery.