

Name of Mission Community:

Number of Churches:

Boundaries:

Purpose: Develop a deeper understanding of the Mission Community concept by those who are charged to make it work..

Process: Below are the guidelines as taken from our Presbytery Manual. This outline sets the stage for the work of the mission community concept. Please take time to read them and to understand what they propose. Then, in using your experience with your mission community, please answer the questions that follow.

Presbytery of Shenandoah Manual Adopted October 27, 2001 Revised Edition (October 2006)

4.5. MISSION COMMUNITY STRUCTURE

4.5.1. Mission Communities

4.5.1.1. Membership:

All churches and ministers within a mission community region shall ordinarily be considered members of the mission community.

4.5.1.2. Purpose:

The primary objective for mission communities is to develop mission goals and directions for churches clustered together for coordination, enhancement, and encouragement. Mission communities will allow the work of the Presbytery to be done more effectively and “hands on” at the local church level. The mission community can help develop local church leadership. The mission community shall not have governing body responsibilities.

4.5.1.3. Functions:

Basic ministry can occur within the mission community in the following areas:

Worship: Develop and provide worship experiences for on-going, seasonal, and special occasions. Mission Communities are granted permission of the Presbytery to celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at their gatherings when desired.

Nurture: Provide community building and educational opportunities.

Mission: Help congregations develop and implement a common vision for mission.

4.5.1.4. Boundaries:

The six mission communities are composed of churches in the following counties and cities:

The Eastern Panhandle: Berkeley, Jefferson, and Morgan Counties of West Virginia.

The Potomac Highlands: Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Mineral, and Pendleton Counties of West Virginia, and McCoole Church in Maryland.

Mountain Valley: Clarke, Frederick, Warren, and Shenandoah Counties of Virginia and the city of Winchester.

Central Valley: Rockingham and Page Counties of Virginia, the city of Harrisonburg, and Circleville Church in West Virginia.

Highland-Augusta: Highland and Augusta Counties of Virginia and the cities of Staunton and Waynesboro.

Maury River: Bath and Rockbridge Counties of Virginia and the cities of Buena Vista and Lexington.

(Some churches on borderlines have chosen to be part of a mission community outside their county lines.)

4.5.2. Community Coordinating Teams

4.5.2.1. Membership:

The mission community coordinating teams shall be composed of a lay person and a minister from each church in the mission community who are elected by the sessions of the individual member churches. A parish may have only a minister and a layperson representing the parish if it so chooses. A church without a pastor may have two lay representatives, one of whom must be an elder currently on the session. The convener of the mission community,

when elected, will be a member of the coordinating team, although he or she may or may not be the elected representative from a church.

4.5.2.2. Purpose:

Each mission community will elect a coordinating team to plan its ministry. The coordinating team will coordinate the work of the community with other mission communities, committees, and resource teams within the Presbytery. The coordinating team will work with the General Presbyter on a regular basis.

4.5.2.3. Duties:

Each mission community will have the freedom to plan and implement its own work. The following principles shall guide that work:

The program and structure will relate directly to the vision statement of the Presbytery. ***Shenandoah Presbytery: A Community of Christ for Worship, Nurture, and Mission.***

The primary focus for mission and ministry is the particular church. The role of the Presbytery is to encourage and support that mission.

The programs should be appropriate to the demography and culture of the particular geographic area.

The structure should be flexible and adaptable to the variety of needs of the churches.

The structure should be open and representative of differing points of view.

A convener, a minister, and a lay person will be elected from each mission community to serve on Presbytery Council.

Suggested activities for efficient operation include:

1. Help members understand the responsibilities of the Presbytery Council, the constitutional and standing committees of the Presbytery and the assistance that is available from Presbytery staff.
2. Develop a spending plan for the basic mission community funding and a process for responding to the possibilities of challenge grants from Presbytery.
3. Clarify the expectations the coordinating team has for the convener.
4. Consider the possibilities of sharing events with other mission communities and request resource teams as needed.

4.5.2.4. Job Responsibilities of Mission Community Conveners:

Serve on Presbytery Council.

Be the designated person for coordinating with Presbytery staff on administrative issues.

Sign, code and submit to the bookkeeper all vouchers requesting funds for the mission community.

Work with the mission community coordinating team to see that their administrative and program responsibilities and challenges are clearly assigned and an accountability process is set in place.

Maintain records of the mission community and accumulate the data requested from each mission community for evaluative purposes.

Questions for the Conveners: (Please answer and bring with you).

1. How often does your mission community meet?
2. a. What level of participation do you regularly experience?
 - b. Of the churches that attend, how many bring a pastor and an elder?
3. What is your current leadership structure and how does it change from year to year?
4. About your meetings: Are they more business or social in nature, and what is the typical length of the meetings?
5. Can you provide your budget statements for the last few years when we meet (the budget of the mission community)?

AT-LARGE-QUESTIONS

1. What are the ministries of worship, nurture and mission that have taken place within and sponsored by your mission community?
2. What events or programs has the mission community supported that a single church could not do as well?" (Give examples as well as explanations, please)?

3. What have been the challenges that your mission community has encountered over the years?
 - a. How has your geographic setting played into this?
 - b. How have the relationships between your sister churches shown themselves in the community?
 - c. How have specific events shaped the life of the mission community?
4. a. How do you transition from one leadership group to the next?
 - b. Is your mission community leadership and participation determined and led by clergy, laity or both?
5. How is your particular church's participation in the mission community determined?
6. How have the presbytery-provided funds enabled or limited the work of your mission community?
7. What suggestions for the structuring of the mission community, if any, would you advise us to take back to presbytery?