

Tri-Presbytery New Church Development Commission Operations Adopted April 29, 2010

I. Mission Statement

Believing we are called by God, sent by the Lord Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, the Tri-Presbytery New Church Development Commission seeks to discover, encourage, support, and develop expressions of Church in the Reformed Tradition, for the purposes of strengthening Christ's church and spreading the gospel to all people.

II. Operations Manual

A. The purpose of New Church Development is to provide for missional faith communities to bear witness to Jesus Christ as they live and proclaim God's Kingdom in the world.

1. All new and developing expressions of church will participate in the Great Ends of the Church in unique ways informed by their context(s) of ministry:
 - a. The proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind
 - Allowing the Great Commission of Jesus to shape every area of their life together, new churches see their first, foremost and final calling to be that of helping people to hear, experience, and respond to Christ's call to new life and discipleship.
 - b. The shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God
 - Taking Christian baptism as a sign of both new life and divine calling, churches help members discover and utilize gifts and abilities for ministry, relationship, and service in the Church's mission of bearing witness to God's kingdom in the name of Jesus and in the Holy Spirit's power.
 - c. The maintenance of divine worship
 - As the church's most clearly defining activity, vital worship is at the heart of community life, including prayer, the reading and proclamation of scripture, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, opportunities for self-offering (including financial gifts), and relating to one another and the world.
 - d. Preservation of the truth
 - Churches proclaim the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as revealed through the Scriptures, discern the movement of the Spirit, and seek to live into the new things that God is doing in the church and in the world.
 - e. Promotion of Social Righteousness

- Following the example of Christ's servanthood, churches follow God's call into the world, through ministries of evangelism, compassion, service, and advocacy.
- f. The exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world
- Churches cultivate and exhibit a sense of the holy in their life together and in their interactions with the world. By helping members to identify and live in ways that foster biblical faithfulness and integrity in all relationships, including practices of loving respect and hospitality in times of both agreement and disagreement, churches offer an incarnational and missional presence in their community and the world.
2. Each new church will work with the NCDC to discern and develop leadership (including staffing, as appropriate) and organizational structures that reflect and serve the church's Great Ends as well as the congregation's unique missional objectives. These forms and structures will remain open to change and adjustment called forth by new experiences and spiritual discernment.

B. The Tri-Presbytery New Church Development Commission - Role and Responsibilities

1. Cherokee, Greater Atlanta and Northeast Georgia Presbyteries have formed a three-presbytery commission, with all constitutional authority as prescribed by the Book of Order to oversee new church development ministry efforts within the geographical bounds of Cherokee, Greater Atlanta and Northeast Georgia Presbyteries.
2. All commissioners and liaisons of the NCDC attend quarterly meetings. Quarterly meetings are hosted by a new church development or constituted congregation that is engaged in the mission of new church development. Commissioners carry out our mission in additional ways between meetings, which are typically accomplished by service on various NCDC teams. Recognizing our wide geographical basis we meet in person whenever possible and practical, and often via email or teleconference.
3. Each presbytery elects seven (7) commissioners to the NCDC; each serves a three-year term. Commissioners may serve up to two consecutive terms. The responsibilities of the commissioners include:
 - a) attending, preparing for, and participating in quarterly meetings;
 - b) providing financial stewardship by offering their own resources to the mission of the NCDC and encouraging their congregations, constituent Presbyteries, and other members of Christ's church to give generously toward our shared mission;
 - c) celebrating the mission and ministry of our newest churches by supporting and attending the Annual Celebration (and inviting others to attend) as well as other individual NCD occasions that mark milestones in their ministry;

d) developing relationships with NCDs (including immigrant fellowships) that inform the commissioner's understanding of the mission and ministry of New Church Development in our tri-presbytery area;

e) serving actively on a designated team of the NCDC or serving actively in a special role or project of the NCDC (such as secretary, treasurer, liaison to a congregation, funds development);

f) staying abreast of newsletters, emails, and telephone calls related to the ministry of new church development;

g) sharing enthusiastically the good news of God's work through our ministry together, by informal and formal conversation with individuals, churches, and presbyteries.

4. Each Presbytery has a staff liaison to the Commission who works to ensure positive relationship of the NCDC with the various leaders, structures, and covenants of each constituent Presbytery. The advice and assistance of these liaisons embodies the connectional nature of the church and the joint nature of our work as a Tri-Presbytery Commission.

5. The Commission seeks to identify areas within the three presbyteries where the population is underserved by Presbyterian churches and where opportunity exists for the Presbyterian church to be a witness for Jesus Christ. The Commission supports and encourages many diverse and authentic expressions of church, and it has discerned that successful new church developments may be any or all of the following:

a) Congregations that are typically regional in nature and result from population growth either in developing suburban areas or urban areas in the process of renewal.

b) Congregations that include and engage people of various cultures and identities. Some of these are immigrant and ethnic congregations who minister to people of a specific cultural background. These congregations often serve in a bi-lingual or multi-lingual context, using language(s) other than English.

c) Congregations that self-identify as emerging or missional churches. These congregations respond within their context to unique mission opportunities and may function in ways or through structures that are non-traditional.

6. The Commission is empowered in the following ways:

a) To welcome into relationship with the PCUSA new expressions of church in the Reformed tradition, recognizing appropriate status as a new church development;

- b) To, when advisable or necessary, dissolve the relationship of a fellowship or new church development with the NCDC (and PCUSA) at the group's request and/or the discernment of the NCDC;
- c) To raise funds from churches, individuals, foundations, and other identified sources for the support of its mission;
- d) To hire staff, including an Executive Director, in order to allow the Commission to thrive in its ministries;
- e) To buy and sell land and property for NCD purposes within the bounds of the three presbyteries. These transactions of property happen with the explicit communication, collaboration, and consent of the presbytery, documented with a memorandum of understanding (MOU), with the understanding that property will eventually be deeded to the presbytery within whose bounds it is located;
- f) To develop an effective public relations effort with the congregations of the three presbyteries that interprets the work of the Commission;
- g) To elect appropriate persons to serve as a PNC for a new church development project and to call the organizing pastor;
- h) To act "as a session" for new church developments (including immigrant fellowships) to annually:
 - o receive members,
 - o authorize the administration of Baptism,
 - o authorize the administration of the Lord's Supper,
 - o respond to inquirers and candidates for ordination from NCDs,
 - o and, identify or recommend "next steps" in the congregation's ministry,

The above is typically accomplished during the congregation's annual conversation with the NCDC Oversight Advisory Team, though communication may occur more frequently;

- i) To support constituted congregations by encouraging their health and vitality, and multicultural congregations as they respond to a call to redevelopment and transformation;
- j) To create an annual budget asking for each of the three presbyteries to support that budget proportionately in relationship to the number of communicant members;

- k) To celebrate and recognize the constitution of a new church development as a church of the PCUSA, in cooperation with the constituent presbytery;
- l) To proceed with faithfulness and a sense of strategic balance regarding opportunities for new expressions of church in our region.

7. The Commission will make regular reports to each of the three presbyteries at their Stated Meeting, in conformity with the requirement of the Book of Order. At least annually, the Commission will include in these reports its financial report.

C. Relationship with constituent Presbyteries

1. The three Presbyteries serve as a mutually accountable and supportive covenant partners with each other through the NCDC.
2. All PCUSA new church development ministries, regardless of type, will be established in consultation with the Presbytery. This consultation includes, but is not limited to, consultation with the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry regarding examinations and membership of Ministers of Word and Sacrament within their constituent presbytery.
3. Constituent Presbyteries may, in keeping with the above commitments and according to their own structures, operations, and covenants, work with the NCDC to establish constitutionally appropriate ways to:
 - a) Develop an effective public relations effort with the congregations that interprets the work of the Commission;
 - b) Recommend to the NCDC the formation of fellowships, Pre-NCDs, NCDs and the chartering of congregations within the bounds of the presbytery;
 - c) Maintain personnel records for all clergy and immigrant leaders of all fellowships, Pre-NCDs, and NCDs, through appropriate COM procedures.

To God be the Glory, and in gratitude to Christ who calls us all to serve,

Tri-Presbytery New Church Development Commission
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