

Presbytery Joint Parish Committee

Proposed Description of this New committee

1. Purpose:

In biblical times, and throughout the history of the Christian Church, God has often taken action to renew and reshape the church for a new day. The exile was a particularly dark time in the history of God's people. It was during the darkest days of the exile that the prophet Isaiah spoke for God a message that renews the hope of God's people for renewal:

Isaiah 42:9-10, 14

v. 9: See, the former things have come to pass,
and new things I now declare;
before they spring forth,
I tell you of them.
v 10: Sing to the LORD a new song,
his praise from the end of the earth!
Let the sea roar and all that fills it,
the coastlands and their inhabitants...

v. 14: For a long time I have held my peace,
I have kept still and restrained myself;
now I will cry out like a woman in labor,
I will gasp and pant.

Just as God renewed the church in days of old, God does so again and again. This is why the motto of the Presbyterians and all Reformed churches has been *The Church, reformed and always reforming*.

Listening to the Spirit's call for a new song (singing of the new thing God is birthing among us now), we seek through prayer and commitment to reshape the way our presbytery prays and plans for the strength and renewal of the churches in the villages of the presbytery. The Joint Parish Committee will be a praying and planning committee of the presbytery comprised of members from the village churches to help strengthen the village churches and the whole presbytery.

2. Member Congregations:

The Joint Parish Committee shall be comprised of the congregations of

- a. The Ahmaogak-Akootchook Memorial Parish,
- b. The Aywaan Parish, and
- c. The Anchor Presbyterian Church in Anchorage

3. Meetings

- a. The Joint Parish Committee will meet in conjunction with the stated meetings of presbytery. Each church's commissioners to presbytery will also serve as a member of the Joint Parish Committee for that meeting.
- b. Besides the two face-to-face meetings held in conjunction with stated meetings of presbytery, the Joint Parish Committee may request the presbytery to budget funds for one other face-to-face meeting annually.
- c. The Joint Parish Committee can meet as often as needed by conference call or other electronic means.

4. Membership of the Joint Parish Committee

- a. Each congregation's Ruling Elder Commissioners to stated meetings of presbytery (ruling elders and commissioned ruling elders) will also serve as members of the Joint Parish Committee for that meeting held in conjunction with the stated meeting.
- b. Congregations may choose to send the same commissioners to more than one stated meeting of presbytery in a row, in order to allow more continuity in the membership of the Joint Parish Committee.
- c. All CREs and Each congregation shall designate one ruling elder to serve as member of the Joint Parish Meeting for those meetings not held in conjunction with presbytery.
- d. The Joint Parish Committee will elect its own officers. Committee officers shall include the following:
 1. Moderator
 2. Moderator-elect who shall serve as vice moderator and
 3. Clerk.

Officers shall serve for two years. The moderator of the Joint Parish Committee will be a member of the Presbytery Leadership Team with vote.

5. Staff

- a. Any teaching elders serving member congregations will serve as staff to the Joint Parish Committee.
- b. Staff may not become officers.
- c. Staff will have voice but not vote at Joint Parish Meetings.

6. Responsibilities of the Joint Parish Committee:

- a. Serve as the Native American Consulting Committee of Presbytery
 1. Assisting the Presbytery in understanding issues relating to Native Americans and Alaskan Natives.
 2. The Committee may be responsible for grants and their use within the goals and objectives of the grant and Presbytery goals.
 3. The Committee may be asked to address concerns, plan programs or workshops for congregations with a high percentage of Native American members, or in congregations with an interest in Native American perspectives. The consulting committees will be asked to be involved in cross-cultural education events.
- b. Plan, develop and implement plans that best strengthen indigenous congregations to serve Christ's mission to their communities and beyond. This work includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 1. Plan, Develop, and Implement culturally sensitive guidelines for local congregational church leaders that ensure the biblical importance of God's salvation to all humans, their lives and their cultures;
 2. Plan, Develop, and Implement a theologically-based statement that includes our creeds, etc., using the local culture to illustrate the intent of the creed, etc., that adds to the wisdom and understanding of the Bible;

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3. Plan, Develop, and Implement forms of worship that best empower indigenous congregations to serve Christ's mission to the communities;
 4. Plan, develop, and Implement guidelines to ensure that the presbytery continues to include the local indigenous persons in presbytery decision-making;
 5. Plan, Develop, and Implement guidelines for leadership development and mentor programs;
 6. Plan, Develop, and Implement guidelines to work toward ecumenical mission;
 7. Plan, Develop, and Implement Leadership Development that may include Seminary Education, CRE, or other leadership methods, including those that empower local leader to officiate sacraments, etc.,
 8. Plan, Develop, and Implement Cross Cultural Education programs and events to serve as guidelines for local churches and Presbytery.
- b. Make and give a formal oral report to the Presbytery of old and current issues affecting Native Americans and Alaska Natives.
 - c. Develop Strategies to teach local leaders how to evaluate successes and/or failures of their local church and how to address problems in a timely and adequate manner
 - d. Develop strategies for shared ministries between congregations and places as needed to enhance the witness of Christ throughout the Joint Parish communities.
 - e. The Committee shall consult with local churches annually about their financial and properties responsibilities to ensure that Presbytery Trustee and Budget Committees are adequately informed for budgetary purposes.