

Pastoral Leadership Options Exploration Team (P.L.O.E.T)
Blackhawk Presbytery Assembly Meeting Report
April 14, 2020

The PLOETs set their sails at the end of 2019 in order to explore how the congregations of Blackhawk Presbytery can continue to worship, despite the changing world, decrease in membership, as well as diminishing funds.

The team consists of moderator Mike Selburg; staff Nancy Dolan, Eric Heinekamp (and pre-April 1, 2020, John Rickard); Mission Committee representatives Diane Jochum & Gene Archer; and COM representatives Catherine Martin, David Spaulding & Roy Backus.

The team has determined seven types of ways for a congregation to continue worshipping outside of the norm: These models are: Partnership (multipoint), Hub, Gathering, Subscription, Destination, Streaming and 'Garden Plain'. A brief overview of the models is described below.

Partnership (multipoint): One MWS or CP serves more than one congregation (the traditional 'yoked' model). Could be with other PC(USA) churches or with other congregations of the Reformed tradition (or a combination).

Hub (based off a mix of Cathedral and African models): MWS or CP serves a specific church and leads a team of trainee-pastors (MWS or CP) who serve as campus worship leaders/pastors at other churches.

Gathering: Geographically-close congregations join together for worship services with one worship leader (MWS or CP) and rotate between the different church buildings throughout the year. Churches keep their buildings and get to worship in them at specific times throughout the year, while gaining the attendance of other congregations.

Subscription: Congregations can pay for a subscription of sermons written by pastors in our Presbytery. Worship is led by Session-appointed worship leaders, including someone to read the sermons.

Streaming: Congregations can stream worship services (minimally, sermons) happening at a different church (project on screen or wall).

Garden Plain: This model is inspired by our own Garden Plain Presbyterian Church. Guest worship leaders from the Reformed tradition rotate over a period of Sundays (depending on how many worship leaders the congregation acquires).

Destination: Congregations bring in guest leaders from the Reformed tradition and provide for them housing and possible other perks during their visit.

The PLOETs also note that congregations can take advantage of:

- Sharing office and worship staff with other congregations
- Partner with other churches in their community for occasional services or for other ministries and missions (Sunday School, Youth Group, mission projects, etc)
- Communal Space: congregations can either let go of their buildings and 'nest' in another church, building or home. Or a congregation can allow other congregations to 'nest' in their building, in exchange for rent money and possibly shared staff.

The team is finishing compiling this information into a user-friendly manual that will be used by COM. After compiling the manual, the team will create a training process for COM. Then, this will become possession of COM who will utilize it to help churches in need. Note, this is not hard-set this-way-only model. Rather, these are suggestions of ideas intended to create productive and visionary conversations. Congregations will make their own decisions of what they want to do. If they are able to blend some of these models, or if they come up with new ideas, they have the freedom to pursue that route. This is a fluid process intended to help congregations live into a new future while remaining together to worship the Triune God.

The PLOETs will continue to meet weekly until this process is complete, which we expect to be in early May 2020.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Dr. Mike Selburg
The First Presbyterian Church of Morrison, IL