



Presbytery of Great Rivers

Bringing Hope: Every Hour, Every Day

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Clerks of Sessions and Members of Great Rivers Presbytery,

What you have before you are the fruits of our ongoing transformational conversations around the presbytery, and most specifically the three online September townhalls where members of the presbytery specifically named together what kind of presbytery we wanted to be. The Great Rivers Presbytery Visioning Team has listened closely to what was lifted up, and from your contributions we have drafted the attached document of a 2020 Vision Statement that we hope will be able to take us forward into 2021 and beyond.

Before we can move further, we need *your* feedback. We, the Visioning Team, would love for you and/or your session to review this document and share with us your comments so it can better reflect who we are and where we are going together. It is our hope that any changes we make to our current model of presbytery can be guided by our aspirations expressed in this statement, so that ministry is centered and God is glorified.

Here is what we would love from you and/or your sessions:

- **“Does this reflect who you as a session (or validated minister, elder, etc.) feel we are called to be as a presbytery at this particular time?”**
- **“What specific changes would you suggest we make to better reflect what our aspirations should look like?”** *(feel free to mark on document and share that with us)*
- **“What would you like the Visioning Team to know as we continue our process?”**

We want to be accountable to each other and you. We want any structural transformations we make to most accurately reflect our shared hopes so that you can be best empowered for ministry where you are. We hope too that these conversations can move the invitation into this work beyond simply the committee membership and out where the rest of the presbytery is as well. As you reflect on the above questions, it might be helpful to consider how well this document speaks to your own local context. We are the presbytery together!

If possible, please have your session review this document before January 2021. Please send to the office at (office@greatriverspby.org) or 3601 N. Sheridan Road, Peoria, IL 61604. Let us know too if you have any questions! Thank you!

In this together,

The Visioning Team of Great Rivers Presbytery

2020 Vision Statement for the Presbytery of Great Rivers

We are followers of Christ. We are a community of congregations and ministries bound together by God's love. We are humans who journey through blessing and brokenness, striving to be faithful, in need of connection and community, grace and repair, guidance and support, affirmation and encouragement, solidarity and celebration. We have faith that we have each been gifted and charged to a specific work of ministry in our particular time and place, the kind of work that changes lives. We are a people who accept that the ministry landscape is changing, and that we need each other, and we affirm that God is with us and at work in our midst. We are a body that tries to live faithfully together through covenants rooted in our love for one another and a polity that seeks to foster accountability to our promises to each other, a polity we have the collective power to change as needed.

Our aspirations:

TRANSFORM We aspire to change, to grieve and to let go, to ask new questions, to challenge old assumptions, to seek joy, and to build different structures that more closely align with our mission. We aspire to make space for new partners, to assist each other with how we may fit into new realities where we may be unsure. We want to move into a new future together.

CONNECT We aspire to be together, connected and connecting, to each other and God. We aspire to keep relationship first and to encourage collaborative ministry. We desire the presbytery to meet us where we are. We want to contribute where we can make a difference.

SUPPORT We aspire to support one another personally, professionally, and holistically, to build each other up, to bear one another's burdens, to create space for mutuality, solidarity, and support. We aspire to listen.

SPIRITUALLY ENGAGE We aspire to be spiritually overflowing and worshipfully engaged. We want to be inspired and to share that inspiration. We want to glorify God above all and recognize the divine in our midst, manifest in the multitude of gifts around us, filling every space in our presbytery. We aspire to have intentional moments of prayer for each other.

SEEK JUSTICE We aspire to bless the range of identities in our midst, to embrace the leadership of peoples long silenced, so we may challenge each other and be enriched by the unique perspectives of others. We aspire to repair, reorient, rearrange, or reject what we must in order to build the Kin-dom of God on earth as it is in heaven.

RESOURCE We aspire to be resourced and resourcing, to teach and to learn, as we respond to the unique challenges of today. We want spaces to reflect on our effectiveness and sharpen our discipleship, attentive to our heads, our hearts, and our bodies. We want to be strengthened, trained, and equipped for 21st century ministry in our local contexts.

FOCUS We aspire to rally around a unifying missional focus by uniting around our Matthew 25 identity, centering the needs of the people as if we were serving Jesus himself. We want to be a meaningful presence in our communities and honor Christ's Great Commission.