

## Vision Statement

This vision statement for the Synod of the Sun is based on priorities of Mission; Relationships; Communications; Networks; and Assessment. Intended as a 3-5 year vision of what we are becoming and how we get there, the vision statement grows out of our core values, and the why and mission statements.

### I. GENERAL AFFIRMATIONS

- a. The Synod of the Sun is a worshipping body;
- b. Synod resources (both human and financial) will principally be outwardly directed.
- c. The design for mission will provide for one full time Synod Leader & Stated Clerk dedicated to facilitating and interpreting the mission, seeing to the governance, and overseeing the administration of the synod;
- d. While pursuing this vision, the synod will continue to fulfill its responsibilities as a council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in mutual relationship with other councils.

### II. MISSION

- a. The synod exists primarily for mission, and secondarily for governance; therefore, we seek to be defined by the mission we facilitate and do;
- b. We will fulfill our mission goal in partnership with presbyteries, congregations, networks, covenant partners, and denominational agencies;
- c. We will work to coordinate our mission and work together with other synods towards a common goal of resourcing contingent presbyteries and their leaders.
- d. We will work for the dismantling and eradication of injustices (including internal) based on race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, accessibility and socioeconomic status through:
  - i. Education & Training
  - ii. Shared experience(s)
  - iii. Building community

### OUR VALUES *adopted Nov 2013*

In response to God's call to corporate discipleship under the authority of Jesus Christ as Lord, and as a council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Synod of the Sun affirms the following core values:

**Faithfulness:** we honor Christ as Lord when we are worshipful in our work and theologically grounded in our action (Colossians 3:17; 2 Corinthians 4:5)

**Servanthood:** we follow the model of Christ who, though Lord of all, became servant to all when we recognize as a synod that our role is to serve presbyteries and congregations, and as commissioners that to be called is to be sent (Mark 10:42-45; Philippians 2:5-12)

**Community:** we live as the Body of Christ when we foster relationships, share responsibility, embrace diversity, and ensure every voice is heard (Acts 2:42-47; Romans 15:5-7; Ephesians 4:1-6, Galatians 3:26-28)

**Functionality:** we fulfill the call of Christ when we place structures and resources in service to mission not institutional self-preservation (Mark 8:34-35; 2 Corinthians 9:8)

**Responsiveness:** we build Christ's church when we train leaders, support mission partners, connect resources to needs, and communicate effectively (Matthew 28:16-20; Ephesians 4:16-18)

**Flexibility:** we empower faithful discipleship in Christ when we employ fluid structures and build self-directed mission networks rather than hierarchy (Mark 2:18-28; Acts 11:17-18)

**Openness:** we seek the Spirit of Christ when we listen for new ideas, voices, and methods in our midst; and practice transparency and accountability in our corporate life (Isaiah 43:19; John 3:21; 2 Corinthians 4:2)

# Moving us forward to respond and lead the changing church into God's future

## iv. and Advocacy

### III. RELATIONSHIPS

- a. A mission description for Commissioners, Committee(s) charge, and role descriptions for Chair(s) and Officer(s) will be developed and included in the standing rules;
- b. We will continue to renew our covenant partnerships using abbreviated documents, with increasing awareness of the needs and call of God on all parties;
- c. We will gather our Covenant Partners for education and fellowship at least every two (2) years;
- d. We will continue to support presbytery staff through EP and Stated Clerk Forum(s), and other leadership through various training opportunities as requested.

### IV. COMMUNICATIONS

- a. We will continue to offer a unique service to presbyteries through the Communications Services Plan;
- b. The design for the Communications Services Plan provides for one full-time Communications & Administration Coordinator, utilizing contract help where necessary;
- c. We will continue to develop the synod's Video Bank as a way of connecting congregations and presbyteries in mission;
- d. We will continue to develop and provide materials used for mission interpretation by Synod Commissioners and for congregations on Synod Sunday;
- e. Synod Commissioners will participate actively as connecting links and advocates between the synod and the presbyteries, networks, covenant partners and designated mission(s).

### V. NETWORKS

- a. We will be responsive to emerging needs and locally generated initiatives through facilitating networks of individuals, congregations and presbyteries for specific mission purposes.
  - i. Networks should ordinarily consist of participants from more than one presbytery and seek to fulfill a purpose beyond the reach of a single presbytery;
  - ii. A process for application and development of a network shall be reviewed and amended in a way that denotes responsiveness, trust, and collaboration.

### VI. ASSESSMENT

- a. We will develop and maintain a practice of Impact Assessment, reviewing and evaluating the impact of all that we do;
- b. We accept that "failure" is a perception as a measure of "success; in that vein, we will fail fast and fail forward, secure in our call;
- c. We will consistently seek the wisdom and call of the Holy Spirit in all that we do through the assessment of our impact on mission and exploration of new ways of carrying that out in God's creation.

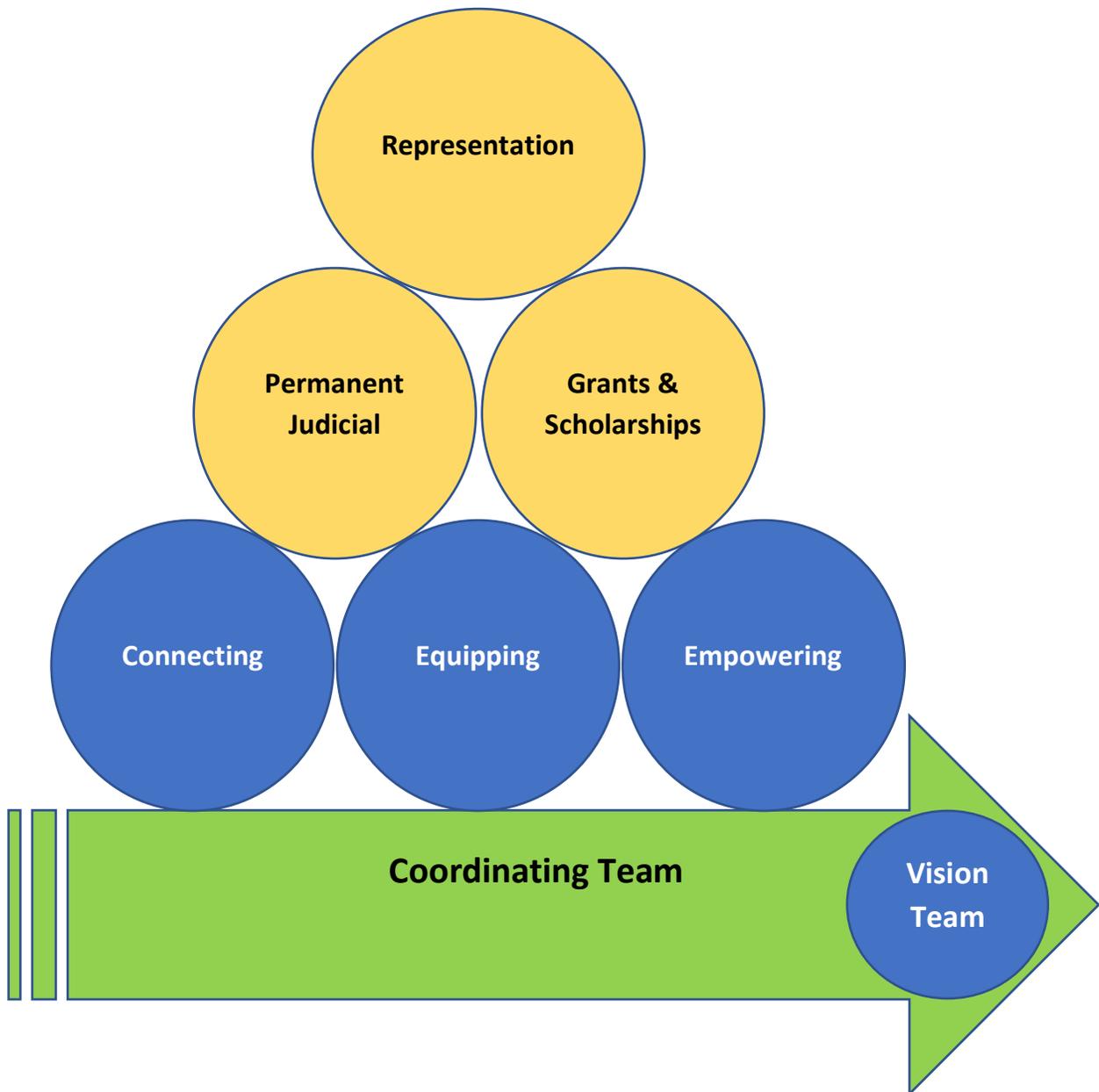
# Moving us forward to respond and lead the changing church into God's future

## OUR MISSION

*"The Synod of the Sun of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) serves Christ by connecting, equipping, and empowering Presbyterians for Christ's mission within and beyond the Synod's bounds."*

## BECAUSE

*"We believe when we work together across boundaries, we make visible the Good News and find wholeness as the Body of Christ. In our common calling, we impact lives together."*



# STRUCTURE IN SERVICE TO MISSION

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## **Plan for election of Commissioners to Synod (G-3.04)**

*by approval of presbyteries in 2019*

- Each presbytery elects one ruling elder and one minister of the Word and Sacrament to a three-year term, ordinarily staggered.
- A commissioner may serve no more than two successive terms.
- The synod, to provide racial ethnic balance among commissioners, will provide for the election of up to six (6) commissioners at-large.

**Servanthood:** *we follow the model of Christ who, though Lord of all, became servant to all when we recognize as a synod that our role is to serve presbyteries and congregations, and as commissioners that to be called is to be sent (Mark 10:42-45; Philippians 2:5-12)*

**Functionality:** *we fulfill the call of Christ when we place structures and resources in service to mission not institutional self-preservation (Mark 8:34-35; 2 Corinthians 9:8)*

# STRUCTURE IN SERVICE TO MISSION

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## Committees (Re)Defined with specific authority

**Standing Committees** (i.e., *Connecting, Equipping, Empowering, Personnel, Representation & Coordinating Team*) are each empowered to consider and conduct matters referred to it by the synod and as described;

- Each shall have charge of its own budget, a subdivision of the synod's operating budget; and authority to carry out their charge;
- Each shall begin and end their meetings with prayer and worship components;
- Each committee may coopt up to three (3) persons with voice and vote, provided Commissioners comprise a majority of its membership.
- A Committee quorum shall be 50% +1 of its membership

**Flexibility:** *we empower faithful discipleship in Christ when we employ fluid structures and build self-directed mission networks rather than hierarchy (Mark 2:18-28; Acts 11:17-18)*



**Functionality:** *we fulfill the call of Christ when we place structures and resources in service to mission not institutional self-preservation (Mark 8:34-35; 2 Corinthians 9:8)*

## SYNOD ASSEMBLY A place of. . .

- ❖ Worship;
- ❖ Conversation/Development to/for that which synod is uniquely suited;
- ❖ Celebration of Networks, Mission, Relationships;
- ❖ Local mission engagement;
- ❖ Affirmation of Committees' work;
- ❖ Approval of revised and final Synod budget;
- ❖ Other work as required/advised by the Coordinating Team.

**Faithfulness:** *we honor Christ as Lord when we are worshipful in our work and theologically grounded in our action (Colossians 3:17; 2 Corinthians 4:5)*

# STRUCTURE IN SERVICE TO MISSION

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## Connecting Committee

*Charged with nurturing relationships between synod and the world! (i.e. Congregations; Presbyteries; Covenant Institutions & Agencies; PC(USA) Agencies)*

- Presbyteries/Congregations
- Covenant Relationships
- Communication and maintenance of relationships (i.e. Synod Sunday; Video Bank; Conversations with the Clerk; Presbyterian Disaster Assistance)
- Develop new and creative ways of strengthening relationships between and among the Body of Christ.

**Community:** *we live as the Body of Christ when we foster relationships, share responsibility, embrace diversity, and ensure every voice is heard (Acts 2:42-47; Romans 15:5-7; Ephesians 4:1-6; Galatians 3:26-28)*

## Equipping Committee

*Charged with oversight and development of that which equips presbyteries and the synod to live into their call to ministry. (i.e. Synod Communications Services Plan, as well as Synod Personnel)*

- All aspects of the Communications Services Plan
- EP & Clerks (Forum; COM & leadership training)
- Develop new and creative ways of equipping Presbytery leadership and strengthening communications with and between presbyteries and the world.

**Responsiveness:** *we build Christ's church when we train leaders, support mission partners, connect resources to needs, and communicate effectively (Matthew 28:16-20; Ephesians 4:16-18)*

## Empowering Committee

*Charged with development, nurture, and empowerment of Synod Networks and providing deeper relationship through orientation. Networks should consist of participants from more than one presbytery, be responsive to emerging needs and locally generated initiatives seeking to fulfill a purpose beyond the reach of a single presbytery.*

- Development
- Support
- Maintenance
- Celebration
- Orientation and interpretation

**Openness:** *we seek the Spirit of Christ when we listen for new ideas, voices, and methods in our midst; and practice transparency and accountability in our corporate life (Isaiah 43:19; John 3:21; 2 Corinthians 4:2)*

**Functionality:** *we fulfill the call of Christ when we place structures and resources in service to mission not institutional self-preservation (Mark 8:34-35; 2 Corinthians 9:8)*

# STRUCTURE IN SERVICE TO MISSION

## Representation Committee

*Book of Order duties per G-3.0103*

- Synod shall elect from among members of the synod at-large (*not Synod Commissioners*), six members, each serving a three-year term;
- Shall consist of three classes except where initial classes of one and two year terms are necessary to establish regular rotation;
- Committee members shall be elected to no more than two consecutive terms;
- Committee shall consist of equal numbers of men and women representing a minimum of four (4) presbyteries;
- A majority of the members shall be selected from the racial ethnic groups within the synod.

## Grants & Scholarships Commission

*Charged with application process, review and award of funds designated specifically for the program, as outlined in manual.*

- Comprised of 5 PC(USA) members
- Chair shall be Synod Commissioner elected by Synod Assembly
- Elected from among members of the synod at-large (*not necessarily Commissioners*)
- Elected to rotating, staggered 3 year terms with a maximum of two consecutive terms.

## Personnel Committee

Responsible for the review and oversight of synod staff, development and maintenance of personnel policies, and management of hiring processes.

- One Commissioner each from Connecting, Equipping, and Empowering Committee(s)
- One member of the EP Forum as decided by the Forum
- One person not currently serving as Synod Commissioner

## Coordinating Team

*Charged with uplifting the work of Committees and visioning for the synod; approval of preliminary budget; assessment of impact; and coordination of Assemblies with authority to make decisions on behalf of the assembly between meetings.*

**Comprised of (11):** Moderators of Committees: Connecting; Equipping; Empowering; Representation; Personnel; and Grants & Scholarships Commission; member of the EP Forum; Synod CT Chair; Synod Moderator; Synod Moderator-Elect; Staff Resources – Synod Leader/Stated Clerk and Assistant Stated Clerk

**Functionality:** *we fulfill the call of Christ when we place structures and resources in service to mission not institutional self-preservation (Mark 8:34-35; 2 Corinthians 9:8)*

# STRUCTURE IN SERVICE TO MISSION

- Assessment of ministry impact relative to established mission, vision, values and why statements
- Synod Budget
- Oversee administrative function
- Nominating
- Acts on behalf of the Assembly between meetings
- Planning Synod Assemblies

## Vision Team

*Charged with vision and planning of the life and work of the synod, as well as an annual Coordinating Team Retreat. The purpose of the retreat is orientation and articulation of vision and focus, building team and relationships among the Coordinating Team.*

**Comprised of (6):** CT Chair, Synod Moderator, Synod Moderator-Elect, and one person from the Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk's Forum, Assistant Stated Clerk, and Synod Leader & Stated Clerk.

# DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE

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## Commissioners

### **What does it mean to be a Synod Commissioner?**

Commissioners serve as leaders and missionaries of the synod. They are called to seek and to discern the mind of Christ, interpret the mission and actions of the synod, and serve as an agent of Christ's mission in the region and member presbyteries.

### **What kinds of gifts, experience, and abilities do I need to have to be a Synod Commissioner?**

As the synod continues to grow toward a more missional body, there is an ongoing need to communicate these changes and to develop ways and means by which the synod can continue to connect, equip, and empower. The synod needs leaders with a variety of gifts and skills in the areas of media and communications, finance, and development, among others, and above all with a heart for mission and ministry.

### **If elected by my presbytery as a Synod Commissioner, what is expected of me?**

Commissioners are the direct link to constituent presbyteries and will maintain regular communication with their presbytery. Whenever possible, commissioners will secure time on their presbytery's meeting docket to provide a report of the work of the synod. Where a personal report is not possible, a written report will be provided for publication.

Every commissioner serves on one of three Standing Committees (Connecting, Equipping, Empowering). As a Commissioner to the synod, you are expected to fully participate in the life and work of the synod and your chosen committee.

### **Do I get to choose which Standing Committee I serve on?**

YES! God calls each of us independently, with special gifts for God's own purposes. We believe that you go and serve where God calls. Detailed descriptions of the Standing Committees can be found in the **Vision Plan: Moving us forward to respond and lead the changing church into God's future.**

### **How is the work of the committees accomplished with in such a large geographical region?**

Much of the work of synod and its Committees is conducted primarily through email, conference calls, and video conferencing between Synod Assemblies. Depending on the committee, it is possible that there will be an occasional face to face meeting in a central location.

# DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE

## Committee Vice-Moderator Responsibilities

- Works with the Committee Moderator and Synod Leader & Stated Clerk to call meetings, set agendas, and see that the Committee's mission is carried out in a timely fashion and with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love;
- Serves and participates in the life of the Committee, assisting the Moderator wherever possible;
- Communicates, interprets, and celebrates the work of the committee to synod and beyond;
- Provides open and inclusive space for ALL to serve: Commissioners and Corresponding members, as well as encouraging and recruiting Coopted service;
- Stands in the gap; In the event that the Committee Moderator is or becomes unavailable to fulfill any or all of their responsibilities;
- Wherever possible, serves the following year as the Committee Moderator.
- Pray for the Synod, it's committees and leadership.

## Committee Moderator

- Ordinarily, would have previously served as Committee Vice-Moderator
- Works with the Committee Vice-Moderator and Synod Leader & Stated Clerk to call meetings, set agendas, and see that the Committee's mission is carried out in a timely fashion and with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love;
- Assures that full and complete minutes, including committee budget, are prepared and provided to the synod staff in a timely way;
- Serves and participates on the Synod Coordinating Team by, among other things, sharing about the work of the Standing Committee;
- Communicates, interprets, and celebrates the work of the committee to synod and beyond;
- Provides open and inclusive space for ALL to serve: Commissioners and Corresponding members, as well as encouraging and recruiting Coopted service;
- Assures that the committee provides written policies for its work and presents those, and any changes, to the Synod Assembly for full approval.
- Pray for the Synod, it's committees and leadership.

## Synod Moderator-Elect

- Moderates the Assembly in the event the Moderator is unavailable;
- Serves on the Coordinating Team;
- Leads synod nominations work;

## DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE

- Serves, at times, on any appointed groups of the Synod that are deemed necessary by the Coordinating Team or Assembly for dealing with needs beyond that outlined for Synod Committees;
- Serves on a Standing Committee in agreement with the Moderator and Chair of CT, so that each committee has an elected officer;
- Represents the Synod at events beyond Assembly meetings as requested and appropriate.
- Pray for the Synod, its committees and leadership.

### Synod Moderator

- Ordinarily, will have served previous year as Synod Vice-Moderator;
- Moderates all Assembly meetings;
- Serves on the Coordinating Team;
- Works with Stated Clerk to plan the Synod Assembly docket;
- Leads Synod annual budgeting & oversight;
- Appoints, and at times serve on, any Task Forces, Teams or Committees that are deemed necessary by the Coordinating Team or Assembly for dealing with needs beyond that outlined for Synod Committees;
- Represents the Synod at events beyond the Assembly meetings as requested and appropriate;
- Serves on a Standing Committee in agreement with the Moderator-elect and Chair of CT, so that each committee has an elected officer;
- Reviews and approves the minutes of Assembly meetings, in partnership with the Moderator-elect, as prepared by the Stated Clerk.
- Pray for the Synod, its committees and leadership.

### Coordinating Team Chair

- Ordinarily, will have served previous year as Synod Moderator;
- Develops agenda and moderates Coordinating Team;
- Reports to the Assembly on behalf of the CT;
- Leads synod administrative oversight, i.e. Insurance Review, etc.
- Represents the Synod at events beyond Assembly meetings as requested and appropriate;
- Serves on a Standing Committee in agreement with the Moderator-elect and Moderator, so that each committee has an elected officer;

## DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE

- Serves on Task Forces, Teams or Committees that are deemed necessary by the Coordinating Team or Assembly for dealing with needs beyond that outlined for Synod Committees.
- Pray for the Synod, its committees and leadership.

### **Corresponding Members**

***Executive/General Presbyters (Presbytery Staff Leadership), Presbytery Stated Clerks and Synod PW Moderator*** serving within the bounds of the synod (unless duly elected as a commissioner) shall be seated as corresponding members of the synod with voice and no vote in the Assembly, but with voice and vote in Committees.

***Initially Developed and Submitted by 2018 Vision Task Force: Shelley Hernandez, Synod Moderator; Rev. Elizabeth Gabbard, Synod Moderator-Elect; Rev. Mitch Miller, Synod Moderator-Elect Nominee; Ernest Higginbotham, Assistant Stated Clerk; Valerie Young, Synod Leader & Stated Clerk***

***Revised January 2019 by Committee Leadership and based on Feedback at Assembly and further prayer and discernment.***

- Rev. Elizabeth Gabbard
- Rev. Mitch Miller
- Shelley Hernandez
- Rev. Jesus (Jesse) Gonzalez
- Rev. Harry Cooper
- Valerie Young, Synod Leader
- Edith Hill
- Sharon Curry
- Bruce Goodlock
- Rev. Tracy Spencer Brown
- Rev. Ron Sutto, EP

***Approved by Synod Assembly, March 25, 2019.***