

*Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart to revere your name. I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever.*

*Psalm 86: 11-12*

Greetings brothers and sisters in Mackinac Presbytery,

It is with deep joy that the Office of Vital Congregations welcomes you to the Preparation/Planning Year. As we begin this work in relationship together, you will find your **Getting Started Handbook** enclosed. Please make copies for your leadership and your pastors as you prepare to walk through this important year together. Remember, this 2019 Preparation/Planning year is crucial to ensure everyone participating feels ready for the vision cast, the commitment necessary, and the work ahead of us all. By the end of the year, we will discern those presbyteries who feel called and ready to begin the 1<sup>st</sup> WAVE of the 2-Year Vital Congregations Initiative in 2020 General Assembly in Baltimore.

Please mark your calendar of all important dates and deadlines. In the coming days you will hear from 2-Liaisons who will help go over important dates and deadlines as we get started. The first, Destini Hodges, represents the *Vital Congregations PCUSA Staff Team* member who will be in relationship through the Preparation Year, on a quarterly basis to prayerfully support you. You also have a Pastor Liaison, Phil Brown, who having written and helped envision the Initiative together will be able to answer questions, respond to issues, or help brainstorm on a monthly basis with presbytery leadership.

Finally, as a fun way to share in the joy and hope of this important work, we invite your presbytery to glorify God and enjoy God by joining in the “Tambourine Challenge.” We are asking all presbyteries to share stories and photos with us, so that we can let people know the revitalizing Spirit of God is on the loose in your presbytery and in your denomination. Please share your images of the “Tambourine Challenge” with [Monique.Rhodes@pcusa.org](mailto:Monique.Rhodes@pcusa.org). We will share those as we continue to highlight your presbytery’s preparation for Vital Congregations.

We have been praying with and for your presbytery for months, and we are so delighted you have answered God’s call to walk in faithful relationship together as we seek to be a more vital church of Jesus Christ. As the Psalmist declares, we pray that our Lord might teach us God’s ways and lead us wholeheartedly into the “new thing” Christ is doing in the Church. We pray that truth-telling and courageous acts of faith might reconcile, revitalize and redeem. We pray that the Church might live with undivided hearts, glorifying God in vital life together. And, we look forward to traveling this faith-filled and wondrous journey together with you all.

IN Christ,



Rev. Dr. Kathryn Threadgill  
Associate for Vital Congregations, PC(U.S.A.)



**Vital Congregations**

## **2019 Important Dates and Deadlines**

### **January 22<sup>nd</sup>: Presbyteries Contacted and Announced**

- Presbyteries are contacted by VC PMA Staff and VC Pastor Team Liaison
- Letter from Office of VC with: Important dates/deadlines; Handbook of Preparation; VC Manual; VC Immediate Toolkit; Registration Information for May 2019 Gatherings & Facilitator Training all go out.
- Presbyteries will be informed when Registration for VC events are live.

### **February 28<sup>th</sup>: Doodle Polls for Facilitators**

- Presbyteries will receive a Doodle Poll for quarterly meetings for Facilitators and Presbytery leaders.

### **March 18<sup>th</sup>: Deadline to submit Doodle Polls to VC Office**

### **April 1<sup>st</sup>:**

#### **1. Cut-off Deadline to Register for May Denver or Atlanta Gatherings.**

- All church pastors, one church officer, and presbytery leadership are to register for Denver (West) or Atlanta (East) Gatherings.

#### **2. Presbytery information due to the Office of Vital Congregations.**

- List of churches participating in the Initiative (begins on pp. 12 of Preparation Handbook)
- Names and information of Facilitators from the presbytery.
- Presbyteries identify whether they plan to begin in January or Fall Track 2020.

### **May 2019**

#### **1. May 6-9 – West Coast Presbyteries Gather (Denver, CO.)**

#### **2. May 13-16<sup>th</sup> – East Coast Presbyteries Gather (Atlanta, GA.)**

- Regional Gatherings for the presbyteries preparing to walk through the Initiative. Event is for Pastors, Presbytery leadership, and Clerks of Session to: learn about the 2-year initiative, plan for their churches and contexts, get ideas & training on the 2-year Initiative. The theme will center around Wonder & the Word – God as the transforming refuge of the Church, and the connectional gift of the Community of faith.

### **June 20<sup>th</sup>: Registration Deadline for Facilitator Training Post-Big Tent**

- A minimum of 2-Facilitators should be registered for Big Tent and/or Facilitator Training in Baltimore, MD.
  - August 1-3<sup>rd</sup> – Big Tent
  - August 4-6<sup>th</sup> – Facilitator Training

## August 2019

1. August 1-3<sup>rd</sup> – Big Tent-Baltimore
2. August 4-6<sup>th</sup> – Vital Congregations Facilitator Training-Baltimore

## Fall 2019

### 1. Fall 2019: 1<sup>st</sup> Wave Presbyteries: Continue Planning Year

- All presbyteries work individually through the Planning Year Handbook in: Forming Pastor Cohorts; Sharing the Vision of Vital Congregations with Pastors, Sessions, Staff, and churches; monthly planning tips; worship liturgies and more.
  - *Note: Your VC PMA Staff Team and VC Team Liaisons will be in contact and available for questions.*

### 2. October 14-17, 2019: National Vital Congregations & 1001 Conference *(Optional Event)*

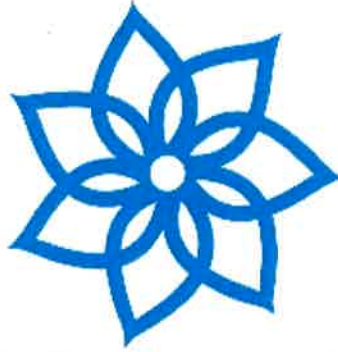
- Location: Kansas City, KS
- Dates: October 14-17<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- Theme: The Church: Then, Now, and Beyond
- TFE hosts a Vital Congregations & 1001 Conference together. This is open to all the PC(USA). Registration Information will be shared as soon as it is available. Vital Congregations will host workshops delving deeper into the 7-Marks.

### 3. November 25, 2019: Christ the King Sunday/Advent of Vital Congregations

- Individual Presbyteries are encouraged to host an event to check-in with pastors; marks the end of Planning year; pray together for the Initiative.
- VC PMA Staffer and VC Team Liaison will do a final year-end check-in with presbytery.

## 2020 Launch of Initiative

- Presbyteries who feel called and ready, have determined and informed the Office of Vital Congregations whether they will begin the January 2020 or Fall 2020 (church calendar) Track, and will be officially celebrated in the Initiative launch at General Assembly in June 2020 Baltimore.



## Vital Congregations

THE OFFICE OF VITAL CONGREGATIONS, PC(USA)  
INVITES YOU TO

### THE TAMBOURINE CHALLENGE

As we prepare for the Vital Congregations Initiative, as we prepare to journey in the Spirit's power into faithfully following where Christ is leading the Church, we need your help in joining the band, and sounding forth the revival and revitalization of God! Please have fun with this! The goal is to have people asking where you got that awesome tambourine, and what is this Vital Congregations Initiative?!

1. **Pray:** For your church, presbytery, synod, PC(USA), and world.  
Pray for the work of Vital Congregations
2. **Proclaim:** Use your Tambourine to proclaim the joy of Christ doing a new thing in Vital Congregations
3. **Post:** Post photos and stories of your tambourine in a vital ministry around your presbytery.

QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT:  
[MONIQUE.RHODES@PCUSA.ORG](mailto:MONIQUE.RHODES@PCUSA.ORG)

**Office of Mission Program Grants**

Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA), Presbyterian Church (USA)

100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, Kentucky 40202-1396

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/1001-2/mission-program-grants/>

(888) 728-7228, Ext. 5230 / 5251

Fax: (502) 333-7251

[Tim.Mccallister@pcusa.org](mailto:Tim.Mccallister@pcusa.org), [Bill.Moore@pcusa.org](mailto:Bill.Moore@pcusa.org)

**PRESBYTERY GRANT FOR CONGREGATIONAL TRANSFORMATION  
(OCTOBER 2014)**

Date Prepared \_\_\_\_\_

Synod \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Presbytery \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Project Name \_\_\_\_\_

Web Site Address \_\_\_\_\_

**INTRODUCTION:** This grant is intended to provide funding to presbyteries in support of their efforts to develop a process for helping congregations to begin and continue a transformational way of life. Transformation is the process of intentionally moving into a new reality and way of being that helps congregations envision what God is calling them to be for their community and for the Kingdom of God. All churches are in some state of being transformed and presbyteries must have resources available to assist them.

The readiness assessment gives the presbytery an opportunity for self-examination as it begins the challenging task of leading transformational change. Such self-assessment is critical as the presbytery develops its process for encouraging and supporting congregational transformation.

**GRANT FUNDING AMOUNTS:** Presbyteries may request a one-time grant of ordinarily up to \$50,000. The first-year lump sum payment will be for up to \$30,000 and assuming satisfactory progress has been made toward meeting stated goals; a second-year lump sum payment of up to \$20,000 will be disbursed. A dollar-for-dollar match provided through presbytery and/or synod is required but waivers will be considered on a case-by-case basis, upon request. This grant is not intended to provide funding for congregational-level transformation efforts.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** This application is available from the [Mission Program Grants Office website](#). E-mail as an attachment the completed proposal (Parts 1 and 2) to [Tim.McCallister@pcusa.org](mailto:Tim.McCallister@pcusa.org) and [Bill.Moore@pcusa.org](mailto:Bill.Moore@pcusa.org) at the Mission Program Grants office. Proposals will be reviewed according to the cut-off and review dates schedule contained within the Manual of Administrative Operations and on the Mission Program Grants website.

**PART 1: ASSESSMENT OF PRESBYTERY READINESS TO LEAD CONGREGATIONAL TRANSFORMATION**

*The format of this document allows the writer to add typing space as needed to fully respond to each question.*

- Has your presbytery clearly articulated its vision for congregational transformation?  
 Yes (Please attach a copy.)  
 No  
 In the process of clarifying that vision

*Comments regarding your process (Required):*

- What tools have been most helpful to you (or do you expect to use) in shaping your vision for transforming the congregations within your presbytery? (Rank in numerical order of importance, with 1 as most important and 7 as least.)

- Prayer
- Bible study

- Study of demographic and congregational trends
- Purposeful conversations with congregations and pastors
- Purposeful conversations with Presbytery groups
- Guidance from a consultant
- Other (Please describe):

3. Transformation is a process rather than a product, a journey rather than a destination. How you will communicate that understanding of transformation to presbytery leadership and congregations? *(Required):*

4. Has your presbytery identified and recruited a representative team to lead your transformation effort?
- Yes (Please attach a copy.)
  - No
  - In process

*Comments regarding your process (Required):*

5. To what extent has your presbytery established congregational transformation as a priority? (Check all that apply.)

- Presbytery Council has agreed.
- Committee on Ministry has indicated an understanding of the need.
- Presbytery has agreed to make transformation a priority and confirmed a leadership team.
- The presbytery budget includes significant support for transformation.

*Comments (Required):*

6. Has your presbytery considered how it will deal with the inevitable conflict that accompanies significant change?

- Yes, and we have a plan in place.
- Yes, and we are developing a plan.
- Not yet, but we are aware of the possibility of conflict.
- No, we are not anticipating major conflict.

*Comments (Required):*

7. Which of the following do you consider most critical for congregational transformation? (Rank in numerical order of importance, with 1 as most important and 9 as least.)

- Evangelism
- Leadership development for transformation
- Mission
- Pastoral commitment
- Congregational commitment
- Strong faith component
- Familiarity with theory of transformation
- Outside consultant
- Other (Please describe):

8. Does your plan include an outside consultant? If so, identify them and the qualifications that prompted you to choose them. If your plan includes a consultant but you have not yet chosen one, what qualifications are you seeking and how do you propose to find the consultant? Comment on your presbytery's follow-up plan for continuing the transformation process after the end of the consultant's contract.

**Note:** While your presbytery may have the expertise to develop and implement the transformation process, if you wish to seek an outside consultant, contact The Rev. Ann Philbrick in the Church Growth Office, (888) 728-7228, X5514 or [ann.philbrick@pcusa.org](mailto:ann.philbrick@pcusa.org) for a listing of consultants and other related training resources.

9. Has your presbytery considered how it will evaluate and assess their progress towards congregational transformation?

- Yes, and we have a plan.
- Yes, and we are developing a plan.
- Not yet, but we understand the need.
- No, our priority is to get transformation happening; we will worry about evaluation later.

*Comments on your plan or understanding of the need (Required):*





# PRESBYTERY GRANT FOR CONGREGATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

## PART 2: APPLICATION FOR MISSION PROGRAM GRANT FUNDING

The following vision of the church in 2020 may prove helpful in determining the areas around which a transformation process might develop. It is with this future in mind that the Mission Development Resources Committee will evaluate your proposal.

Churches in the year 2020, as a result of your work with them, will:

- Have strong, competent, and spiritually mature leaders whose roles are prayer and discernment for the congregations and who will lead their faith communities into deeper spiritual practices;
- Be worshiping congregations that reflect the cultures and ethnicities of their neighborhoods;
- Engage in building relationships and share their faith with others;
- Embrace their God-given missional opportunities with passion and equip people to meet those challenges in adaptive and innovative ways;
- Be places where welcoming strangers and showing hospitality is the norm;
- Accomplish great things by connecting and collaborating with partner communities.

The format of this document allows the writer to add typing space as needed to fully respond to each question.

Please answer the following questions.

1. What is your presbytery's vision for successful congregational transformation? What is the history and results of the transformation work in your presbytery?
2. Describe the strategies you will use to develop a process for promoting continual transformation. Your response should consider, but is not limited to, the following questions:
  - a) What are the needs, strengths and weaknesses of the congregations and their contexts for ministry and mission?
  - b) How will you assess the effectiveness of your pastors and sessions?
  - c) What is the vision of the presbytery for your pastors, sessions and congregations?
  - d) How will you prepare and support your pastors, sessions and congregations as they transform?
  - e) What training opportunities are needed and available?
  - f) Will you network or link congregations for mutual support during transformation?
  - g) How will you determine if your efforts are effective? How will you adapt if they're not?
3. How will this transformative work be continued beyond the life of the grant?
4. What is your plan for the education of the Committee on Ministry and the presbytery-at-large?
5. Include a balanced income and expense budget that describes how the grant will be used and how you will financially support the effort beyond the life of the grant.

### SCHEDULE OF PROPOSED INCOME FOR PRESBYTERY TRANSFORMATION GRANT FUNDING

<u>Presbytery</u>	<u>Synod</u>	<u>PMA</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____

The responses to the assessment and application were reviewed and approved by the appropriate mission strategy body of this presbytery and/or synod as fulfilling the policies governing Mission Program Grants. Presbyteries and synods participating as funding partners and giving oversight and assistance, date and sign below. Synod review and approval of this proposal is not required by the Mission Development Resources Committee if the synod is not providing funding.

**NOTE: If any signing below is a current member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, please inform the Office of Mission Program Grants Staff.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Presbytery Executive or Designee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Synod Executive or Designee

**CONSENT AND RELEASE**

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By my signature, I hereby certify that this Consent and Release is fully understood by me and is entirely satisfactory.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_