

The Presbyterian Church (USA)



VISION
2020

Invitation to Engage with the Guiding Statement

As you reflect, respond and are informed by the Guiding Statement, we invite you to try using it (in your ministry setting). Experiment with ways to make the spirit of the Statement “come alive!” Let us hear about how God showed up in the process.

Share your story:

#PCUSA2020

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INVITATION TO Engage with the Guiding Statement (PCUSA)

Introduction

What is Vision 2020?

- The Assembly Committee on the Way Forward recommended to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) that the Co-Moderators name a “2020 Vision Team” of fifteen people **to develop a GUIDING STATEMENT for the denomination and make a plan for its implementation with all deliberate speed.** The process of developing such a guiding statement will help us to name and claim our denominational identity as we seek to follow the Spirit into the future.
- Using scripture passages for our opening exercises, the 2020 Vision team held listening sessions with presbyteries, congregations, synod leaders, groups at the Big Tent, the Association of Presbyterian Christian Educators, Seminaries, and with Campus Ministries over a period of fourteen months.
- Some of the questions used in listening sessions are listed below. They are in this exercise as a way to invite you (your group) into vision work. Take a minute to complete.
 - Who are we? What makes us unique as _____ [Presbyterians]?
(your church/organization/ministry)
 - What breaks God’s heart in our (your) community?
 - Where do you encounter God’s joy, love and grace in our (your) community?
 - How is _____ [the Presbyterian Church (USA)] relevant?
(your church/organization/ministry)
 - What do we, _____ or the PCUSA need to let go of?
(your church/organization/ministry)
 - What do we, _____ or the PCUSA need to hold on to?
(your church/organization/ministry)
 - Who or what is missing “at the table” as we ask ourselves these questions?

Opening: Engaging the Word¹

As indicated above, each time the Vision 2020 Team met, we began by centering in scripture. You are invited to choose either passage (see attached):

- Habakkuk: 1:1 – 2:3 (*with specific attention to verses 2: 2 – 3*)
- Luke 10: 1-11
- Ask someone to read it out loud while you or the group just listens.
- Ask someone to read the passage a second time.

¹ Other texts to engage: Matthew 25, 1 Sam. 3, Proverbs 19:21, Matt. 26: 1-13. If using w/ group, divide into groups & assign each a text. This exercise is an adaptation of Lectio Divina.

During the second reading, grab pencil or pen as you listen to the passage the second time.

- Listen for God’s action or voice.
- Look for words or phrases that “pop-out.” Make note by underlining, circling or drawing.
- Make note of questions and the way this reading informs your understanding of God.
- How does this passage enlighten your understanding of God’s Vision?

Engaging the Guiding Statement (attached)

- With a copy of the Guiding Statement in front of you, read³ it out loud.
- Pause, take some time to look at each section.
 - Look for words or phrases that “pop-out.” Make note by underlining, circling or drawing within that section.⁴
 - Listen for God’s action or voice.
 - How does this vision invite _____ to participate in God’s grace-filled community⁵?
(you, your church/organization/ministry)
 - Make note of questions and the way this reading informs your understanding of God.
 - How does engaging with the Guiding Statement inform your understanding of _____ (or) the PCUSA’s Vision?
(your church/organization/ministry)

Closing (two options)

1. **Musical Reflection:** If available, listen to Tracy Keenan’s song, *This is Who we Are*.

2. Vision 2020 Guiding Statement Prayer

- We **pray** the Holy Spirit continues moving in life-affirming and healing ways.
- We pray we have the **courage** to speak, to engage, to hear, and to follow.
- We pray that we can be **united** in our diversity that we can find our commonality in our core – the risen Christ, who alone redeems the world!
- We pray that we will **serve** boldly and in a way, that heals the wounds of the world and ushers in “Thy Kingdom, Thy Kindom Come.”
- We pray that we would be **alive** with vivaciousness and a strength that is birthed only through knowing that death will never have the final say, that death becomes a necessary new birth for all who follow Christ.
- We pray that God, who alone breathes life, and makes hearts soft would speak with clarity

² If more than one person in the room, invite another voice to read the second time through.

³ If more than one person in the room, invite different voices to read each section.

⁴ Digging Deeper: What biblical narrative(s) come up in your mind as you listen to the guiding statement? Where or How does the Guiding Statement confront or convict you?

⁵ Digging Deeper: A Matthew 25 Church - pcusa.org/matthew25

through the Holy Spirit to each who are gathered and to the fullness of the church not present (today) allowing these simple (and simply challenging) words to become the guiding statement of what it means for us to be faithful people of God, faithful followers of Christ, and faithful to the voice of the Holy Spirit who dwells within, allowing us to indeed live into the fullness of what it means to be part of the Presbyterian Church (USA) **Prayerful, Courageous, United, Serving, Alive!**⁶

Further notes about the 2020 Vision Team's Process

- After listening sessions across the country (2017), the team met for three face-to-face gatherings to assimilate information, pray and listen for God's guidance and direction.
- The team was acutely aware of the time constraints and the deadline of producing information for the 2018 General Assembly. They recognized that the challenge was similar in many ways to what congregations, presbyteries, synods, GA committees, school boards, non-profit leaders, and a variety of other groups face during their own vision process.
- The words from Habakkuk, "wait for it," provided an adaptive centering. The team confesses to the pressure of our work, the time constraints, and the ever-present temptation to default to quick "fix-it" it answers.
- As we wrestled, we prayed, paused to listen, and reflected on our task
 - Read and listen to the words from Ecclesiastes 3: 1-4 and Psalm 130: 5-6.⁷
 - Reflect on a selection from Kathleen Norris's devotion on Time.⁸

Gradually my [our] perspective on time changed.

*In our culture, time can seem like an enemy:
it chews us up and spits us out with appalling ease.
But the monastic perspective welcome time as a gift from God,
and seeks to put it to good use
rather than allowing us to be used up by it...
Liturgical time is essentially poetic time,
oriented toward process rather than productivity,
willing to wait attentively
in stillness, rather than always pushing
to "get the job done."*

- Right as we were finishing our last face-to-face meeting (2017) the waiting provided reward. Each section of the Statement came together, and we left knowing we faithfully listened to the Holy Spirit's guidance, captured the essence of what we heard, and sent our draft Guiding Statement to GA 2018.
- The 223 General Assembly (2018) received the draft Guiding Statement, gave thanks to the Vision 2020 for their work, and in preparation for GA 2020, asked us to listen to some of their critique, make edits and come back to GA with our final recommendation.

⁶ Prayer used in Vision 2020 Team Report to the 2018 General Assembly PCUSA.

⁷ Additional suggested passages: Genesis 32: 22-32.

⁸ God's Time, Not Our Time: Kathleen Norris, 40 Day Journey (Our understanding of time).

Engaging the Word

Habakkuk 1 – 2: 3

The oracle that the prophet Habakkuk saw.

The Prophet's Complaint

² O Lord, how long shall I cry for help,
and you will not listen?

Or cry to you "Violence!"
and you will not save?

³ Why do you make me see wrongdoing
and look at trouble?

Destruction and violence are before me;
strife and contention arise.

⁴ So the law becomes slack
and justice never prevails.

The wicked surround the righteous—
therefore judgment comes forth perverted.

⁵ Look at the nations, and see!
Be astonished! Be astounded!

For a work is being done in your days
that you would not believe if you were told.

¹² Are you not from of old,
O Lord my God, my Holy One?
You^[b] shall not die.

**I will stand at my watchpost,
and station myself on the rampart;
I will keep watch to see what he will say to
me,
and what he^[a] will answer concerning my
complaint.**

² Then the Lord answered me and said:

**Write the vision;
make it plain on tablets,
so that a runner may read it.**

³ **For there is still a vision for the appointed
time;
it speaks of the end, and does not lie.
If it seems to tarry, wait for it;
it will surely come, it will not delay.**

Luke 10:1-12

After this the Lord appointed seventy^[a] others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. ² He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. ³ Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. ⁴ Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. ⁵ Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' ⁶ And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. ⁷ Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. ⁸ Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; ⁹ cure the sick who are there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'^[b] ¹⁰ But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, ¹¹ 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.'



Engaging the Guiding Statement (PCUSA)

Our Reformed heritage understands the power of words and we humbly offer this guiding statement as speaking truth and declaring life.

The 2020 Vision Team was mandated by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and charged with developing a guiding statement for the denomination as it moves into the future.

In the faithful desire to discern the will of God we listened throughout the denomination and beyond, hearing hope and frustration, expectation and anxiety. Along our journey even when it is hard to see the way forward, God has spoken and continues to speak to us in these times and places.

Therefore, God calls the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be:

Prayerful

- Confessing our sin to God and those we have wronged, we accept our responsibility for the brokenness in the world and in ourselves. In Christ we are assured of forgiveness and freed to forgive others.
- We ask the Holy Spirit to direct and guide us as we actively listen to Scripture and fully engage in the joys and challenges of life in this present world.
- By grace Christ binds us together, cleanses us in the waters of baptism, nourishes us at the Lord's table, and sends us out to share the Good News.

Courageous

- Reformed and always being reformed, we follow the Holy Spirit in new and imaginative ways to places we have not yet been.
- We foster the hope of reconciliation in Christ who transforms the world through healing individuals and communities.
- We work for God's justice and peace for all people in every land, walking with the vulnerable, the marginalized, and the abused.

United

- As members of the Church universal, we are Christ's disciples, called by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- Against forces that seek to divide, Christ compels us to bear witness to a love that connects communities across great differences.
- We approach others in a spirit of openness and trust as we follow Jesus Christ in respecting the freedom of other religions, worldviews, and traditions.

Serving

- Gratefully following the One who washed his disciples' feet, we listen to our neighbors, working to meet their practical needs.
- We partner with others to become the hands and feet of God in the world, showing compassion and generosity to all creation.
- The Holy Spirit pushes us beyond the familiar, meeting people where they are as we share Christ's transformative love.

Alive

- We are people of the resurrection: though death surrounds us, we are not afraid because we follow the One who was raised from the tomb.
- The Holy Spirit gives us courage to build a community that reflects the fullness of God's image in humanity: beautifully diverse in age, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexuality, physical and mental ability, geography, and theological conviction.
- In the sure and certain hope of resurrection, we joyfully testify that the Church and its members are called to follow Christ's model by risking all, even life itself, for the sake of the Gospel.

And so, God calls the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be: **Prayerful, Courageous, United, Serving, Alive.**

Thanks be to God.