

## Non-Congregational Partnerships

Direct Mission Support to Urban Community Ministries and Christian Camping: As part of our larger covenantal witness, we continue to maintain a financial "heart-print" on entities committed to strengthening children and youth in places where the cultural message is one of despair. They seek to embody the gospel as they address issues of racism and poverty, such as West Kensington Ministries, Chester Eastside Inc., and the Welcome Church. Our renewed commitment to camping at Kirkwood Camp - in partnership with Lehigh Presbytery - allows us to provide a safe faith-based outdoor experience for students throughout the larger region.

Our scholarships support students who might not otherwise benefit from a dedicated week of friendships and outdoor activities framed by a healthy theological understanding.

Partnership with the Philadelphia Chapter of the National Black Presbyterian Caucus: We continue to work closely with our African American leadership in the creation of opportunities to deepen our understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities of our African American congregations.

Self-Development of People: Currently in a season of revitalization, our Presbytery's chapter of SDOP has a long history of supporting community-based organizations to empower ecumenical and grassroots programs to respond to issues of poverty, violence, hunger, and a number of other issues that oppress and marginalize our most vulnerable neighbors. Each year, SDOP distributes at least \$16,000 worth of grants with room for more depending on funds collected from congregations through One Great Hour of Sharing.

Presbyterian Women (PW): Our chapter of PW continues to be a source of discipleship, fellowship and mission in their overall effort to work for justice and peace. In addition to supporting various ministries aligned with their mission, our local PW is deeply committed to alleviating hunger by responding to the food challenges in our region. In their effort they provide a liaison who works throughout the year with the 18 Care Closets located in our congregations. These care closets are also recipients of presbytery grant dollars.

*We invite our 124 Churches gathered and scattered throughout the Presbytery of Philadelphia to join us by becoming a **Matthew 25 Church!***

*May our collective witness continue to build towards congregational vitality, dismantle structured racism, and eradicate systemic poverty as bearers of the Good News of Jesus Christ.*



**PRESBYTERY of PHILADELPHIA**

CHRIST'S WORK ♦ OUR WITNESS

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**PRESBYTERY of PHILADELPHIA**

CHRIST'S WORK ♦ OUR WITNESS

**JOIN US AS A MATTHEW 25 PRESBYTERY ~  
BECOME A MATTHEW 25 CHURCH!**



**MATTHEW 25**

***A partnership with the Presbyterian Mission Agency  
to build congregational vitality, dismantle racism and all other isms,  
and eradicate poverty***



*"Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."  
(Matthew 25:40)*



- ◇ **Building congregational vitality** by challenging people and congregations to deepen their faith and get actively and joyfully engaged with their community and the world.
- ◇ **Dismantling structural racism** by advocating and acting to break down the systems, practices and thinking that underlie discrimination, bias, prejudice and oppression of people of color.
- ◇ **Eradicating systemic poverty** by working to change laws, policies, plans and structures in our society that perpetuate economic exploitation of people who are poor.

## WHAT MAKES OUR PRESBYTERY A MATTHEW 25 PRESBYTERY?

### Ministry and Leadership Incubator

The Presbytery of Philadelphia is blessed with resources - human and financial - that allow us to consider ways to equip our churches. We continue to grow this equipping model that incorporates institutional and congregational partnerships, leadership equipping, along with the encouragement of new initiatives in our congregations.

Princeton Partnership: We are creating opportunities with seminarians to come alongside pastors in our churches in teams of two in an effort to energize a new or current initiative. Since we launched this initiative 4 years ago, we've partnered with some 11 churches and 23 seminarians from Princeton Theological Seminary in this cohort model and ministry laboratory. We're in the process of expanding the seminary partnership model with Palmer Seminary and United Lutheran Seminary. In the 2019-20 academic year, we anticipate partnering with four churches and eight seminarians.

Leadership Training: We have provided opportunities throughout the years for continued learning through intentional Elder Training, Ideas and Grant Writing Seminars, Financial Management Workshops, and Clerks' Round Table gatherings. This past year we launched our first presbytery-wide Fall Fest which allowed for leaders from within our presbytery to lead and engage others in timely topics.

Ecumenical Equipping: With the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, we have created an annual equipping event that has brought together more than 200 participants from around the greater regions and denominations. These events are focused on offering leadership approaches that respond to the needs of the current and ever-changing church, ranging from Money, Media, and Mission to the recent Canoeing the Mountains event with Tod Bolsinger.

Courageous Conversations: Through both presbytery-wide and regional gatherings, we've created opportunities for continued growth and understanding by tackling challenging conversations on race, bias and privilege, and immigration. We've engaged these topics through fishbowl panel presentations and small groups. We have also participated formally with partners such as Crossroads and Coming to the Table in their efforts to address systemic racism and consider how to dismantle it in our local communities.

### Strategic Ministry Initiatives in Economically Impoverished Areas

West Philadelphia Presbyterian Partnership: We are blessed by the openness of several congregations and the investment of insurance dollars from a tragic fire, three congregations have "left their buildings" in an effort to replant a vibrant worshipping community built upon the courage and spirit of the first and early African American Presbyterian witness in our nation. This historic "replanting" and financial model will allow for a full-time pastor along with the building of a multi-purpose worship venue.

Chester Residency: This partnership with the 1001 New Worshipping Communities Residency Program of the PC(USA) and our only surviving congregation in Chester, T.M. Thomas Memorial Presbyterian Church is bringing about the reformation of a community. Through the gathering of caregivers along with the development of theater and other programming, this ministry initiative will bring together residents of that community to both worship and birth new possibilities. Chester is one of the most economically challenged areas within our presbytery.

300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commitment: Eight community entities received more than \$40,000 each as part of our 2017 campaign to raise \$300,000 for 300 years of our Presbytery's existence. 2018 saw the final distribution of these dollars. These entities each demonstrated a commitment to improving the education of children, interrupting the school to prison pipeline and working toward restorative justice.

### Encouraging Congregational Vitality through

### Grant Dollars, Ecumenical Joint Witness, and Ecclesiastic Structures

Grants for Creative Initiatives: Through Covenant Funds and Great Ends Grants, we grant nearly \$120,000 annually as seed dollars to more than 30 initiatives that have birthed and funded new ministries addressing hunger, gun violence, youth leadership training, new worshipping community start-ups, anti-racism trainings, mentoring programs, urban gardens, as well as church revitalization, racism and poverty. In addition we provide about \$100,000 in capital grants annually to assist with buildings and infrastructure in an effort to alleviate financial stresses that might shift congregational focus away from mission.

1001 New Worshipping Communities (NWC): We are strengthening our partnership with the denomination by encouraging and supporting seed grants that serve to leverage ministries in new and creative ways. Broad Street Ministries, The Well, and Beacon Church have been recipients of these funds. Last spring, 1001 NWC also hosted an equipping event for individuals discerning new ministry possibilities in our region.

Retooling Administrative Commissions and Establishing Care Teams: We are committed to establishing Administrative Commissions that serve as vehicles for creative resourcing and support for congregations as they seek a new way forward. This builds upon the historic understanding of activating Administrative Commissions simply for disciplinary or judicial resolutions. Alongside this model, our Care Teams come alongside congregations while discerning or walking through a challenging season. These teams of 3 leaders allow for focused conversation, and intentional strategic response.

New Arrivals and Immigrant Ministries: We continue supporting our ministries where the culture of heart comes from another nation and the primary language spoken is not English. This has been done through both funding and strategic thinking about leadership in those communities of faith. Their presence adds new dimensions to the expression of our Presbyterian heritage in the greater Philadelphia area.

Ecumenical Partners: Recognizing that many of our congregations share geographic proximity with other denominations, we are currently working with the Reformed Church in America and the United Church of Christ in intentional collaborative ministry or joint witness. We believe this effort will both revitalize and strengthen congregational presence and witness in strategic locations.

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/>  
<https://presbyphl.org/2019-ministry-narrative/>