

**Called to Lives of Meaning and Purpose Initiative Annual Meeting 2021
Pre-Meeting Work for Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
Myrtle Collaboration**

Hub Activities:

Our activity in 2021:

This year was a transition year. Our first cohort congregations were ending their programs, and we have been moving toward the second cohort, which will begin in 2022. So, there were no major hub activities in 2021.

In order to lighten the load of our teams, who were burdened with continuing COVID lockdowns, we used our coaches to create final reports on each team. The coach met with the congregational team and reported their final thoughts about the project. Once all activities of the first cohort are completed, we will receive a written financial report.

Our hopes for 2022:

We have launched our second cohort in two locations: Boise, ID, and Columbus, IN. The original team leaders in those locations are helping us to coordinate hubs of congregations that will continue to explore calling. In 2022 we hope to engage these congregations in discerning their communal calling to their communities. Both are inclined to tackle the problem of racial justice, but still need to go through the complete discernment process. Instead of all congregations being Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA), they will be more diverse and include Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and Independent Baptist. The PCUSA congregations are all either participating in or pursuing Matthew 25 status as a congregation that acts “boldly and compassionately to serve people who are hungry, oppressed, imprisoned or poor.” (More information can be found at <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/>.)

Instead of bringing these congregations to Louisville, we will have separate events in each city that include their coaches and our leadership team. The initial meeting in Boise will be virtual (for the Myrtle Collaboration) and takes place in December 2021. We think that this will be more relevant and also allow us to give more money directly to the congregations instead of using it for travel.

In addition, we hope to work with the Louisville Institute using our team member Kathryn House, a visiting assistant professor of practical theology at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in her role as a Louisville Institute post-doctoral fellow, to investigate the vocation of the theological educator. This will integrate what the Louisville Institute has learned with what we have learned from congregations to see how we might enhance how we teach about vocation. Kathryn House is also developing a course that includes concepts around calling as well as using our congregational teams in her lesson plans. Dr. House will also investigate how congregational studies can be used as a tool to fight systemic racism in congregations.

Discernment:

One point of discernment of 2022 is that we cannot expect teams to prioritize conventional ways of measuring success during crisis and abundant stress. A second point of discernment borne out of the heightened sense of priorities during the last two years is that our teams would rather live out their callings than use their time for theoretical discussions.

Congregational activities:

Note: In an effort to introduce other congregations to how the framework of calling can be useful in their communities, we will share your video, audio, or written documents publicly on the CLMPI website. We will post these for your viewing or reading by December 1st.

Oxford Presbyterian Church (Oxford, OH): After careful listening to the congregation as it connected with their long history of service, the church decided to concentrate on two areas: Caring for Creation (C4C) and Eradicating Systemic Poverty



Website: <https://oxfordpresbychurch.org/c4c/>

The C4C has engaged the entire community in caring for God’s creation with myriad activities. They have included civic, university, congregation, and community in their calling to be good stewards of creation. They have developed programs for all levels of involvement: recycling plastic bags, ringing bells for climate awareness, worship services, tree plantings, and newsletters.



Eradicating Systemic Poverty has also used networks of folks to challenge the systemic poverty in Oxford and dovetails nicely with the efforts of the PCUSA to create awareness through Matthew 25 congregations. Along with their allies, Oxford Presbyterian has provided temporary

shelter, jobs, and then more permanent housing for folks who seek a more stable environment in which to thrive. The continue to gather to creatively consider how else they might minister. The congregation will send their youth to the LUX Summer Theological Institute for Youth.

Website: <https://oxfordpresbychurch.org/bridges-out-of-poverty-collaborating-to-transform-lives/>

The way that we will use what we have learned from the success at Oxford Presbyterian Church is through interaction with seminary coursework. The team at Oxford will be invited to engage students in a course that will be taught at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary by Kathryn House. The Oxford team's attention to listening, being faithful to their history, and careful engagement with the congregation and the community around them gives us hope that hearing God's calling can lead congregations to new adventures. And through this, the Church becomes more engaged with the World for the work of heaven.

Other Myrtle Collaboration congregations:

Covenant Presbyterian Church, Boise, ID

<https://www.cpcboise.org/ministries/serve-in-the-community>

First Presbyterian Church, Columbus, IN

Matthew 25 <http://www.fpccolumbus.org/matthew-25-initiative/>

First Presbyterian Church of Jamaica, NY

<https://firstchurchjamaica.org/>

First Presbyterian Church, Kalamazoo, MI

<http://kzoofirstpres.org/>

Grace Hope Presbyterian Church, Louisville, KY

<https://wearegracehope.com/about-us.html>

Second Presbyterian of Lexington, KY

<https://www.2preslex.org/>

Trinity Presbyterian Church, Harrisonburg, VA

This congregation used some of their grant to further develop a center for spirituality.

<https://centering-space.org/>