

February 2024 Co-Leader Report

In November, I reported that my focus in 2024 will be developing an appreciative inquiry process that can be completed by the middle of 2024. A snow storm, a half-dozen COVID infections, and a handful of pastor's taking a well deserved break between Christmas and Lent have challenged that timeline. The good news is that the Advisory Team has met twice and will be meeting again soon after the stated meeting. In their time together, they have imagined the change we want to pursue as a presbytery and begun to narrow the topic for our inquiry/discernment. Soon, they will finalize those details and select a planning team to carry out the process.

One important aspect of the process will be communicating the vision, mission, and values that emerge from the various gatherings and conversations. To that end, I completed a communications audit in December and January with a company named Digital Congregations. Looking closely at our newsletter, website, and social media, the auditor provided me with a detailed plan for how to update and enhance each platform. I will be working with our communications director, Trudi Folkes, to implement those recommendations.

With the Administrative Operations Cmte, I have been working to draft two new PC(USA) mandated policies on Anti-Racism and Harassment. Those policy drafts have been reviewed by the committee, the Vision Team, and a presbytery attorney. The Admin/Ops cmte will now have a chance to review the questions, comments and recommendations before bringing a final draft to the presbytery in May.

One final item to note is the work I've been doing with the Vision Team's office conversation working group. This group was tasked with exploring the future of the presbytery office since our current lease ends on April 30, 2024. Their goal was to find a small office space within one of our churches that would meet the following criteria:

- Central location (Bloomfield, Montclair)
- Accessibility (ramps, lifts, doorways, bathrooms, etc)
- Ease of Travel (train, bus, proximity to major roadways, parking)
- Security (lockable rooms)
- Sound Structure (the floor can hold the weight of multiple file cabinets, protected from flooding or potential water damage, etc.)

They also considered the opportunity for shared space that could be used for workshops and other presbytery gatherings. They were able to find that and much more at the Bloomfield PC on the Green. The group reported back to the Vision Team in January and a lease agreement is currently in the works.

Steve Huston
Organizing Co-Leader