

I. The Vision of the Presbytery of Yukon—The MESH acronym:

MESH is a term that reminds Alaskans

- of a fish net, which a fisherman uses to catch fish, and which reminds us that God sends us out to be fishers of people;
- of the connections that are made through God's church. These connections, between people, and between ministries, remind us that together we are the body of Christ, and that when each member shares the gifts we have been given, there is an abundance of ideas, of warm fellowship, and of resources for doing God's ministry;
- of the way different individuals, and different regions, and different cultures are called to work together to form a ministry that is greater and more intricate than any one strand alone.

In this vision statement MESH is also an acronym to remind us of the elements needed for vital ministry. We clarify those elements as follows:

- **The purpose of the Presbytery of Yukon is to facilitate Christ's ministry through congregations and other local ministries within the presbytery.**
- **This requires the presbytery to assist each ministry in its own context.**
- **This also requires the presbytery to help provide the connections, both within the presbytery and beyond that provide the kind of sharing that inspires and feeds the ministry of the whole church.**

A. The Presbytery of Yukon seeks to help local ministries to embody the following qualities:

- a. **M**issional—Proclaiming the gospel on ~~two~~ *three* levels:
 - i. Help individuals to know themselves as, and grow themselves as, Christ's disciples and members of the family of God.
 - ii. Help individuals and congregations to know themselves and grow themselves as Christ's ambassadors, engaged in the concerns of their communities.
 - iii. Help individuals and congregations become more aware of how God's salvation is for all creation. Following guidance on The Great Ends of the Church the church should exhibit whole-earth salvation in stance, in word and in deed.*
- b. **E**nvironments-aware—That is, Ministry that Fits the Time and Place
 - i. Builds-up local disciples, and the local congregations, in ways that fit the local culture and that build the Kingdom of God. For many years the Presbytery of Yukon has worked closely with St. Lawrence Island Yupik, Iñupiaq, Korean and Town-culture Alaskans. The cultural differences are significant and valuable. God may be calling us to work with a wider range of cultures as well.
 1. Builds-up the local communities in ways that build-up the Kingdom of God
 2. Builds-up the whole world through the ways we live locally.
 3. *Builds-up personal, community and societal awareness on the need for caring for God's beloved creation.*
 - i. the urgency of caring for God's earth now*
 - ii. the immense value of a healthy earth for all humanity, and the suffering already felt because of the earth's deteriorating environmental health.*

c. **Sustainable**—participating in the biblical mandate to develop sustainable thriving for ministry. Our vision for sustainable thriving is based on the Presbyterian *Great Ends of the Church*, which read as follows:

The great ends of the Church are: (From *The Book of Order*: F-1.0304)
the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind;
the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God;
the maintenance of divine worship;
the preservation of the truth;
the promotion of social righteousness; and
the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.

Many of our congregations have further defined how they will organize in order to fulfill *The Great Ends of the Church* by using areas of focus provided by the Acts 16:5 Initiative.

Our vision of sustainability includes both financial sustainability for ministry, and also environmental sustainability in Alaska and all the earth.

Sustainability refocuses human beings on right relationships (**righteousness**). As such, the principle of sustainability ~~are~~ **is** directly related to the biblical concepts of righteousness. **principles of love, grace and jubilee, and the divine forgiveness of our moral debt to God.**

d. **Healthy**—Signs of a healthy ministry include the following:

1. The ability to connect the different parts of the ministry to one another well (See 1 Cor. 12—one body, but many parts, all members of one body, and all in need of all the others), allowing the Holy Spirit to move through sharing ideas, inspiration and resources,

2. The ability to deal with the issues of ministry and covenant life, and without raising undue anxiety in the process.

3. The ability to strategize and take action in order to proactively pursue God's mission for the church stated in a church's vision statement.

4. The ability to care for the health of others, and not just the health of church institution. Other areas of concern for health include the health of people, of communities, and of God's creatures. Ministry that ignores these areas of health cannot be healthy.

i. We have experienced this in our own presbytery: One example is the contamination of sea mammals, and of the St. Lawrence Islanders who eat them, by the PCBs left by the U.S Navy on St. Lawrence Island in past decades.

ii. We also know from first-hand experience that connecting with nature is necessary for a healthy personal spirituality and life.

If congregations are to exhibit the new life that characterizes the gospel, they must be constantly engaged in renewal and reform. Congregations should always be giving consideration to the meaning of grace and jubilee in our personal and congregational lives, and in our relationships with the wider human and natural communities. Specifically, Congregations must therefore be learning and responsive congregations that pay attention to the new thing that God is doing in their communities, and find the freedom to respond with creative joy.