



The Grapevine

CONNECTING THE CONGREGATIONS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF DETROIT

October 2011

Humble Leadership



by the Rev. Dr. Allen D. Timm, Executive Presbyter

In September, clergy new to the presbytery and interims, were invited to the Pastors in Transition workshop. The Rev. Dr. Graham Standish spoke at the event, and shared what he means by humble leadership. He blends his work as a licensed clinical social worker with his PhD in spiritual formation. I suggest his book, Humble Leadership (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2007), as guide for study.

Standish said that humble leadership focuses first on becoming open to God. Spiritual disciplines center us on what God is calling us to be and do. He gave us three questions:

- Am I really interested in what God wants?
- Do I have the courage to seek God's will?
- Am I willing to see God's hope and possibility in everything?

These principles apply not only to the leader, but also to the leadership of the congregation. He challenged pastors to lead their congregations in spiritual practices that emphasize unity and seek God's will together. He urged them to find unity among generations, theological and ideological differences, and

different interests.

Then a congregation will find, in Graham's words, "faith in the face of fear, hope in the face of doubt and despair, love in the face of dysfunction and conflict, and prayer in the face of confusion and uncertainty" (handout to the group).

Humble leadership, according to Standish, begins with Spiritual Integration of the four dimensions of life. These dimensions are, in Standish's words, based on Adrian van Kaam's work:

- Spiritual (Transcendent) – Aspiring to what God wants and being inspired by God-sense connection with the Holy
- Mental (Functional) – How we organize and function in life, our planning, imagining, expecting, thinking, scheduling
- Physical (Vital) – How we embody thoughts, aspirations and inspirations in life, and behave accordingly
- Relational (Socio-Historic) – How we interact and connect with people, creatures, and the Divine in life

The implications of Spiritual Leadership are clear. If we get caught up in one dimension or the other, we have "spiritual cut-off."

If we focus only on the body, we get tangled in pleasure,

not incarnating what God longs for the world. Is your church so focused on the building that it neglects serving your neighbor?

If we focus only on the mental dimension, we give way to a few in power or the pastor's control over the church. Do we give way to a few who want their way at the expense of following God's vision?

If our reason for being is the relational dimension, we focus on each other instead of the Great Commission. Is the main reason we come to church on Sunday to see our old friends?

Graham urges leaders today to focus on Spiritual Integration of these four dimensions. He said: Churches that have cut off the spiritual can become dominated by one, two, or three of these dimensions, "The stronger the cut off, the more stagnation and/or dysfunction" (handout).

One of Standish's reminders to me was that leaders in the congregation no longer want to sit at meetings where others have brought decisions that have been made. They want to use their gifts. They want to grow spiritually. They want to see God at work. It is then that they grow, and the church grows. He urges pastors to surround themselves with spiritually alive leaders, and to help them seek the potential God longs for the church. I know this to be true from my experience in the parish, both for large and small congregations.



Top three pictures: Nine congregations join in worship to celebrate what God is doing through the ministry of Park United Presbyterian Church in Highland Park.

Left: pastors attending from nine different churches

Center: joint choirs

Right: prayer for people



Above: Self Development of People Committee present Beland-Manning Park Restoration with a grant. Standing l-r: Al Timm, Exec., Andrew Baxter, Arneatha Reynolds, Shanita Jones, SDOP member, Jeane Moore, SDOP Chair, Kenneth Collinson, SDOP member. Seated l-r: Chris Reynolds, Reshawn Whetstone, SDOP member



Above: Self Development of People Committee present Oakland Community Gardens with a grant. L-R: Jeane Moore, SDOP Chair, Al Timm, Exec., William Hebron, Jerry Ann Hebron, Shanita Jones, SDOP member, Reshawn Whetstone, SDOP member



Left and Right: Work day at Comunidad Los Del Camino (formerly Detroit, Southwest) sponsored by the Presbyterian Men's Fellowship resulted in repairs and clean up around the facility. 25 workers attended as well as 65 workers at Highland Park, Park United to make repairs to that facility.



Clergy Ordination Anniversaries

ELIZABETH DOWNS	5
E. DICKSON FORSYTH	45
JAMES KUMIN	5
JAMES SKIMINS	35

The Parish Paper

Our organization's purchase of photocopy rights for The Parish Paper INCLUDES

1. Permission to provide copies to our staff and the congregations within our constituency in any of the following ways: E-mail, Postal, newspaper, newsletter, meetings, training events, and our Website.
2. Permission for each congregation within our constituency to (a) photocopy or electronically distribute for local use as many copies as it needs, (b) post them on its Website, and (c) quote sentences and paragraphs.

Your congregation does NOT have permission (a) to delete the copyright notice on page 2; (b) to re-write, paraphrase, or change the wording of sentences and paragraphs; or (c) to give ANY THIRD PARTY—other than your staff and constituents—permission to photocopy or reprint (in any quantity, no matter how small, whether for free distribution or for sale).

Presbytery of Detroit

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
17575 Hubbell Ave, Detroit, MI 48235
313-345-6550
313-345-7250 (fax)
Info@detroitpresbytery.org
http://www.detroitpresbytery.org
http://www.PbyDetroit.org (for documents)
http://www.synodofthecovenant.org
http://www.pcusa.org

Staff

Executive Presbyter
The Rev. Dr. Allen D. Timm, ext. 203
Stated Clerk
The Rev. Edward H. Koster, ext. 201
Director of Outdoor Ministries
Richard Grant, 517-546-0249
Executive Director Second Mile Center
Ruth Azar
Resource Center Director
Joanne Higgins, ext. 215
Hunger Action Coordinator
Artheillia Thompson, ext. 207
Executive Assistant
Beverly Knox, ext. 204

Office Manager

Sandra K. Jensen, ext. 220
Accounting Manager
Bev Auger, ext. 209
Office & Bookkeeping Clerk
Rhonda Barley, ext. 200

Consultants

Hands-on Mission
Mary Lloyd, 313-247-0792
Transformation of Congregations
The Rev. Estelle Aaron, 216-280-1338
Youth Hands-on Mission
Charon Barconey, 313-770-5822
Interfaith Ministries
The Rev. Wm Gepford, 313-933-4086

THE PARISH PAPER

IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

Coeditors: Herb Miller, Lyle E. Schaller, Cynthia Woolever - www.TheParishPaper.com

November 2011 - Volume 19, Number 11

Copyright © 2011 by Herb Miller

Should We Unleash the Power of Congregational Planning?

A traveler on an October flight to Chicago was seated by a little boy who was obviously traveling alone. The little boy seemed nervous, so the traveler tried to engage him in conversation: "Do you know what you want to be when you grow up?"

"No," the boy replied. "I don't even know what I'm going to be for Halloween!"

That level of planning is not a big liability for little boys, but it is for most organizations. What allowed Walmart to replace Sears in retail market share? Why did Southwest Airlines steadily increase market share at the expense of American, Delta, and United? It seems that in older companies the leaders tend to drift into the future while focused on what worked in the past.

Does that kind of drifting-mentality happen in congregations? In most churches, the answer is yes. Like corporations, congregations do not *consciously* resist planning. Their failure to plan more often rests on the assumption that they are *already doing* sufficient planning. "Isn't that what we're doing at all these meetings of committees and governing boards?" one pastor asked.

But all of those meetings throughout the year sometimes blind church leaders to the fact that they are not watching the congregation's overall, big-picture direction. Thus, the church easily begins acting like an ocean liner in which the engine room is in perfect running order and the galley puts out excellent meals—while the ship sails confidently toward abrupt connection with a rocky coast ten miles ahead.

After a church decides that drifting into the future is inappropriate behavior for an organization that God has called to serve the people in its surrounding community for decades to come, its leaders must understand the value of an effective planning process.

Why Do Congregational Planning?

Several centuries ago Niccolo Machiavelli warned us in his book, *The Prince*, that "There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things."

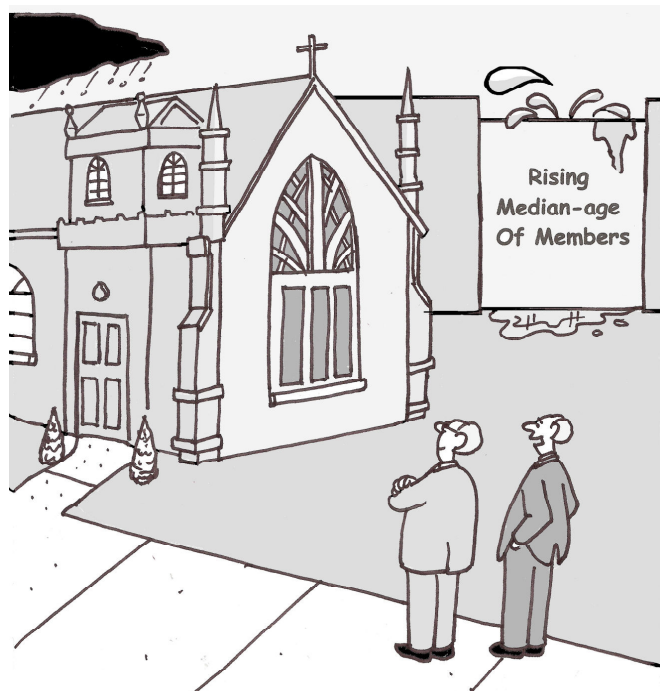
Why, then, should a church bother with planning? Without continuously fine-tuning its overall focus and ministries, a church can (a) feel satisfied with itself and (b) experience long-term failure in its health and vitality.

1. Planning keeps a church connected with the needs of people in its surrounding community and culture. The Moravian Book Shop, founded in 1745 by a congregation in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, is the oldest bookstore in the nation. Why did that church establish a book store? Because at that point in history, in that community and that culture, making books available to people was a significant ministry.

Does every church need a book store? Not necessarily. But every church needs to frequently and systematically involve its attendees in asking, "In our community, on this page in history, what can we do to help the largest possible number of people enrich their lives by loving God and loving their neighbors?"

2. Planning keeps the older age groups in touch with the thinking and needs of younger adults, their teenagers, and their children. F. Scott Fitzgerald said, "At eighteen our convictions are hills from which we look; at forty-five they are caves in which we hide."

Planning keeps generational viewpoints connected in ways that produce new insights, so that their church has great years in its future, not just in its past.



"The church has been here for 76 years. I don't think we need to be concerned about its future."

3. Planning helps us to respect what other people want, not just what we want. The thinking and aspirations of every church member are driven by “what I want most for myself and my congregation.”

When influential church members get frozen in the trajectory of what they want, they often lose the ability to hear what others want. The communication produced by an effective planning process helps unfreeze the perspectives of well-meaning people who, without realizing it, are building failure into their church’s DNA.

4. Planning helps us to reduce and prevent the pain of congregational conflict. Historical facts—such as ten-year worship-attendance trends and Sunday school attendance trends—are important to a church’s future. Such statistical facts tend to surface during an effective planning process. And the *feelings* that people have regarding those *facts* are equally important.

When parishioners have an opportunity to communicate their strongly held feelings in non-threatening circumstances, (a) wounds often heal, or are prevented, and (b) churches often find solutions to complex problems.

5. Planning helps us to overcome our inclination to retreat to what worked in the past, so common during times of anxiety and stress. People who grew up along the Mississippi River know that, during times of duress, the only direction a crawfish will move is backward. When a church experiences the stress of changing times, changing pastors, changing finances, or changing circumstances, the temptation to retreat to what worked in past years—rather than figuring out what works in the present—often exerts a strong pull. An effective planning process can prevent that often-fatal reflex.

6. Planning helps us to overcome the church-killing idolatry to sameness. Examine the sleeve of a man’s coat and you find two buttons, and sometimes three, or maybe four. Why? Custom put them there—and kept them there. We are told that in the monasteries of centuries past, the monks wore long robes that made eating their soup difficult—so they sewed buttons on their sleeves to keep them out of the soup.

Churches tend to retain all kinds of buttons from decades past, and their members are loath to remove those vestiges of what served a vital purpose in years past—once-valuable traditions that are no longer meaningful to most of their people. [J. Wallace Hamilton, *Still The Trumpet Sounds* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1970), p. 171]

A good planning process helps a church to trim non-productive buttons with fewer painful repercussions. By doing effective planning, we can claim that middle ground between destructive idolatry to sameness and frenetic idolatry to every new theory.

7. Planning helps us keep our congregation’s crucial ministries in balance. Five behaviors marked effectiveness in the ancient church: *Kerygma* (proclamation of the Gospel); *Koinonia* (community/fellowship); *Diaconia* (compassionate service); *Didache* (teaching the Christian

faith); and *Leiturgia* (worship/communal prayer). Effective planning strengthens achievement in all five of those behaviors—protecting a congregation from leaving out one or more ministries crucial to its future.

8. Planning generates hope. John Steinbeck eloquently wrote, “Hope implies a change from the present bad situation to a future better one. The slave hopes for freedom, the weary man for rest, and the hungry food. And the feeders of hope, economic and religious, have from these simple strivings of dissatisfaction managed to create a world picture which is very hard to escape.” [John Steinbeck and Edward F. Ricketts, *The Log from the Sea of Cortez* (New York: The Viking Press, 1941), p. 72]

Hope is not a church’s only important ingredient, but without hope, fear and anxiety drain church batteries of productive energy. An effective planning process provides hope for journeying into the future.

9. Planning helps keep Christ central. A hospital visitor saw these words on an inhalation therapist’s tee shirt: “Breathing is life. Everything else is details.” In churches, as in all other aspects of life, some matters are central; others are peripheral. When their people confuse central matters with peripherals, a congregation’s magnetic pull and life-giving power decreases.

10. Planning drags our future into the present so we can influence its quality before it happens. Long-range thinking tends to improve our short-term decision-making.

We take the first step toward higher achievement in ministries when we concentrate on our most result-producing priorities. An effective planning process helps us to identify those priorities.

There is never enough time to do everything, but there is always enough time to do the essential things. An effective planning process helps us to identify those essentials.

The Bottom Line

One way to summarize the purpose of church planning is by quoting an American Indian proverb about the environment: “We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our grandchildren.”

We do not merely inherit a congregation from our grandparents; we borrow it from our grandchildren. The big question: What strengths will our congregation have when we return to our grandchildren what we have borrowed? An effective planning process answers that question in a positive way.*

*From the “Free Resources” section of the www.TheParishPaper.com Web site, download two options for congregational planning—plus several dozen optional how-to church-effectiveness resources that committees and ministry teams can use to voyage with confidence into the future.

Presbytery of Detroit Calendar of Events

To have your Churches event posted please send the information to sandy@detroitpresbytery.org.

October 2011	
25	Presbytery Meeting at Ann Arbor, Westminster, 1500 Scio Church Rd., Ann Arbor 48103; 734-761-9320
27	Howell Conference & Nature Center's "A Wild Wonderful Night" fundraiser. Click for more information about this great event!
29	Month of Mission Breakfast 9:00 am at Detroit, Westminster 17567 Hubbell, Detroit, MI 48235 Click here for flyer
30	Farmington, First Chamber Music by Fleur-de-Lys at the church 26165 Farmington Road, Farmington Hills, MI 48334 at 4:00 pm. Click here for information
November 2011	
1	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
1	Healing Service 6:00 p.m. at South Lyon, First
4-5	<i>Embracing Racial and Cultural Diversity: A Vision of the Presbytery of Detroit</i> to be held at First PC, 1669 Maple Rd, Birmingham, MI 48009. Click here for more information
4-6	2011 National Tentmaking Conference <i>The Flap on Tentmaking</i> to be held at Stony Point Center, Stony Point, NY. Click here for more information
5	Clerk Training 9:00 am at the Presbytery Office. Topic: Statistical Report
5	Barnabas Youth Opportunities Center Annual Fundraiser, Appreciation, and Recognition Evening of Elegance at Calvary Presbyterian Church, 19125 Greenview, Detroit, MI 48219 in Fellowship Hall. Click here for flyer
6	Daylight Savings Time Ends - set clocks back one hour
8	Mid-Oakland Faith Communities Coalition on Foster Care Regional Meeting 6:30 PM at Kirk in the Hills Presbyterian Church, 1340 West Long Lake Road Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302 Michigan Department of Human Service Director, Maura Corrigan to speak, service agencies invited to provide materials, contact info and display items--tables will be provided. Click here for flyer
11-12	South Lyon, First 205 East Lake Street is having a Rummage Sale 8:00 am-7:00 pm on Friday and 8:00 am-noon on Saturday. For more information contact the church at 248-437-2875.
13	Redford, St. James holding its Annual St. Andrew's Day. Click here for flyer
13	Women of the Church Day at Hope Presbyterian Church, 15340 Meyers Rd., Detroit, MI 48227 at 11:00 am. Click here for flyer
15	Deadline for submission of nominations for the Presbyterian Men's George Irwin Service Award. Click here for form
22	Presbytery Meeting at Royal Oak, First, 529 Hendrie Blvd., Royal Oak 48067; 248-541-0108
24	Presbytery Office Closed Thanksgiving
24	Detroit, Westminster 29th Annual Thanksgiving Dinner 11:00 am - 4:00 pm. Click here for flyer
December 2011	
6	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
6	Healing Service 6:00 p.m. at South Lyon, First
10	Men's Advent Communion Breakfast at Livonia, St. Paul's, 27475 Five Mile Rd., Livonia 48154. Keynote speaker is Lloyd Carr, retired head coach, U of M Football Team. Click here for flyer
23-Jan 2	Presbytery Office Closed for Christmas and New Year Holiday
January 2012	
3	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
3	Healing Service 6:00 p.m. at South Lyon, First
5	Presbytery's books close at 5:00 pm please make sure the 2011 Per Capita and Shared Mission are submitted
16	Presbytery Office Closed in observance of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday
24	Presbytery Meeting at Mt. Clemens, First, 168 Cass Ave., Mt Clemens, MI 48043; 586-465-0461. Installation of the Moderator & Vice Moderator

26-28 Calvin Symposium on Worship at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI. [Click here for more information](#) or contact Bob Szwed, Chair of Congregational Life Ministry Team at bszwed@yahoo.com

February 2012

7 Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at [Dearborn, Littlefield](#)

7 Healing Service 6:00 p.m. at [South Lyon, First](#)

18 Leadership Training Day with Gil Rendle at Dearborn, The First, 600 N. Brady, Dearborn, MI 48124. [Click here for brochure](#)

28 **Presbytery Meeting location TBD**

March 2012

6 Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at [Dearborn, Littlefield](#)

6 Healing Service 6:00 p.m. at [South Lyon, First](#)

11 Daylight Saving Time begins- set clocks ahead one hour

21-24 ETS hosts 2nd Annual Women in Leadership Conference. [Click here for more information](#)

April 2012

3 Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at [Dearborn, Littlefield](#)

3 Healing Service 6:00 p.m. at [South Lyon, First](#)

24 **Presbytery Meeting location TBD**

May 2012

1 Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at [Dearborn, Littlefield](#)

1 Healing Service 6:00 p.m. at [South Lyon, First](#)

28 Presbytery Office Closed in observance of Memorial Day

June 2012

5 Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at [Dearborn, Littlefield](#)

5 Healing Service 6:00 p.m. at [South Lyon, First](#)

26 **Presbytery Meeting location TBD**

July 2012

3 Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at [Dearborn, Littlefield](#)

3 Healing Service 6:00 p.m. at [South Lyon, First](#)

4 Presbytery Office closed in observance of Independence Day

August 2012

7 Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at [Dearborn, Littlefield](#)

7 Healing Service 6:00 p.m. at [South Lyon, First](#)

27 **Presbytery Meeting location TBD**

September 2012

3 Presbytery Office closed in observance of Labor day

4 Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at [Dearborn, Littlefield](#)

4 Healing Service 6:00 p.m. at [South Lyon, First](#)

October 2012

2 Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at [Dearborn, Littlefield](#)

2 Healing Service 6:00 p.m. at [South Lyon, First](#)

23 **Presbytery Meeting location TBD**

27	Month of Mission Breakfast
November 2012	
4	Daylight Savings Time Ends - set clocks back one hour
6	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
6	Healing Service 6:00 p.m. at South Lyon, First
22	Presbytery Office closed for Thanksgiving Day
22	Detroit, Westminster 30th Annual Thanksgiving Dinner 11:00 am - 4:00 pm
27	Presbytery Meeting location TBD
December 2012	
4	Taizé Worship 7:00 pm at Dearborn, Littlefield
4	Healing Service 6:00 p.m. at South Lyon, First
24-25	Presbytery Office Closed for Christmas Holiday
31- Jan1	Presbytery Office Closed for New Year Holiday
	###