

The Presbytery of San Diego Declaration

The Presbytery of San Diego declares that we are no longer primarily a governing body. We declare that we are a relational community and that we are becoming a mission agency.

The Past/A Governing Body: In recent years, our Presbyterian Church (USA) has described the identity of presbyteries as governing bodies. This gives the impression that the main reason we come together is to govern ourselves. It suggests that rules, regulations, and policies are what is most important about our life together. This is probably a result of the corporate and regulatory model of church that our denomination has followed in the twentieth century. While this may have been sufficient in the past, it does not describe who we are today or who we hope to become in the future. While we will continue to govern as needed, it is not the primary adjective that defines who we are. Our polity alone cannot be the reason enough for us to meet together.

The Present/A Relational Community: The main reason we as a presbytery come together today is for relationships: our relationship with God through Jesus Christ, our relationships with personal friends, and the relationships that congregations have with one another. It is through our God-given relationships that we experience joy, sorrow, purpose, fulfillment, and hope. Our connections are providing a bridge for us towards our emerging future. As a relational community, we will emphasize listening, learning, and praying. We have taken vows to abide by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and we will continue to do so, lovingly holding one another accountable in relationships. Our polity helps us set up appropriate boundaries for our relationships. It is a means to an end, it is not an end in and of itself. We see the value of being a part of a connectional system with other presbyteries and other communities who share a similar identity in Christ.

The Future/A Mission Agency: Our dream is that we will learn to become a mission agency together. As the early church laid hands on people and sent them out in mission (Acts 13:1-3), we hope to do the same. We live in a mission field and all of us are sent by God into it. God has a mission and God's mission has a church. We hope to discern what God is doing in our world and join Christ in the mission He has already initiated. We hope to learn new skills for new forms of mission for this new millennium. We hope to launch new missional experiments to discover together how God's Holy Spirit is leading us. We want to be a sent people who are shaped by God's mission, energized by God's mission, and defined by God's mission. The reason we will come together is to discern where and how to be in mission together. We hope to connect with other mission agencies in California, the United States, Mexico, and around the world, extending the Kingdom of God here on earth. As we move into our new future, we desire to be both humble and bold. We are humble because we do not have all the answers, we are learning as we go, and we know we need each other's wisdom and insight. We want to be bold because we do not want to be trivial or waste our time on what is not important. We long to make a difference in the world.