

Dear Fellow Presbyters,

Greetings to you in the peace and presence of our Lord and Risen Savior Jesus Christ.

As the Synod Executives of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), we write to the church in this season of Easter to encourage you with good news from the most recent gathering of the Synod Executives Forum in April 2011.

The Middle Governing Body Commission of the 219th General Assembly invites feedback regarding observations about the current structure of our PC (USA) and potential models regarding its reorientation for the future. We pray for the members of the MGB Commission and encourage them in their labor on our behalf. This General Assembly MGB Commission faces complex issues and important questions regarding the design and mission of the middle governing body covenantal relationships in our denomination. Therefore, we wish to emphasize our common understanding as Synod Executives who partner with presbyteries, that the presbytery is the essential middle governing body in our shared polity. The Presbytery, that unique expression of ordained Elders and ministers, is not simply our historical foundation, but a present and future necessity for the health and vitality of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

The acknowledgment of the Presbytery as an essential element in our governance structure is accompanied by our realization that genuine adaptive change must be recognized, worked for, and implemented throughout the church. More good news is that the Synod Executives of the PC (USA) realize that engaging in a process of adaptive change invites us to learn new ways and change attitudes, values and behaviors, for the future of the Synod to be an increasingly relevant and viable unit in the church's common life. Therefore, we expect that as we look to the future, the current configuration and purpose of the Synod as a unit in the church must be reoriented and reinvented in models that more strongly support and nurture the Presbytery. In other words, we are committed to the understanding and possibility that Synods, as a unit in the church, may not look like what they've always looked like, nor will Synods all look the same. The possibility of Synods serving a new purpose within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is welcomed as an adventure of hope, and fills our imaginations with the promises of God as we live in the assurance that the future is made by God's faithfulness.

Please pray for us and pray for each other.

Scripture is clear that Christians are to be instruments for hope and change. To be responsive to Scripture means that we can turn current complex frustrations into labors of hopeful opportunities as we work for new models that invigorate the church in ways we do not yet envision. If we are open enough to truly encounter God, then we can expect ourselves to be transformed in ways we do not ask or imagine.

With energy, intelligence, imagination and love, the Synod Executives of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are willing to be a partner in creating conceptual scaffolding necessary to build a new view of what covenants among our governing bodies might look like. We are

aware we need to acknowledge with clarity and conviction the centrality of the Presbytery as essential and necessary to these covenantal and connectional relationships in our denomination.

For the sake of the Christ we love and the gospel we serve,

Joyce Emery
Synod of Alaska-Northwest

Mary Lynne Flowers
Synod of the Northeast

Edwin Quiles Rodriguez
Synod of Boriquen (Puerto Rico)

Rob Brink
Synod of the Pacific

Raafat Zaki
Synod of the Covenant

David Ezekiel
Synod of the Rocky Mountains

Phil Brown
Synod of Lakes and Prairies

Reg Parsons
Synod of the South Atlantic

Carol McDonald
Synod of Lincoln Trails

Doska Ross
Synod of Southern California and Hawaii

Terry Newland
Synod of Living Waters

Conrad Rocha
Synod of the Southwest

Nancy Kahaian
Synod of Mid-America

Judy Fletcher
Synod of the Sun

David McKee
Synod of the Mid-Atlantic

Bruce Stevens
Synod of the Trinity