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**Form: North Puget Sound Presbytery Information Form**

These pages are designed to help interested people know something about our presbytery, and sense the spirit that makes it a vital part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Specifically, this information is intended for **ministers** who may seek membership in the presbytery, **elders** who may serve in the presbytery, and **church members** whose congregations make up the presbytery.

**Part One: Vision and Purpose**

Our presbytery is one of seven presbyteries that make up the Synod of Alaska Northwest. Geographically, our presbytery is in seven counties in the northwest corner of Washington State, stretching from portions of the north end of Seattle, to the Canadian border. Our churches, 35 in number, are located on what we call the mainland, as well as on the San Juan Islands and the Olympic Peninsula.

Our purpose is set forth in this adopted statement:

Vision Statement

Our vision is for each congregation and presbytery member to be:

Vital in ministry

Supported in meeting existing and emerging needs and

Connected in Christ-like ways for shared mission all to the glory of God.

Mission Statement

The mission of North Puget Sound Presbytery is to:

Engage

Resource and

Encourage

Congregations and presbytery members as together they serve Jesus Christ to transform the world.

We believe these vital aspects of the Presbytery's purpose should be reflected in the life and work of our churches as well. We therefore urge sessions to seek to integrate these aspects into the mission statements of the churches they oversee.

**Part Two: Mission**

Doing mission together is one way Presbyterians understand our oneness in Christ, and our call to responsible participation in our presbytery. We affirm this way of doing mission and expect our leaders to seek to make it a growing commitment among our churches.

**Part Three: The Work of Presbytery**

The work and witness of our presbytery is done through its committees, Council, and Council's sub-committees.

Sessions are encouraged to elect Permanent Commissioners to Presbytery.

It is essential that capable people serve on committees and task forces. We expect ministers, elders, and church members to serve so that ministry and mission may happen through the presbytery. Members are elected from these groups:

- Ministers – Parish clergy and Non-parish clergy
- Elders from the churches of presbytery
- Lay Persons from the churches of presbytery
- Retired Ministers who can offer service

#### **Part Four: Presbytery Meetings**

Our presbytery has four stated meetings a year. Usually two of them are on Wednesdays (May and November), and two of them on Saturdays February and September). When a major issue is addressed or a speaker offered, the meeting may be divided over two days.

It is our understanding, based on our Reformed theology, that when the presbytery gathers, it gives visible expression at that time and that place to the mystery we call the body of Christ. Such a gathering is more a spiritual manifestation of Christ's presence and spirit among us, than what is sometimes called a business meeting. In the gathered presbytery we learn again that we need each other, we cannot go it alone, and that together we can do more for God's glory that we can alone. In the gathered presbytery we order the work of Christ in our part of the vineyard, and celebrate Christ's promises to be with us to the close of the age. We expect members to grow in this understanding.

#### **Part Five: Expectations.**

For whatever reasons we have chosen to work out our salvation with fear and trembling within the structure of the Presbyterian Church (USA). That choice carries with it some consequences. One in particular is that we are interdependent (connectional), not independent. We accept that while we are saved by God's grace through faith (the Gospel), we order our lives together within a set of rules called the Book Of Order, in order to do things decently and in order. Ministers and elders, in particular, are called to celebrate both the Gospel and the form of government of our church as gifts of God for the benefit and welfare of God's people.

With that understanding, these are the expectations we have of ministers who seek membership in this Presbytery, and elders who are called to serve in the Presbytery:

1. **A point of view.** We believe that while the major part of pastors' vocational work is within a parish setting, their fundamental connection is to the Presbytery, of which they are continuing members, so too for non-parish ministers. Their vocation is carried out in some non-church form of ministry, but their basic allegiance is to the Presbytery, of which they are continuing members. Also, the service of elders is essential to the life of the Presbytery.

Elders and ministers both have taken vow to “serve in the governing bodies (plural) of the church . . .(G-14-0207I & G-14.0405 b.[9].

2. **A style of life.** We believe it is vital that ministers and elders honor their connection to the Presbytery with faithful attendance at its meetings, by conscientious service on its committees, by being a friend among their colleagues, by nurturing a spirit of Christian love by their words and actions, and by building respect for the Presbytery among all its members.
3. **A bridge to their churches.** For pastors and elders, we believe it is essential that they seek to lead their sessions and congregations to know, understand, duly consider, and follow the leadership of the Presbytery in the witness and mission of the Presbyterian Church (USA).
4. **A partnership in ministry.** We believe that as elders and pastors join together in a mutual commitment, all governing bodies benefit, and the giver and receiver both are blessed by that partnership.

Our expectations are that ministers who seek membership in this Presbytery and elders who are called to serve in the Presbytery will share these four beliefs, and commit themselves to live by them, to the Glory of God.

Accepted \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_