

ATTACHMENT C – Presbytery Funding Work Group

The following is written by the Stated Clerk/Head of Staff Ted McCulloch. The information is from the various meetings of the Presbytery Funding Work Group and its sub-teams. Any mistakes, incorrect interpretations or information are his responsibility. Thank you!

PRESBYTERY FUNDING WORK GROUP

After the discussion at the June Presbytery meeting on how the Presbytery has been funded and the realization of how general mission dollars had been used for Presbytery operations, the Council was determined to follow up. It should always be clear that when we refer to General Mission Giving or funds, we are referring to that portion of General Mission dollars that are kept in the Presbytery. General Mission dollars received are split between the Presbytery, who receives 71% and General Assembly, who receives 29%. That has always been the case.

So a Work Group was appointed with Council members and members from around the Presbytery. Presbytery staff members were also included with voice but no vote. Early on, several things became very clear.

- Presbytery operations should not be funded with General Mission dollars given by congregations.
- Alternative ways of Presbytery funding should be explored.
- General Mission dollars should be separated in their own account and the Presbytery must be transparent in how those dollars are used.

It quickly became apparent that splitting the work group into three sub-teams would be the most effective way to proceed.

1. Per Capita Sub Team: Our Presbytery portion of Per Capita has been kept artificially low. Ours is the lowest of any of the eleven Presbyteries in our Synod and the lowest by over \$2. That alone is not reason to raise Per Capita. But the reality is that our Per Capita was lower because of using General Mission dollars for Presbytery operations. That was not something we are willing to continue. Therefore a significant raise of \$3.89 per member in the Presbytery Per Capita rate was deemed necessary.

We are all aware that church budgets are stressed. So how we could we ask for such a large increase? Along with other adjustments in funding, this would remove General Mission dollars from funding any part of Presbytery operations. Congregations would be free to continue General Mission giving; reduce it so their overall contributions to Presbytery do not increase; or look at how they might use some or all of those mission dollars in their own community.

2. Investment Funding Sub Team: The Presbytery has significant investment accounts for which a spending formula has made approximately \$80,000 per year available to be used. Most years we have not made use of all that was available. By adjusting our spending formula and then using all that is available each year, about \$95,000 would be available to be used for Presbytery operations.

With increased Per Capita, appropriate use of our Investment accounts, the savings of moving to a virtual office, and some budget reductions in the Presbytery operating budget, the funding of the operations of the Presbytery will be achieved.

There is one other Sub Team and their work, to me, is the most important of all. And that is the work of the Mission Sub Team

3. The Mission Sub Team: Part of why this Presbytery Funding matters so much is that we are called, as followers of Jesus Christ, to reach out in mission to the people in our communities, in our regions, and in our world. Congregations have reached out in mission through their giving and through their own work. If we are going to fund the operations of the Presbytery differently, the best result would be creating paths for all of us to live out the mission of Jesus Christ, especially through the General Mission giving of our congregations.

This is what the Mission Sub Team, along with leaders of our Presbytery Mission Coordination Committee, is and will be working on. There are conversations beginning on several different ideas. Nothing is finalized but some general thoughts so far.

General Mission Giving:

- Must be kept separate from Presbytery operation funds.
- Important to share with the Presbytery how General Mission funds are used
- General Mission giving matters, in part, because that's how the Presbytery contributes to the General Assembly missions of the PC(USA) (*currently General Mission dollars are split 71% to Presbytery and 29% to General Assembly*).

Other uses of mission giving being explored

- Setting aside a portion(s) of General Mission giving to go to one or more missions – examples being Presbyterian Disaster Assistance; a program like Food Bank of Easter Michigan; or other suggested missions. Possibly changed annually.
- Possible Mission grants to churches needing starter funds – maybe by combining some of the currently designated funds to be the seed money for these grants. In essence, returning General Mission giving to the missions of our congregations.

These are just starting points but the most important part is to make participating in mission in all its variety and blessings a clear, visible value of the Presbytery of Lake Huron.