

Presbytery Policies for Congregations Receiving Assistance

All financial assistance packages to congregations in the Presbytery of Lake Erie will be administered according to one of the four categories listed below. All multiyear aid package commitments will become a matter of Presbytery record, and all multiyear aid plans will receive a yearly review according to the established plan and by the process in place for each category. That yearly review will be reported to Presbytery.

1. Congregational Life Committee will retain in its records a listing of all recommendations for assistance and the rationale for that assistance.
2. The overall time frame for each recommendation for assistance shall be established by Congregational Life and submitted to Presbytery as a requirement for Presbytery approval of the assistance.
3. The place in which the current year request for each congregation receiving assistance falls in the overall plan shall be submitted to Presbytery each year as a part of the Congregational Life budget.
4. Records will be maintained by Congregational Life for five years after the assistance relationship is concluded.

Category 1 – Exploratory

Description/Rationale: For congregations who desire to do a study and inquiry with Congregational Life about entering into any of the below categories or any other creative program involving financial assistance and congregational development.

Time Status: 1 year or less

Amount of Assistance: Up to \$2500, as available.

Category 2 – Ongoing Assistance to Maintain a Presbyterian Witness in an Area

Description/Rationale: A congregation may be the only Presbyterian witness in a region and it may be therefore in our interest to maintain ongoing aid to keep that witness alive even though demographics may make it unlikely for that congregation to become self-supporting.

Time Status – 5 year cycles which will coincide with mission study

Renewal cycle – annual

Amount of Assistance – indefinite

Mission Study Requirement – minimum of every five years

Oversight – Subcommittee of Congregational Life

Alternatives to Retain in Consideration: Becoming part of a yoke or similar ministry-sharing arrangement.

Requirement for Maintaining Assistance: Congregation annually submits report to Congregational Life detailing its ministry strengths, accomplishments, and concerns.

Causes for Potential Change of Status: concerns about internal health of the congregation, apparent failure to meet ministry opportunities that are present, decline of internal support and/or pattern of increasing needs for Presbytery support.

Category 3 – Short Term Renewal

Rationale: Congregations may have a need for financial assistance that is not significant and that exists during a brief time during which specific programs aimed at increasing the ministry and finances of the congregation are implemented.

Time Status: one to three years

Renewal Cycle: annual during the approved time frame

Annual Amount of Assistance: - up to \$10,000, decreasing annually

Mission Study Requirement: abbreviated mission study that shows how the specific renewal request harmonizes with the overall mission of the congregation.

Oversight: Subcommittee of Congregational Life

Alternatives to Retain in Consideration: none

Requirement for Maintaining Assistance during three year cycle: Congregation annually submits report to Congregational Life detailing progress on specific goals for which the assistance was granted.

Causes for Early Termination: Indications that progress towards detailed goals is not satisfactory and that remedies appear unlikely.

Category 4 – Redevelopment

Description: A congregation that may have demographic opportunity that makes it of strategic value to the Presbytery, that may have existed in a state of decline, that has a desire for comprehensive redevelopment of its ministry, and that is aware of and willing to undergo the known and potential changes necessary for transforming its ministry.

Rationale: In Lake Erie Presbytery, the lack of population growth may sometimes make strategic redevelopment a better choice than new church development. The methodologies and strategies employed in these redevelopments can become models and paradigms for other congregations seeking growth, renewal, and redevelopment.

Time Status: 7-10 years

Renewal Cycle: annual during the approved time frame

Annual Amount of Assistance: - up to \$20,000 per year in the first year, but with diminishing amounts in succeeding years

Mission Study Requirement: Full mission study with a renewal in 5 years

Oversight: A Church Redevelopment Committee specific for each congregation undertaking Redevelopment. The Church Redevelopment Committee for a particular congregation will be formed by Congregational Life and will be an ad hoc subcommittee under Congregational Life, but its membership must include persons from outside of Congregational Life. At least one member must be from COM. The Redevelopment Committee will submit reports to Congregational Life and COM but will meet independently of both of those committees. At least one-third of the Redevelopment Committee will be elders or other laypersons from the congregation undertaking redevelopment. The pastor will meet with the Committee each time that it meets but will

not be a member of the committee and will have no vote. The Church Redevelopment Committee will meet with the Session of the congregation at least quarterly and at any time that there is a special need.

Alternatives to Retain in Consideration: If the redevelopment does not appear to remain on track, options such as yoked or other shared ministry arrangements should be considered.

Requirements for Maintaining Assistance during the cycle: Continuing to meet redevelopment goals according to the assessment of the specific Church Redevelopment Committee. The goal is a combination of accountability and flexibility.

Causes for Early Termination: Indications that progress towards detailed goals is not satisfactory and that remedies appear unlikely.

Application Process:

1. An affirmative vote by session and congregation which involves a stated willingness to work with all aspects of the process.
2. The present or new pastor must be approved as having the specific talents needed for redevelopment. This is to be ascertained by qualified outside assessment.
3. The completion of a full mission study is required.

Congregational Redevelopment Committee:

1. Composed of 6 persons (at least 3 of whom are laypersons with at least two women and at least two men, at least one from COM, and two from the congregation undertaking redevelopment) with gifts that mesh with redevelopment.
2. Together with the session will focus on progress on goals and objectives.
3. Together with session will focus on internal obstacles to goals and objectives, internal dissension, entropy, absence of visitor consciousness, etc.
4. The Redevelopment Committee will bring an update report to the Congregational Life Committee and COM quarterly.
5. The Redevelopment Committee will bring an annual report to Congregational Life Committee and COM.