

During the Charleston-Atlantic stated presbytery meeting held February 27<sup>th</sup>, commissioners, teaching elders and guests met with their respective 'neighborhood' groups to focus on four questions: Share one thing that excites you about your church. What is a challenge your church is facing? What ministries/experiences do you share with other churches in your presbytery and in your community? Name one thing you would like to see happen among the churches in this presbytery.

During this particular gathering, an average of 18 people was in each of the 6 neighborhood groups. And each of the 6 neighborhoods has an average of 8 member congregations.

All of the group facilitators reported enthusiastic participation of members in discussing the questions.

Out of these small group meetings was voiced a renewed commitment in seeking ways to more frequently and effectively connect with one another. Gathering with neighborhood congregations, as a part of each presbytery meeting, was encouraged.

Numerous examples were shared on how neighborhood member congregations are already working together in mission and ministry. Ideas were also shared on how congregations could intentionally begin combining efforts to better serve the needs within their geographic area while more effectively and demonstratively witnessing for Christ.

The congregations with the Charleston-Atlantic Presbytery range in reported membership from 12 to over 2500. They are in rural and urban areas. Some congregations are growing in numbers while others are aging and shrinking numerically. Some congregations have run out of space while others have more property than they can financially handle.

Challenges shared in the neighborhood meetings were diverse, although still contained a lot of commonality. Thus, the wonderful possibility exists of sharing experiences, learning from one another, and helping in problem solving.

Every person had something exciting to share about their particular congregation. Just hearing what others are doing is an opportunity for learning. And an opportunity for growth, witness, service and increased connection.

Neighborhood B, at the time of our last presbytery meeting, included seven congregations. One of these was Park Circle Presbyterian Church. The planning team that prayerfully put together the closing worship service of Park Circle, held May 1<sup>st</sup>, included representatives of every Neighborhood B congregation. The worship service celebrated 75 years of witness, ministry and memories. The reception was hosted, and food provided, by Neighborhood B congregations. The body of Christ, sharing in this closing worship service, included guests from many of the congregations within our presbytery.

What could have been a burden of a single congregation in planning a final worship service became an opportunity for Neighborhood B, and our entire presbytery, to come together in support, prayer, celebration, service and witness. An incredible example of being in ministry together.

Your Transition Team continues on the journey of seeking to implement the various changes, developed by our Vision Team and approved by our presbytery.