

**Report and Recommendation on
Establishment of a Commission on New Worshiping Communities
September 2022**

The Coordinating Council recommends that the Presbytery constitute an administrative commission to be known as The New Worshiping Communities Commission, according to the charter described below.

In the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), a New Worshiping Community is a gathering of people who are:

- Seeking to make and form new disciples of Jesus Christ
- Taking on varied forms of church for our changing culture
- Gathered by the Spirit to meet Jesus Christ in Word and Sacrament
- Sent by the Spirit to join God's mission for the transformation of the world
- Practicing mutual care and accountability
- Developing sustainability in leadership and finances

New - seeking to make and form new disciples of Jesus Christ - NWCs witness in word and deed (1 John 3:18), continuing Jesus' own mission of discipling, feeding, teaching, healing, welcoming, crossing boundaries, and proclaiming God's coming realm. Living out the Gospel demands ministry which engages today's cultures (John 1:14). New ways of joining Christians together for contextual ministry will use current and historic ways of "being church" as springboards for creative innovation (Matt 9:17).

Worshiping - gathered by the Spirit to meet Jesus Christ in Word and Sacrament, NWCs welcome new members of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27) through Baptism and are nourished by Christ's spiritual presence in the Lord's Supper. The Spirit impels us outward, so that worshipers participate in the redemption of the world in Christ (Col 1:20). Therefore, the primary beneficiaries of the NWC are not its own members, but rather its community and world.

Community - practicing mutual care and accountability - We commit ourselves to love one another (John 13:34) in relationships of mutual care and accountability, as faithful disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Entrusting ourselves and the church to the Holy Spirit, we seek to grow to maturity in faith and life. As distinct yet connected expressions of the body of Christ, NWCs have local leadership arising from their own community of faith (Exodus 18:21).

Toward the constituting of a commission that will support and guide the development of New Worshiping Communities (NWCs) in Carlisle Presbytery.

Vision/Purpose/Intention

The NWC Commission intends to inspire and lead within Carlisle Presbytery a movement dedicated to the cultivation of new worshiping communities by:

- Cultivating among the churches of the presbytery an adventurous climate which values creativity, diversity, courage, dependence on the Spirit, and risk-taking
- Advocating in the presbytery for the dedication of financial and human resources, and the infrastructure to support new worshiping communities
- Seeking the Holy Spirit in discovering populations for whom existing institutional congregations are not helpful for their spiritual journey, and discerning opportunities for starting new worshiping communities to meet unfulfilled needs
- Building awareness of the *1001 New Worshiping Communities* movement, and helping identify individuals and groups within existing congregations who may wish to partner in the development of new worshiping communities
- Supporting leaders who have a vision for starting new worshiping communities while nurturing their growth

Core Values

In order to carry out our common vision, the Presbytery of Carlisle, along with each new worshiping community, holds the following Core Values which represent the filter through which we see the world and upon which ministries are created. These Core Values also guide conversations and storytelling as the NWC Commission assesses and supports each new worshiping community in their work and witness.

Spirituality

Connection and relationship with the divine through practices that extend beyond corporate worship and may include service, learning/study, mindfulness & embodiment, and/or fellowship opportunities.

Love

Unselfish devotion that honors, values, respects, and embraces others and all of creation. Love both values and decentralizes oneself making space for engagement with others, especially those who have been marginalized by society.

Creativity

Transcending traditional ideas, rules, patterns, relationships, and structures to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, and interpretations. Creativity grows out of our call to be courageous co-creators with God and enlists imagination and diversity to make space for a fuller understanding of God.

Humility

The practice of self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and honesty that accompanies being teachable, flexible, and open to others. Humility also recognizes the active work of God's Spirit in the lives of others and creates a safe space for appropriate vulnerability.

Community

A mutually-supportive group of people who care about something and pursue it together, thereby finding collective meaning, countering loneliness, and exceeding the sum of its components. Such a community celebrates its diversity, engages in mutual reflection, and expresses its call.

Justice

Pursuit of structures that conform to what is right, fair, and reasonable for all of creation and its populations, with an emphasis on protection of the marginalized. Promotion of systemic and public love, recognizing that such is part of the realization of the kin-dom of God.

Discernment Process

Each NWC emerges in a unique way. Some come from the movement of the Spirit in a particular individual, resulting in a sense of call to a particular need, passion, or place. Some respond to a common cause, unserved people, or injustice. Others come from the discernment of an individual or congregation to expand, rebirth, or complement an existing ministry. Whatever the case, special care and attention will be taken to assist the leaders to discern the nature of the call and the reasoning behind the desire to initiate a particular NWC.

- **Person** - Upon coming to the New Worshiping Community Commission (NWCC), a prospective NWC leader begins to engage in a discernment process with the commission that includes a Discerning Missional Leadership assessment (DML) through PCUSA's *1001 New Worshiping Communities*. They are also connected with a liaison from the commission to help discern the nature of the call.
- **Place** - For some NWCs, the sense of call to a particular place is an important consideration. When identifying a possible space, special consideration will be taken in discerning why that space has emerged as a possible landing place for the NWC. This includes taking time to get to know the community, its people, its businesses, its community organizations, and its existing churches.
- **Focus** - The sense of call to a particular need, passion, place, cause, or injustice is an important consideration. The NWCC determines how the focus of a NWC will help expand, complement, and supplement the service of the Presbytery to the larger community, especially in those instances where it offers a divine, holy, or safe space to those who have experienced obstacles in their faith journey.

New Worshiping Communities Commission Charter and Membership

The New Worshiping Community Commission [per G-3.0109b(4)], will report semi-annually to the Presbytery and have the following powers:

1. To guide prospective NWC leaders through their discernment process (as per "Discernment Process" located above) by appointing a liaison and reviewing the results of the DML evaluation;
2. To request budgets from the Presbytery to implement and staff such NWCs;
3. To assume all powers and responsibilities of a session for the benefit and ministry of the NWC and to lead such a community as authorized in G-1.02 (Organizing a Particular Church), or to delegate such powers and responsibilities to the NWC when said Commission deems it appropriate to do so.
4. To revise this Vision and Core Values document if and when the need arises ("reformed and always reforming...").

The New Worshiping Communities Commission is constituted, as follows:

1. **Membership**
 - a. The New Worshiping Communities Commission shall have no fewer than seven and no more than nine standing members, of whom four or five shall be ruling elders.
 - b. The commission may also include non-ordained, non-voting advisory members who shall have voice during meetings.
 - c. Members shall be elected in compliance with the principles of inclusiveness, participation, and representation.

- d. The quorum of the New Worshiping Communities Commission shall be a majority of its standing membership.
- e. Standing members shall serve three-year terms as part of a rotating class, and shall not serve more than two consecutive terms as a voting member.

2. **Accountability**

- a. The Commission shall be directly accountable to, and shall report directly to the Presbytery. The Commission shall hold stated meetings and may, with due notice, hold special meetings as called by the Chair or by two members of the Commission.

Brief Background to the Report and Recommendation

The Council's Working Group on New Worshiping Communities includes Bruce Humphrey, Emily McCachren, Rachel Schwab, and Allison Smith, with Candidate Kevin Long and the Rev. Kelly Wiant, serving as co-opted members.

The working group met: May 5, June 2, July 7, August 4 and 17 to work out language to describe presbytery structures of support and accountability for the formation of New Worshiping Communities in Carlisle Presbytery.

The Working Group received updates from Kevin Long and Kelly Wiant, both of whom have completed the Discerning Missional Leadership Assessment with 1001 NWC and are enrolled in Apprenticeship Groups to support and guide their discernment.