

***Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy***  
Adopted: February 19, 2005

**Strategic Plan for 2005 and Beyond**

*Prologue*

***The Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy: a people of history, traditions, challenges, hopes, and dreams.***

Author Leonard Sweet tells the story of a nautical interpretation of an anchor. Normally, an anchor is used to hold a ship in place. But under certain circumstances when there is no wind and the ship desires to move forward, the anchor can be used for a different purpose. In these situations, the anchor can actually pull a ship forward. First, you send out a whale boat with the sailing ship's anchor. The whale boat crew rows out as far as it can and then drops the anchor. The sailing ship then winches its way forward. The process is called "kedging". Sweet uses this as a metaphor for how the church can utilize its traditions and history. We can use it to move forward or we can use it to keep us stuck in time.

The Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy sets sail seeking to move forward. With the acknowledgement that the world, the Presbytery, our ministry area, and our congregations are undergoing evolutions and/or devolutions, we are committing ourselves to a vision and mission statement that faces these realities. The following comes out of this process of discernment:

Part I.

***Our Beliefs***

We are people of the Creator God – being called into creativity, transformation and authentic relationship among diverse peoples in our midst.

We are people of the Redeemer God – being led to evangelize by sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ in fresh and innovative ways among fresh and innovative neighbors emerging around us.

We are people of the Lover God – being sent by the Holy Spirit to feed the spiritually

hungry people within our changing communities.

We are people of the Sovereign God – committing ourselves to discipleship-excellence by participating in what God is doing through justice-action, merciful-example, and shalom-living.

Part II. ***Our Mission Context***  
Significant Characteristics

We are Presbyterians living and working in Missouri and Illinois, in the midst of a population remarkable in its diversity of lifestyle and ethnicity.

- » Currently there are over 2,945,916 persons residing in our presbytery. This represents an increase of 6% since 1990.
- » Between 2004 and 2009 the population is projected to increase by 1.7%
- » The lifestyle diversity is extremely high with 49 out of 50 U.S. Lifestyle segments represented. The top segment is Suburban Mid-Life Families representing 7.5% of all households.
- » The racial ethnic diversity of our presbytery is very high. Anglos represent 78.8% of the population and all other racial/ethnic groups make up just 21.2% which is well below the national average of 32%. The largest racial-ethnic group is African-Americans representing 16.7% of the total population. Hispanic/Latinos are projected to be the fastest growing group increasing by 13.7% between 2004-2009.
- » The largest age group in the presbytery in terms of numbers is *Millenials* (Age 3 to 22) comprised of nearly 850,000 persons or 29% of the total population. *Builders* (age 80 and up) make up 4.5% of the population, slightly above the national average.
- » The area can be described as *somewhat non-traditional* in family structure because we have a below average presence of married persons and two-parent families. Divorced and widowed persons and single female households with children are above the national average
- » Based upon the number of years completed and college enrollment, the overall education level in the area is *somewhat low*. While 81.8% of the population aged 25 and over have graduated from high school as compared to the national average of 80.4%, college graduates account for 23.9% of those over 25 in the area verses 24.4% in the U.S.
- » Household concerns in our presbytery which exceed the national average

include: Neighborhood gangs, retirement opportunities, divorce, satisfying job/career, time for recreation/leisure and health insurance.

- » The faith receptivity and involvement level and preference for Christian religious affiliations is *somewhat high* when compared to the national average.
- » The overall religious giving potential can be described as *about average*.

### Part III. ***We Articulate Our Vision***

We would be faithful people

- acknowledging God's claim on our lives and our resources,
- listening for God's dream for our future,
- claiming ministries that will embody God's kingdom in our time and our place.

We would be faithful communities

- connected to the needs and aspirations of our neighbors
- creatively living out the tensions of the faith
- nurtured by tradition but liberated to the newness of God's possibilities.

We would be churches

- enlivened by the gospel,
- enriched by the active discipleship of persons of all ages,
- equipping each person for ministry,
- engaging in fruitful partnership with our communities,
- empowered by the realization of cooperative ministry.

We would be congregations

- blessed by our difference, bound by common values rooted in scripture and tradition
- led by passionate leaders committed to proclamation, mission, and health

- renewed in response to the newness and need of the world around us
- committed as witnesses against the injustices of racism and privilege
- dedicated to the health and wholeness of all people, particularly in supporting children and the households that nurture them toward maturity.

Part IV.

### ***Our Mission Calling***

The world today is fast-paced, constantly changing, sometimes chaotic, and jam-packed with information. The church is deeply affected by what is happening in the world around us. The presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy needs a flexible, adaptive plan for these dynamic times. Strategic planning is an intricate and ongoing process that anticipates the future and how the world might look 3-5 years from now. Guided by the vision and mission of the presbytery, a strategic plan will help us focus on what can be rather than what is.

Part V.

### ***Our Mission Statement***

**Our mission is to build relationships that lead congregations in life-transforming ministries so that we together embrace the fullness of the Kingdom of God.**

Part VI.

### ***Our Strategic Challenges and Opportunities***

**The presbytery affirms that evangelism is a primary concern. Each ministry area will need to prayerfully discern what this means for each part of our presbytery. It is our prayer that this will guide our work in:**

#### **Transforming Congregations & New Church Development**

72% of the geographic areas of our presbytery have no Presbyterian church (63 of 115). Some of these appropriately would not be places where we should have a church. Other areas are over represented. Some are places where there is a draw, a magnet area if you will where greater coordination should be going on. Other areas would be appropriate for consideration as regional church centers. Finally, several places would be appropriate to have a missional perspective. Specifics include the following:

- There are areas where there is high population and high diversity. We have places in our presbytery where there is extremely high lifestyle and racial/ethnic diversity and extremely high population which creates a community environment that is likely to be so dynamic that it is being transformed on a continual basis. There are 16 areas in our presbytery that have this quality

These include:

St. Louis, MO	O'Fallon, MO
NW. St. Louis, MO	Edwardsville, IL
SW St. Louis, MO	Florissant, MO
Chesterfield, MO	SE St. Louis, MO
Belleville, IL	Cape Girardeau, MO
St. Charles, MO	Festus, MO
NE St. Louis, MO	SE Oakville, MO
Alton, IL	NE Belleville, IL

- The regional areas are created by high population but low diversity. There are 7 areas in our presbytery that have this quality

These include:

St. Peters, MO	Farmington, MO
W. Oakville, MO	SE Wildwood, MO
Wildwood, MO	Poplar Bluff, MO
Washington, MO	

- The missional areas are created by low population but high diversity. Diversity being the key characteristic.

These include:

Sikeston, MO  
NE St. Charles.

- There are towns and smaller constituency settings where the multiplicity of congregations creates areas of intense concentration:

These include:

St. Louis, MO

Alton, IL

NW Edwardsville, IL

NW Alton, IL

NW Cuba, MO

- Developing our Immigrant Ministry under “Principles for Welcoming Immigrant and International Christian Communities Policy.”
- Exploring across presbytery and denominational boundaries new venues for ministry and mission

### **Resourcing and Equipping Congregations for Effectiveness**

- Working with sessions and congregations in developing “health” is a very high priority for our presbytery.
- Providing leadership with the tools for transformation that are needed to meet our current era will continue to be a challenge to congregations and staff. We will need to learn to communicate across educational and cultural levels
- Assisting congregations in doing their ministries in worship-ful ways, equipping and resourcing congregations will be a necessity in the next several years. This includes
  - ++ Training models that will take the staff from the office to ministry areas
  - ++ Working more closely with our Ministry Areas to provide coordination and development to benefit congregations
- Empower laity (growing leaders) through regular educational opportunities at the renovated Presbyterian Center
- Strategizing as a primary concern on the building of relationships
- Sharing resources in the ecumenical arena increasing dialog with faith groups
- Strategizing to reach the challenges of generational groups and various family types
- Explore strategies to reach youth and children

## **Dismantling Racism and Privilege**

- Continuing to address racism and privilege in the midst of a growing diversity in our population
  - ++ Strengthening the unique relationship between African Americans and Caucasians
  - ++ Recognizing the particular relationship between other minorities and Caucasians

## **Building a Structure for the Future**

- Maintaining a structure that remains flexible in the face of the challenges before us