

SOUTH WEST PRESBYTERY

Strategic Planning—Discerning Our Priorities—February 2011

South West Presbytery embarked on a strategic planning process in September 2010. The court met and discussed “big questions” that the Presbytery will face in the years to come. These questions were reviewed and collated by a planning team. A number of general areas emerged, and these were presented to the November 2010 meeting of Presbytery. Members were invited to comment further on the gathered topics, and this resulted in nine possible priorities.

The Presbytery was invited to gather at Cedar Glen on January 22, 2011. The purpose of the gathering was to discern from among the various priorities and select three that seemed most relevant at this time. The Rev. John Buttars prayerfully guided the group toward an understanding of discernment. The majority of the participants cast ballots before the day concluded.

The planning team reviewed the balloting and feedback received from participants and found support was widely distributed among the priorities. The team considered both the support level and the broad categories to distill three major areas. These are outlined below. They are ranked according to the support received.

1. Develop a measure of viability for congregations and community ministries. This would include a Presbytery process to develop such a measure and criteria for its use. It would also include consultation with congregations and community ministries. There would need to be an action plan to implement a measure or viability once developed.
2. Undertake a multi-year plan for training and skills development in the areas of intercultural ministry, leading change and evangelism. The common theme is learning how to reconnect with our changing context. This priority could include specific learning events, or the use of consultants to help the Presbytery understand our changing communities and their specific needs.
3. Develop a Presbytery-wide commitment to each other by fostering “a culture of collaboration.” This would include greater understanding of gifts and resources in the Presbytery, the types of activities congregations and community ministries are engaged in, and opportunities for greater cooperation. This priority includes opportunities for group building and overcoming old presbytery boundaries.