

# PROJECT CREED

## **Q. What is Project CREED?**

A. Project CREED is a special project of the Diocese of Pittsburgh to Re-envision the Diocese for the 21st Century as outlined by lay and clergy team members with their recommendations subject to the review, consideration, and approval by the Diocesan Convention in November 2019. What is God calling us to do here in the Diocese of Pittsburgh, and how can we redesign the tools in the diocese to most effectively help us answer that call?

## **Q. What are the key components of the project?**

A. The project encompasses four areas in which volunteers are examining how this diocese can better live out the words of our mission to *Love, Teach, Heal* by focusing on four aspects of our work as individuals, parishes, and a diocese.

## **Q. What are those four areas?**

A. The four areas addressed by working groups are described in detail below. They are the **Governance Working Group**, focused on right-sizing our governance structure to better accomplish our mission; the **New Initiatives Working Group**, focused on strengthening the ministries of our individual parishes to meet the needs of our own congregations; the **Reaching Out to Neighbors Working Group**, focused on discerning how we can be better neighbors in a larger community; and the **Communication Working Group**, focused on how we can strengthen trust through better communication techniques within and among parishes and with the diocese as a whole.

## **Q. Who is involved in Project CREED?**

A. Currently, some 66 members of the diocese (45 lay and 21 clergy) have volunteered to serve on one of the four working groups. Through *Grace Happens* and other communications, every person in the diocese was invited last fall to help in this re-envisioning process, and we continue to welcome all volunteers.

## **Q. How did Project CREED come about?**

A. The project began in a conversation between Bishop McConnell and the Standing Committee on ways to create more effective communication and engagement between the bishop's office, our clergy and our congregations. Diocesan Council had already been considering a review of

governance structures. The combined efforts led to a vision of a process that would create broad-based ownership of changes necessary to our life as a diocese.

To assist in this, the bishop and Standing Committee chose an outside consultant, Judy Stark. Representatives of the three governing bodies of the diocese – the Standing Committee, the Diocesan Council, and the Board of Trustees, together with the bishop and his senior staff – met with the consultant for a full day at the end of September 2018, and began to design what became Project CREED.

The project received further input from a day-long clergy convocation in late November, and at the December meeting of Diocesan Council. All agreed that the process had to be all-inclusive, diverse (in all aspects of that word), and committed to producing a substantive action plan, not mere words on paper.

### **Q. Who is the consultant to Project CREED?**

A. Judy Stark, from St. Petersburg, Florida, has consulted in various capacities with 16 dioceses across the nation. She brings a wealth of knowledge of the broader Church to Project CREED, including how other dioceses approach the issues that we confront in Pittsburgh and how we can develop approaches that best meet our local needs.

### **Q. Who are the team and working group leaders in Project CREED?**

A. Bishop McConnell has asked Jon Delano, president of Diocesan Council, to serve as Team Leader, and Jon is also serving as chair of the Governance Working Group. Amy Shelley is chairing the New Initiatives Working Group; the Rev. Julie Smith is chairing the Reaching Out to Neighbors Working Group; and Elaine Effort is chairing the Communication Working Group.

### **Q. What is the timetable for action?**

A. Each of the four working groups is expected to produce an action plan by this summer for review and approval by the lay and clergy deputies to the 2019 Diocesan Convention this November. If the Governance Working Group proposes changes to our governing structures, that will also require action by the Committee on Constitution and Canons to submit the appropriate language to Convention to amend the legal framework under which we operate. The plan is to provide plenty of time for members of the diocese to consider the recommendations of Project CREED.

### **Q. Is it too late to participate in the working groups?**

A. Absolutely not! We need you! Anyone in the diocese, lay or clergy, who would like to contribute to any of these working groups can become a member simply by contacting Andy Muhl, the executive assistant at the diocese, at [amuhl@episcopalpgh.org](mailto:amuhl@episcopalpgh.org), or Jon Delano at

jon.delano@verizon.net. If you prefer not to be part of the working group but wish to share an idea, just send it along to Jon and Andy.

### **Q. What is the focus of the Governance Working Group?**

A. Our governance structure, set by the canons, may be too cumbersome for a diocese of our size. How can we right-size our elected and appointed diocesan bodies to reflect current needs, insure diversity, respect geography, and guide us into a 21st-century model of leadership, lay and ordained? What works best to build trust and collaboration among parishes, guard against a Pittsburgh-centric governance structure, and remove barriers to entry for all to participate in our governance?

### **Q. What is the focus of the New Initiatives Working Group?**

A. In a changing world, we need to develop ministries that reflect the needs in our own congregations and beyond. The possibilities include house churches; dinner churches; gatherings in bars and coffee shops; mini-communities of faith that focus on a unique group, such as young mothers; laundry love; services of choral evensong, Compline, and 12-step Eucharists; and more. We want to say “yes” to these creative expressions of faith that increase the ways we love, teach, and heal in the name of Jesus Christ. How can we foster these new ministries, support them financially and otherwise, and encourage congregations to tap into the resources available?

### **Q. What is the focus of the Reaching Out to Neighbors Working Group?**

A. Our diocese does not operate in isolation. We are part of larger communities of diverse beliefs. Our neighbors are Christian and non-Christian and, increasingly, not religious at all. How can we discover who they are, minister in our neighborhoods, find strategic partners, and identify local needs and resources? How can we use our assets most effectively to multiply our presence in our communities, expand our capacity for mission, and be a powerful voice inviting others to know the person, work, and love of Jesus Christ? How can we define who our neighbor is, and discern how to be good neighbors in our own communities?

### **Q. What is the focus of the Communication Working Group?**

A. Trust depends on constant communication and sharing of information, which is not solely the responsibility of the governing bodies. Building trust requires a commitment to sharing information across parish lines about the work we are doing – both together and independently. How can we build and strengthen that trust through 21st century communication tools? What kind of information should be shared, and how can we facilitate parishes getting to know, connect, and respect each other’s contributions to the diocese?