



Alphabet Soup

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I never did like alphabet soup. It always looked good in the commercials – or at least, it looked fun. In reality, I thought it tasted terrible, and I could never get enough of the right letters on my spoon to spell anything. What a disappointment!

The Presbytery created its own pot of alphabet soup in February, a broth with random letters: C, P, V, M, T. We mixed up the ingredients of Presbytery responsibilities from our Manual of Operation and let them simmer for a time. On our organizational spoon, letters began to group themselves as CCV, CTM, CPM.

Having lived with our new organizational structure for a few months now, it felt timely to report on how things are going. Unlike the Campbell's variety, I can confidently state the Presbytery's alphabet soup is "Mmm, mmm good!"

The Commission on Pastoral Ministries (CPM) assumed responsibility for the care and nurture of our pastors at every stage and type of ministry. In one of its more traditional functions, CPM presented Mark Fraley for examination as a candidate to the ministry of Word and Sacrament at this week's Presbytery meeting. What a delight to hear the passionate call of Mark! He was unanimously moved to candidacy, and will be under the care of the Presbytery during these next stages. The CPM will monitor and support his progress. CPM has also been reaching out to pastors to learn how the Presbytery might support them during the pandemic. Annually, it approves all long-term contracts and terms of call for installed pastors.



The Commission on Transitional Ministries (CTM) has been able to focus its efforts on assisting congregations through pastoral transitions. Since February, CTM members have trained several Pastor Nominating Committees on the steps for creating position descriptions, posting and advertising those positions, interviewing candidates, and finalizing terms of call. Several congregations are in the final stages of the call process, while others are just beginning. CTM also reviews and approves all initial contracts and terms of call. Annually, it approves all short-term or transitional contracts. CTM is also hard at work updating policies to bring and retain quality pastoral candidates for the Presbytery.

In our new structure, the Commission on Congregational Vitality (CCV) supports innovative and connectional congregational ministries that enhance the vitality of congregations and empower leaders. This support may include training, resources, grants, and accompaniment. As one of its first actions, CCV worked with Council to offer emergency grants for congregational and specialized ministries impacted by the pandemic. These are still available, and many grants have been used for technology upgrades.

Moderators of these three commissions regularly meet together with the Council moderator and Presbytery staff to assess clarity of responsibilities. Not surprisingly, a single situation might cross into the authority of several commissions. By opening channels of communication among the commission leaders, we've been able to agree on how to move forward either through a joint working group or in serial steps.

We welcome your feedback. Take a taste of our new alphabet soup, and let's us know what you think. We hope you won't be disappointed!