

## Who Is Leading This?

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Debbie Detterman, *Financial Administrator*  
Mike Porter, *Coordinator of Abbots and Mission Affinity Groups*  
Rebecca Bowman, *Administrator of Abbots and Mission Affinity Groups*

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Tim Snow, *University Presbyterian Church, Seattle, WA*

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*because following Jesus is too important to do alone*

Human beings need an authentic community – where we truly belong; where we can celebrate and where we can cry; where we can be challenged to be our very best and where we can be forgiven when we have been our very worst.

We need a community where we can be welcomed and accepted, no matter who we are, where we've been, or what we've done – where all of us can grow in our relationship with God and our relationship with one another.

We need a community where humility is genuine, radical life change is expected, spiritual growth and transformation is celebrated, and prayer and worship are central.

We need to be part of a community that is not about us except to help us be our best as we love, serve, and influence the world around us.

The Body of Christ – the Church – is intended to be this community. But, for many of us, the contemporary “church” that we experience is tired, stressed, embattled, and afraid; a place of confusion, conflict, and fragmentation; a poor imitation of the broken world around it.

## What is The Fellowship Community?

...a network of churches and leaders called together to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ by growing in Christ's likeness, living by God's Word, and joining in God's mission in the world.

Following Jesus is no easy path – especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Based in the PC(USA), we are devoted to following the Jesus revealed in Scripture and, in so doing, sharing the life and hope of the gospel with a broken and hurting world.

## How large is The Fellowship Community?

Hundreds of congregations and individuals in 45 states have joined already, and we are growing!

Joining The Fellowship Community is simple, but simply joining is not the point. When you join The Fellowship Community you promise to live differently—actively embodying the good news of Jesus Christ wherever God places you.

## Why Individuals *and* Congregations?

Congregations join when the session sees membership as significant for their identity and mission. Where there is less unanimity, individuals can find encouragement and community by joining.

To join The Fellowship Community means studying and affirming the Essential Tenets—our way of clarifying the core values expressed in Scripture and our Book of Confessions—and agreeing to be part of a community in which we hold each other accountable to live as followers of Jesus Christ.

## Why Stay in the PC(USA)?

This is where God has called us to be.

We do not agree with all the decisions made by the PC(USA), but our disagreement, based on our understanding of Scripture, challenges us to be all the more clear in our teaching of the good news and the way of Christ and our commitment to love and serve others in Jesus' name.

## What Does The Fellowship Community Offer?

- ♦ A place of welcome and mutual encouragement – sustaining faith and faithfulness
- ♦ Persistent and faithful witness to the Faith
- ♦ Commitment to faithful living and witness – not fighting the denominational battles or leaving
- ♦ Formation of the lives and ministries of all disciples, especially teaching and ruling elders

- ♦ Introduction of the discipline of mutual accountability for congregations (Mission Affinity Groups)
- ♦ Serious attention to the Faith – our Theology Project
- ♦ Recommitment to the Great Commission – a place for experimentation, innovation, and the exchange of missional practices
- ♦ Focused attention to the smallest congregations and fellowships
- ♦ Bible studies and other resources
- ♦ Regional and national gatherings

## Upcoming Events

- ♦ \*Wee Kirk Conference, Angola, IN, October 6-8
- ♦ Wee Kirk Conference, Mt. Pleasant, PA, October 12-14
- ♦ \*Wee Kirk Conference, Montreat, NC, October 19-21
- ♦ Regional Gathering, Rockford, IL, January 30
- ♦ Small Church Cluster Conference, Clinton, SC, April 13-15
- ♦ Theology Conference, San Diego, CA, April 25-27
- ♦ 2016 National Gathering, Pittsburgh, PA, September 6-8

*\*Including a special emphasis for pastors and commissioned elders serving in their first call.*

## How Are People Connecting?

Mission Affinity Groups, Abbot Ministry  
Social Media, Blog

Each member congregation is part of a Mission Affinity Group (MAG). These groups of 3-4 congregations are formed around a common mission focus—some might be their location, others might be a specialized type of ministry. Sessions use our Narrative on the Health of Mission and Ministry to evaluate their local ministry against biblical expectations for the Body of Christ. Then they meet in their Mission Affinity Group at regular intervals to share their joys, diagnose their challenges, pray, build accountability, and worship.

The Abbot Ministry is currently a pilot project connecting individual pastors and commissioned elders with a peer who serves as a spiritual friend. Abbots are in regular contact to support, encourage, and pray with people who would otherwise be isolated and alone in ministry.