

EXPLORATION

RESOURCE—Once the issues of Mission, Identity and Process have been explored it is time to look at the practical matters of making shared ministry a reality. These will include considerations of staffing (lay, clergy, paid and volunteer) and structure (organizing for shared ministry).



REVIEW—Evaluation is an important step in any process. This stage focuses on limited evaluation for short-term goals and projects as well as periodic comprehensive evaluation.

ARE YOU READY FOR THE ADVENTURE OF EXPLORING PARTNERSTEPS?

For more information contact your district superintendent or the Commission on the Small Membership Church, Michael Long, chair
pastormelong@comcast.net
(814) 736-9788



EXPLORING PARTNERSTEPS

An Initiative to Help United Methodist Congregations in Western Pennsylvania Discern Opportunities for Sharing Ministry



Sponsored by the Commission on the Small Membership Church, Western Pennsylvania Conference, The United Methodist Church

IDENTIFICATION

THE POOL OF POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Other United Methodist congregations, congregations of other denominations or even non-church partners are to be found all over Western Pennsylvania. Where do we start? Who should be talking to each other? How does the exploration begin?

Actually, there are several answers to these questions. District superintendents may initiate conversations between churches. Interested laypersons or clergy may hear about “Partnersteps” and suggest a starting point. Someone may even become interested by reading this brochure!

The important thing is that people with a heart for sharing ministry get together and learn more about the process.

For those who express an interest we will provide an introduction to “Partnersteps.”

INTRODUCTION

THE FILTER

The introductory events will present a strong biblical basis for sharing ministry, highlight some of the potential “benefits” of cooperation, and give an overview of the critical issues to be explored in “Partnersteps.”

It will take commitment, time, prayer and a good deal of soul-searching to discover God’s plan for sharing ministry with others. These introductions will help further identify those potential partners that are truly interested in beginning the exploration process.

Following the introductory event a group of potential partners that are ready to commit themselves to exploring the possibilities for shared ministry may sign up as an official Partnersteps site. At this point a coach will be assigned to guide the exploration.

EXPLORATION

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RELATE—Enter the coach. The potential partners will be guided by their coach to get to know each other. Time will be spent examining the critical issue of mission (or purpose). What missional values do the partners hold in common? Where do they differ? What is God leading them to accomplish together?

REFLECT—Identity is the next critical issue to explore. The group will look at scripture, beliefs, geography, demographics, local history and other factors to see how they might describe their common identity.

REFOCUS—There are several approaches or processes that a group of partners might use to plan and work together. Which one is right for your shared ministry group? How will working together be different than you are used to in local church ministry? Your coach will help you find answers to these questions and help you refocus for shared ministry.