

Towards Closer Relationships and Better Collaboration in the Presbytery of Los Ranchos
A Grass-Roots, Relationship-Based, Listening Campaign
for the Strategic Coordinating Team (SCT) of the Presbytery of Los Ranchos

In May 2009 the Presbytery of Los Ranchos adopted the Odyssey Report (AKA Presbytery 2.0) (<https://losranchos.org/wp-content/uploads/Odyssey-Report.pdf>). The report envisioned a less bureaucratic, more nimble, relational, trust-based middle governing body.

Shortly thereafter, the presbytery entered into a season of discernment regarding "gracious separation", and then an extended season of dismissals, which concluded with the eventual departure of 11 congregations.

The presbytery then began a time of wandering in the desert – a time of reestablishing relationships, engaging in conversation, rebuilding trust, setting priorities, and determining how God was calling us to be the church in the world.

As we approach the promised land, it is time to take stock of how well the structures laid out in 2009 are serving our call to be a "missional, learning community." Beginning with the Strategic Coordinating Team, it is proposed that we engage in a grass-roots, relationship-based, listening campaign.

Purpose:

To measure the faithfulness and the effectiveness of the work of the Strategic Coordinating Team.

Strategic Coordinating Team (SCT) Description:

Committee Membership: Eighteen members who have time to work with leaders of congregations to broker the resources of presbytery; are willing to challenge the status quo; are able to design experiments and measure results against desired outcomes; are able to think developmentally, in stages and phases.

Committee Function: Doing work which is critical to leadership for our presbytery's mission; help create, maintain, support partnerships of congregations; facilitating and supporting affinity and professional networks; provide resources to maintain and encourage ethnic ministries and New Church Developments (NCDs).

Members serve on one of four sub-committees: Christian Formation and Discipleship; Healthy Congregations; New Worshipping Communities; Worldwide and Community Engagement.

The Presbytery's Vision: *To be a community of flourishing congregations and partnerships that joyfully participate in God's redemptive work through Jesus Christ in the world.*

A Restatement of the Vision, Found on the Presbytery's Website: We believe every **church** can thrive. Our Los Ranchos **community** will **encourage** and **support** you – every step of the way - with **innovation, leadership** and **resources**.

Questions:

- What is the SCT's role in this vision and this promise?
- Are we
 - Encouraging the development and nourishing of flourishing congregations?
 - Joyfully participating in God's redemptive work in the world?
- Are we brokering...
 - support,
 - innovation,
 - leadership,
 - resources?
- Who is God calling us to be?
- What difference are we called to make in the world?
 - How does this support and sustain the congregations we are called to resource?
 - How do we contribute to the health of the presbytery?

- How shall we witness to the Gospel?
 - As a presbytery?
 - As a collection of congregations?
 - As congregations bound together in a connectional church?

Realities:

SCT wields significant power, because it controls most of the non-designated funds of the presbytery.

SCT has the potential to touch every congregation and every member of the presbytery, because its scope is so broad, including responsibilities for:

- Congregational health
- New church development
- Congregational re-development
- New embodiments of church
- Community partnerships
- World-wide missions
- Leadership development
- Christian formation
- Discipleship
- Partnership grants
- Leadership development grants
- Continuing education scholarships
- Brokering resources

SCT has the potential to gather people and allocate money in a manner that supports the presbytery's vision and values.

Building relationships and listening are the keys to achieving faithfulness not only to the presbytery's vision, but also to the Church's responsibility to share the gospel, make disciples, and work toward the kin-dom of God.

Building Relationships and Listening to One Another:

Begins with us, therefore we will:

- Get to know one another via a series of relational meetings by
 - Meeting one-on-one, face-to-face with the members of our network teams.
 - Meeting one-on-one, face-to-face with at least one member of each of the other SCT network teams.
- Explore the interest, passion and call of other members of the SCT by
 - Meeting one-on-one, either face-to-face or via video conferencing (I.e., FaceTime or Skype) or phone to listen to one another.
- Think together about the work of our particular network team and how it is or is not carrying out its responsibility as articulated in the SCT Description by
 - Devoting at least one meeting to this question.
 - Being ready to report our findings to the SCT.
- Think together about the work of our particular network team and what it could and/or should be by
 - Devoting at least one meeting to this question.
 - Being ready to report our findings to the SCT.
- Think together about the work of the SCT and how it is or is not carrying out its responsibility as articulated in the SCT Description by
 - Devoting at least one meeting to this question.
 - Being willing to wrestle with our findings.
- Think together about the work of SCT and what it could and/or should be by

- Devoting at least one meeting to this question.
- Being open to reorienting and reorganizing our work, our network team, and the SCT.

Continues with getting to know the churches and the people we are called to serve, therefore we will:

- Get to know others in our presbytery by
 - Arranging one-on-one, face-to-face relational meetings with at least two persons who are or may be impacted by the work of our network-team.
- Explore the interest, passion and call of others in our presbytery by
 - Arranging one-on-one, face-to-face meetings to listen to at least two persons who are or may be impacted by the work of our network-team.
- Report the results of our meetings with others to our network-team and think about how what we have heard impacts our work by
 - Devoting at least one meeting to this question.
 - Being ready to report our findings to the SCT.
- Arrange a face-to-face listening session with persons engaged in or potentially engaged in or impacted by the work of our network-team.
- Think together about the work of SCT in light of what we have heard by
 - Devoting at least one meeting to this question.
 - Being open to reorienting and reorganizing the work of our network team and the SCT.
- Think together about how SCT is or is not meeting expectations as expressed in the SCT description by
 - Devoting at least one meeting to this question.
 - Being open to reorienting and reorganizing the work of our network -team and the SCT.
- Think together about how SCT functions in relation to other presbytery teams.
- Be willing to engage other teams of the presbytery in this discipline of listening and discernment to maximize presbytery effectiveness and faithfulness.

Implementation Plan

Conducting a Grass-Roots, Relationship-Based, Listening Campaign

FAQs:

1. When and where will groups gather?

Initial relational meetings between network-team members will take place at regularly scheduled or specially called meetings of network teams. Meetings between members of differing teams will be scheduled by individual participants. Listening Session Groups will meet at a date, time, and location designated by the arranger and should be communicated to her or his network team convener, the SCT Moderator and the listening campaign manager.

2. What questions shall we ask?

Sample questions are suggested below.

3. How will we record and share the information we collect?

Relational meetings – notes are not necessary, but may be kept at the discretion of the listener.

Face-to-face listening meetings - participants in each meeting shall record the responses of those with whom they meet.

Listening sessions – the session arranger shall designate a recorder.

Reporting sessions – network-team conveners shall designate a recorder.

Notes will be shared at network team and SCT meetings as outlined below.

4. How do I, members of my network-team, or other SCT members facilitate these conversations?

This and all listening campaigns are based on relationships – getting to know the persons with whom we are or may potentially be in ministry. Suggestions for beginning a conversation and sample questions are provided. However, the most important thing to remember as we listen is to allow what we hear guide what

we say and ask. Notes may be taken during conversations or contemporaneous notes recorded immediately after conversations take place. SCT members will be trained in facilitating Listening Sessions.

Phase I **Beginning with Us: Listening to One Another**

Step 1: Getting to know one another via a series of relational meetings by meeting one-on-one, face-to-face with the members of our network teams, and meeting one-on-one, face-to-face with at least one member of each of different SCT network-teams (not your own).

Relational meetings involve 2 persons and should be scheduled for 20-30 minutes with each person spending half the meeting as listener and half as speaker. Schedule enough time for all persons to meet with each of the other members of your network team.

Relational Meetings have no agenda other than getting to know one another. They are not about business; they are about people getting to know one another. Opening questions/prompts could be:

- *Where are you from?*
- *Tell me about your family.*
- *Do you have photos you'd like to share?*
- *How do you spend your free time?*
- *Why are you involved in the church? In SCT?*

Listen and let the responses guide your next question. Conclude by thanking your conversation partner.

Step 2: Explore the interest, passion and call of other members of the SCT by meeting one-on-one, either face-to-face or via video conferencing (I.e., FaceTime or Skype) or phone to listen to one another.

Individuals schedule at least three 20-30 minute meetings with other members of the SCT, one should be with a member of his or her own network team and the others with members of other network teams. Questions should explore the work of the interviewee in his or her congregation and also with the SCT.

Questions/prompts could be:

- *Tell me about your congregation and how it informs your work with SCT.*
- *Tell me about the work of your network team.*
- *Why are you engaged in this work?*
- *What do you know about the work of other network teams?*
- *What brings you joy in your work with SCT?*
- *What frustrates you about your work with SCT?*

The person initiating the meeting should take notes of her or his conversations in preparation for Step 3. Notes will be held by the note-taker to be referenced during Steps 3 & 4.

Step 3: Think together about the work of our particular network-team and how it is or is not carrying out its responsibility as articulated in the SCT Description by devoting at least one meeting to this question and being ready to report our findings to the SCT.

After receiving (either by submission of notes in advance or orally at the beginning of the meeting) reports of the findings from Step 2. Consider how your network team is:

- *Brokering support, innovation, leadership, resources?*
- *Contributing to the health of the presbytery?*
- *Helping congregations and partnerships share the gospel, make disciples, and manifest the reign of God.*

Step 4: Think together about the work of our particular network-team and what it could and/or should be by devoting at least one meeting to this question and being ready to report our findings to the SCT.

This step can be accomplished at the same time as Step 3 and will be informed by the findings of that step. Questions/issues for consideration will be developed by the network team convener, who may be assisted by the listening campaign manager

Completion date October 18 2018

Step 5: Think together about the work of the SCT and how it is or is not carrying out its responsibility as articulated in the SCT Description by devoting at least one meeting to this question and being willing to wrestle with our findings.

Questions/issues for consideration will be developed by the SCT's Coordinating Council and the listening campaign manager.

Step 6: Think together about the work of SCT and what it could and/or should be by devoting at least one meeting to this question and being open to reorienting and reorganizing our work, our network team, and the SCT.

Questions/issues for consideration will be developed by the SCT's Coordinating Council and the listening campaign manager.

Completion date January 2019

Phase II **Getting to Know the Churches and People We Are Called to Serve**

Step 1: Get to know others in our presbytery by arranging one-on-one, face-to-face relational meetings with at least two persons who are or may be impacted by the work of our network-team.

Relational meetings involve 2 persons and should be scheduled for 20-30 minutes with each person spending half the meeting as listener and half as speaker. In this instance, the arranger should be the first to share, followed by the invitee.

Relational Meetings have no agenda other than getting to know one another. They are not about business; they are about people getting to know one another. Opening questions/prompts could be:

- *Where are you from?*
- *Tell me about your family.*
- *Do you have photos you'd like to share?*
- *How do you spend your free time?*
- *Why are you involved in the church? In SCT?*

Listen and let the responses guide your next question. Conclude by thanking your conversation partner.

Step 2: Explore the interest, passion and call of others in our presbytery by arranging one-on-one, face-to-face meetings to listen to at least two persons who are or may be impacted by the work of our network-team.

Individuals schedule at least two 20-30 minute meetings with other presbyters or members of Los Ranchos churches. Questions should explore the work of the other in the congregation and how it may relate to the work of the SCT. Questions/prompts could be:

- *Tell me about your congregation and how it informs your work with in the presbytery.*
- *Tell me about the work of the _____ (insert name of presbytery entity).*
- *Why are you engaged in this work?*
- *What do you know about the work of other presbytery entities?*
- *What brings you joy in your work with the presbytery?*
- *What frustrates you about your work with the presbytery?*

The person initiating the meeting should take notes of her or his conversations in preparation for Step 3. Notes will be held by the note-taker to be referenced during Step 3. May be shared with the network convener prior to the Step 3 meeting.

Step 3: Report the results of our meetings with others to our network-team and think about how what we have heard impacts our work by devoting at least one meeting to this question and being ready to report our findings to the SCT.

After receiving (either by submission of notes in advance or orally at the beginning of the meeting) reports of the findings from Step 2. Consider how our network team is:

- Providing support, innovation, leadership, resources.
- Contributing to the health of the presbytery.
- Helping congregations and partnerships share the gospel, make disciples, and manifest the kingdom of God.

Step 4: Arrange a face-to-face listening session with persons engaged in or potentially engaged in or impacted by the work of our network team.

It is expected that each member of the SCT will organize and lead at least one listening session.

Listening session groups will consist of 6-10 persons and should include no more than two persons from any one congregation.

Each session will include:

- Opening rounds question
- 2 – 5 questions particular to the work of the network team
- Said questions will be developed by network convener in consultation with the SCT's Coordinating Council and the listening campaign manager.

Instructions for and training in leading a session will be provided; date(s) & time(s) TBD.

Step 5: Think together about the work of SCT in light of what we have heard by devoting at least one meeting to this question and being open to reorienting and reorganizing the work of our network team and the SCT.

Questions/issues for consideration will be developed by the SCT's Coordinating Council and the listening campaign manager based on the learnings from internal and external listening meetings and listening sessions.

Step 6: Think together about how SCT is or is not meeting expectations as expressed in the SCT description by devoting at least one meeting to this question and being open to reorienting and reorganizing the work of our network -team and the SCT.

This step can be accomplished at the same time as Step 5 and will be informed by the findings of that step. Questions/issues for consideration will be developed by SCT's Coordinating Council and the listening campaign manager.

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Step 7: Think together about how SCT functions in relation to other presbytery teams and be willing to engage other teams of the presbytery in this discipline of listening and discernment to maximize presbytery effectiveness and faithfulness.

Questions/issues for consideration will be developed by the SCT's Coordinating Council and the listening campaign manager based on the learnings from internal and external listening meetings and listening sessions and the SCT's deliberations.

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