

PRESBYTERY OF LOS RANCOS (PLR)

Approved on September 28, 2019

MISSION STATEMENT

“God calls the Presbytery of Los Ranchos to cultivate vital congregations and partnerships that embody the love and justice of Jesus Christ.”

Commentary on the Mission Statement

Although valuable as a longer statement and helpfully identifying PLR as a “learning and missional community,” the former Mission Statement in the Odyssey Report (2009) was too long to be easily remembered and widely used. The revised Mission Statement was developed therefore as a version that presbyters could easily embrace and say as an “elevator speech” conveying who we as a presbytery are and what we do. It was the result of a months-long iteration between the Generative Catalyst Team and the Presbytery Council. Each word or phrase was carefully chosen, as the following commentary conveys:

- “God calls ...” We began with God’s initiative, partly because our tradition has always insisted that the work of creation and redemption begin with God’s sovereign initiative.
- “PLR” We explored many nouns to use as our subject, such as “God calls us to be a *community*, a *body*, a *family*, a *council*, *network*, *union*, *companions*, *friends*, *collective*, etc.” In the end, we felt that the word “**presbytery**” names the kind of body that can have the fellowship that is important to us and point to the specific work we have of holding one another accountable.
- “cultivate vital” Using an “optometrist approach” we narrowed a large field of potential verbs to one that adequately captures the kind of sowing, weeding, watering, and harvesting work that the presbytery can exercise in our work. The idea is that our presbytery intentionally cultivates vitality in congregations and partnerships, not that PLR’s mission is exclusively for those congregations and partnerships that would already identify as “vital.”

“congregations and partnerships”

Without repeating the term “flourishing congregations” which is found in our vision statement, and with sensitivity to the presbyters who practice ministry in contexts outside of traditional congregations, we opted to add the word “partnerships.”

“embody”

We were looking for a term that would name our faithfulness in *being* as well as in *doing*. What we *do* springs forth from our identity, values and calling as Reformed disciples of Jesus Christ.

“love and justice of Jesus Christ.”

We were looking for a way of naming the reign of God in plain and distinctive terms. The fact that the Mission Statement begins with God and ends with Jesus Christ was particularly meaningful for us. It was also important that the statement name the transformational work that the Church is called to initiate and do. The terms “love” and “justice” are found throughout scripture and are descriptive of the work we seek to embody as a presbytery.

Development

A proposed revision of the 2009 Mission Statement for the Presbytery of Los Ranchos was included as an information item on September 29, 2018. For several months thereafter, representatives of the GCT engaged in conversations about the proposed statement with various groups throughout the presbytery, and particularly those who felt on the peripheries of presbytery life or felt disaffected. Those conversations led the GCT to recommend revisions which were included in the final version of the Mission Statement adopted by the Presbytery on September 28, 2019.