



August 15, 2019

Greetings!

Over these past two months I have had one-on-one meetings with over 50 leaders in our presbytery. We gathered around tables in coffee shops and restaurants and sat together in rooms and offices in churches throughout our presbytery. So many of you shared your joys and struggles of ministry. I heard so many of your stories about growing your church; wrestling with decline; ways to engage your congregations with evangelism and The Gospel; figuring out how to respond to tragic gun violence; building and equipping new leaders and disciples; dealing with the loss of beloved staff. Through all these stories there was one theme that seemed to emerge more often than not. That was the hunger for more collaboration. So many of you felt that you were out there doing it alone with little to no support from your colleagues. You were wondering if others in the presbytery were dealing with the same things that you were. And if they were, what were they doing about it.

We currently don't have the *best* platform to help build community throughout our presbytery, but we could easily make one. This might sound very elementary to some of you but hear me out. Let's do a better job of being intentional about building community when we gather as a body. This could be something as simple as introducing (or maybe reintroducing) yourself to someone in our presbytery that you don't know too well. Ask them what they are excited about in the life of their congregation. Have them share a recent "win" in ministry. And then, don't be shy, SHARE YOURS! You'll probably walk away from that conversation with a new colleague in ministry AND a new idea. It might seem like a small thing, but these are the first steps to building real and authentic relationships that will be the grounds on which we build whatever it is that will come next.

*"Go ye therefore, into the presbytery and make new friends".*

John