

*“O Lord, you know what is best for me. Let this or that be done, as you please.  
Give what you will, how much you will and when you will.”*  
(Prayer by Thomas a Kempis, 1380-1471)

May what we have done in the last year have been God’s will! Certainly one of our emphases has been “discernment” ... the seeking of God’s will in what we are, in how we act, and in what we decide.

Much of my efforts this past year have been to help create processes for our decision-making and in how we live together as a Presbytery. An example is the process we have used to come to a conclusion on the request of Covenant Church, Simsbury to be dismissed from the PCUSA. Certainly their dismissal is significant for us, but perhaps even more significant is the way we progressed step by step in discernment, in respectful dialog, in careful communication, and in openness to each other’s views. This really matters! It matters because the discipline of good process changes who we are and how we act. It leads us to become more trusting, more spiritual, and more caring of the views of others. All of which, I believe, are the ways of Christ.

We have discovered that the boundaries of the Presbytery are permeable. All healthy living beings adapt to their environment by shedding what no longer benefits them but also taking in what gives them health. As we are dismissing one congregation we are also welcoming new fellowships. We’ve put attention to nurturing the immigrant fellowships of Kenyans in Springfield and Brazilians in Hyannis and we are also pursuing a “new church development” near Holyoke. In so doing, we are adapting to what is happening across America as our nation becomes more diverse. And we are reflecting the wideness of God’s family.

The Presbytery has taken some new initiatives to explore and discern how God might be calling us into the future. Among these initiatives are:

- A significant partnership with 3 congregations in revitalization;
- The creation of a 4<sup>th</sup> Cluster: a non-geographical cluster of specialized and retired ministers;
- A campus ministry summit to explore new ways of doing this critical ministry;
- An Immigration Task Force to help us be intentional and comprehensive in ministry to the international sojourners among us;
- Starting Strong, a support group for newly ordained clergy;
- An approved grant from the Board of Pensions for educational events about new ways of doing church in urban areas and among immigrants and the emergent generations;
- Explorations about new ways of partnering and funding mission.

Jesus said, *“Thy will be done.”* I pray that is exactly what is happening here in southern New England and what we will be doing in future years!

I am your servant in Christ,

