

Reconciliation Team

Brief Description of Purpose and Services

The purpose of the Reconciliation Team is,

to promote health and facilitate reconciliation within congregations and the presbytery as a whole.

This purpose statement needs to be unpacked. Because good relations are built upon spiritual and emotional well-being, the Reconciliation Team's first focus is to promote health in the presbytery and its congregations. The Team approaches the promotion of health through the lens of family systems theory. While family systems theory is not the only modality ecclesiastical governing bodies can use to promote health and facilitate reconciliation, it has proven to be a successful approach in varied and complex situations and is our chosen modality. To promote health in congregations the Team will provide a variety of training workshops in various settings throughout the presbytery. An illustrative, though not exhaustive, list of such workshops and settings includes the following:

Workshops

- Conflict and Communication in the Bible
- Developing Interpersonal Conflict Transformation Skills
- Understanding Congregations as a System to Promote Health
- Cultivating Congregational Conflict Transformation Skills
- Understanding Transition Dynamics during the Interim Period

Settings

- As a congregational retreat or adult education offering,
- as an educational offering at the Presbytery's annual "Big Event," or
- as part of a congregation's reconciliation process.

The RT's second focus is the facilitation of reconciliation in congregations that have experienced or are experiencing conflict. Congregational conflict can exist at varying levels of intensity. As such, the RT has a variety of approaches depending on the extent of the divisions within the church setting, ranging from workshops to coaching church leaders to full-scale mediation – approaches outlined in the LMPC Mediation Skills Training Institute workbook or originating from the Healthy Congregations Inc.

The approach outlined in this Manual represents a full-scale mediation, which in practice will be rare. It is included in its totality to communicate the full complement of tools at the RT's disposal. More common will be scaled down interventions. An illustrative, though not exhaustive, list of such limited interventions include the following:

- educational workshops,
- guided conversations for the purpose of healing between parties experiencing intense conflict,
- coaching of pastors, elders or others in leadership in non-anxious, self-differentiated communication, and/or

- the creation of mutually agreed upon covenants among members.