

ITEM C.206
FOR INFORMATION

COMPANY OF NEW PASTORS PROGRAM EXPANSION PLAN

The Company of New Pastors (CNP) is now in its twelfth year of helping form pastors through spiritual disciplines and peer groups.

As of today, CNP has 430 participants and mentors on the active roster, and 462 alumni/ae (including Excellence from the Start, as the program was known at its inception). Current participants make up 19 covenant peer groups, three of which are just completing their time in the program and five of which are just beginning. All of these groups meet up to twice a year for three-day retreats where they worship, study, reflect, and support one another under the guidance of experienced pastor mentors.

In the last half of 2014 CNP has launched an expansion, which will not only make the program available to a wider group of new pastoral leaders, but will also offer additional opportunities for learning and reflection.

For the first time, new pastors who did not have an opportunity to participate in CNP during seminary will be able to join the program. As the seminary population shifts and declines, the number of Presbyterian students at our six seminary sites has declined as well which pointed toward a slow decline of the program. Making the program available at the transition point, after graduation, presents an opportunity for first call pastors across the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to participate in a proven transition into ministry program.

As financial sustainability becomes an ever-larger issue, the need to stay in conversation and relationship with folks after they are finished with the official program is important. These are the people who know the value of the program and are most likely to support it financially. With that in mind, as well as the desire to provide additional opportunities for reflection, CNP will launch a series of events called Conversations on Pastoral Formation. Each event will feature a keynote speaker and a reception. The first two events will feature Tod Bolsinger and Joseph Small. Additional plans include a series of 50-minute webinars on subjects including the proposed changes in the “Directory for Worship,” using *Glory to God* in planning worship, the value of denomination, and other topics that seem timely. These webinars would be free and open to any former or current participant or mentor.

Over the next year, CNP is undertaking a complete remodeling of the program curriculum for the first time since the program’s beginning. The new curriculum will reflect the theme of grace and gratitude.

These programmatic changes reflect a desire and ability to be flexible and adaptable as a program in order to remain valuable and sustainable. Company of New Pastors has proven to be valuable to many new pastoral leaders in our denomination. We have been called a “gift to the church” by one of our pastor mentors and an “invaluable resource” and “life saver” by participants. We wear those descriptions proudly, and take them seriously as we continue to work to help pastors become better disciples.