

Pacific Southwest District Objective – A Circle of Support

April 29, 2017 – Accepted by the PSWD Policy Board

Core Objective - Supporting congregations in being vital and healthy communities of faith that embody and share distinctive Brethren ways of Christian belief and action - What resources can be brought to support individual and groups of congregations in their efforts to be vital and healthy? How does our work reflect and encourage formation in the ways that our anabaptist/radical pietist lens shapes our life and witness today?

Much of this will occur through paying attention to and holding in balance the principles which make the circle of support highlighted below. Further, this work may include district sponsored training or coaching, resourcing for local churches, training for lay leadership, conflict resolution assistance, etc. Resources will be a mix of staff, consultants, and finances.

Support/Encourage congregations in their mission - Resource the local church for mission, education, worship, evangelism, health and vitality. Supporting congregations that are wrestling with the end of their ministry. Provide workshops and events that bring training to more than one congregation at a time.

Support/Encourage the work of congregations in birthing new faith communities - provide encouragement and active support for those congregations (or groups of congregations) that are looking to plant new church communities. Help to match those interested in beginning new expressions of the COB movement with supportive congregational partners.

Call/Train/Support ministry and ministers - work includes the credentialing processes, training (through Seminary, TRIM, SeBAH and other paths), and ongoing affordable opportunities for professional growth and personal/family renewal.

Guide congregations through times of leadership transition - largely focused on pastoral transitions including: departure of current pastor, helping to secure good interim leadership (if needed), facilitating search process for new pastor, and helping undergird a good beginning of new ministry.

Provide Stewardship support of local congregations - inform and train on good stewardship of finances and facilities, risk management understandings and care, other business/legal concerns.

Provide Youth leadership and faith development - opportunities to grow in faith, leadership, and connection with the breadth of the district, cultivating a commitment to Christ and leading out in moving the church into God's future.

Share opportunities for mission across the district - enhance current work with Brethren Disaster Ministries, but also looking for a project or two that PSWD could come together around to be involved in mission/ministry together, not to replace the good ministry being done through the local church, but to supplement and provide ways to strengthen a shared sense of witness.

Build Intercultural ministry and relationships - instill strong foundations for mutual relationships as sisters and brothers in Christ across our predominantly mono-cultured congregations. Encourage and support congregations that are seeking to become intercultural faith communities.

Produce District Conference to promote ministry, connection, and unity in Christ - continue to focus DC as to its purpose in our life together and how it can be used to strengthen our preparation for local ministry, our sense of connection and unity, and connection to the larger Church of the Brethren community.