

Roundtable Report

FOR ACTION:

The Roundtable does not have anything to present to PSNE for action.

FOR INFORMATION:

Roundtable Vision Team Update, May 9, 2026

At the May, 2025 Meeting of the Presbytery of Southern New England, the Roundtable moved that the Presbytery vote to establish a "Vision Committee," to assist the Presbytery in beginning to discern ways to advance:

- the mission and vision of the presbytery;
- the growth, work and health of the Presbytery, and its congregations and fellowships, as an instance of the Body of Christ;
- the sustainability and stewardship of resources;
- the staffing model;
- the support for congregations and connectionalism;
- the shifts growing out of anti-racism and equity work;
- the functional relationship between the Presbytery's structure and its mission; and
- the potential for collaboration with neighboring presbyteries.

An update was to be made to the Presbytery within nine months of the team's formation. Somewhat later than intended, here is that update. In short: For a number of reasons, the work of the Vision committee did not take place as initially planned. There were some unexpected and unforeseen conflicts and challenges with the schedules of some of the individuals originally tasked with serving on the team, which meant convening it became difficult, and eventually impossible. In addition, at the initial formation of the team, it was anticipated there might be a greater readiness for collaboration with neighboring Presbyteries than has, so far, materialized. Finally, as Roundtable and staff discussed what next steps might be, it became clear that the original Vision Team mandate was perhaps not as specific and structured as it needed to be, in order to guide the (eventual) work of the team. So, where does this leave us?

The Roundtable has had, and continues to have, a number of conversations on the topic of the Vision Team, and feels like greater clarity could now be provided to a new iteration of that group. Some of our observations:

- The team needs greater clarity on whether it should focus on programming (what we **do** as a Presbytery), or issues of PSNE "identity" (who we **are**).
- The Trustees have expressed a desire for suggestions on how to potentially deploy the financial resources of the Presbytery in different/new ways

- The Roundtable and Vision Team need to discuss and try to define what is, or ought to be, “Vision Team work” vs. “Roundtable work”
- The degree of staff support for this Team needs to be more carefully/concretely defined
- The team should/could focus on what “new things” are already happening in certain parts of the Presbytery
- It makes sense to re-visit/re-focus the cross-Presbytery partnership idea, focusing especially on some progress that has been made between the staff leadership of Northern and Southern New England Presbyteries

The work of the Vision Team was designated to last three years. With two years remaining, nothing needs to be done to officially re-form the group. However, as the body initially moving its origination, the Roundtable wants to take accountability and make it a priority to identify and organize new Vision team members (potentially involving the participation of past members, who were underutilized in its previous iteration). Roundtable will provide the names of these individuals, and an update to the Presbytery on the Vision Team’s progress, as soon as reasonably possible, or at the next Stated Meeting of the Presbytery.

The idea for the Vision Team was born out of a genuine sense that focused discernment on “what’s next” for PSNE was needed— the pressures of (in some cases) declining membership, the panoply of challenges to mission and ministry engendered by shifts in the political landscape, changes in the availability of PSNE financial resources, and more, all pointed toward a need to revisit and rethink “how it’s always been done.” However, it seems we may not have been quite ready to engage when the need to address issues like those listed previously was first sensed. Now, though, the Roundtable believes and hopes that— with the learnings of the past year— PSNE is in a better position to actually, meaningfully engage in the work and discernment called for by the original Vision Team mandate. We appreciate the support and grace of the Presbytery as we endeavor to facilitate a reinvigoration of the Vision Team in the year ahead.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Tate and Mildred McNeill
Roundtable Co-Chairs, on behalf of the Roundtable