

I. PROPOSED POLICY FOR CHURCH MERGERS

RECOMMENDATION: That the Presbytery of Chicago adopt the following guidelines for use by congregations considering or engaging in merger discussions.

In the interest of providing guidance and counsel to congregations as well as to the appropriate committees and councils of the Presbytery, the following recommendations for proposed mergers are submitted:

- A. Reflecting our concern for the connectional nature of the Presbyterian Church, when a merger of congregations is contemplated, a task force shall be formed from among the appropriate bodies:
 - 1. When the merging congregations are members of the Presbytery, a task force shall be established under the appropriate divisions of the Presbytery to review and make recommendations regarding the merger based on data submitted as a part of the request, including recommendations for the use or disposition of all current facilities.
 - 2. When a merger is between a Presbyterian congregation and a congregation of another denomination, a task force shall be established under the appropriate divisions of the Presbytery to review and make recommendations regarding the merger, seek consultation with the other denomination or judicatory, and, when necessary, seek their approval.
- B. Affirming our intentionality in the ministry of the church, the proposal for merger from the task force shall include:
 - 1. A proposed Design for Mission.
 - 2. A proposed organizational structure and by-laws.
 - 3. An inventory and assessment of the existing facilities.
 - 4. A thorough study of projected needs and a schedule for five (5) years including:
 - a) Operating Expenses
 - b) Program Expenses
 - c) Capital Repairs and Maintenance Expenses
 - 5. A proposed design for staffing which includes the status of the present staff.
- C. Based on our Presbytery responsibility and concern for proper use and disposition of property for all congregations, including those in merger, we recommend consideration of:
 - 1. Continuing resources for ministry of the merged congregations;
 - 2. Continued nurture of the gathered community and the pastoral care and education of the congregation for ministry;
 - 3. Continuing ministry in the area of the former congregation or congregations where advisable;
 - 4. Use of funds in such a way that the congregations involved in the merger are not relieved of their mission responsibility;
 - 5. Presbytery's mission and corporate responsibility, including possible liabilities of merged congregations.