

Embracing Key Issues Facing Us:

Conversation for analyzing and prioritizing the key issues facing our life together in Palo Duro Presbytery

- Use this resource in conversation with the group of congregation leaders or clergy groups.
- Use this resource also in local church Session conversations and other self-selected groups of leaders.

(On the last page is room to summarize your group's discussion and offer feedback on today's discussion. For local church conversations, complete the summary page and return to Palo Duro Presbytery Transformation Team. Send to _____ by _____.)

We are engaged in the process of discerning how we are to be the church more faithfully and effectively in a vastly changed ministry setting. The work of discerning direction for the future of Palo Duro Presbytery must flow from and respond to a clear understanding of the challenges facing our congregations. If the mission of our Presbytery means anything, it will be about discovering the ways we can open ourselves to the transforming power of the Gospel. We must learn together what it will mean for us to be church in the next decade.

In this meeting we will explore the key strategic issues facing our churches today as a Presbytery community. The overarching goal is to become more fully a *community of communities* called and sent by God. What is the impact of these strategic issues on our churches? What are the effects? How do these issues resonate with the realities we are experiencing in our local settings? What are the implications for Presbytery vision and mission going forward? These are some of the questions that will guide our conversation today.

1. Take a few moments to read through the Key Issues Facing Palo Duro Presbytery.
2. Reflect on what you have read with your congregation in mind. Share with one another in your small group:
 - Which issues have impact for the life and mission of your congregation? Identify which issue you are referring to. Describe the impact? Share an experience, story, or incident that supports what you are saying.

(space for your notes as you listen to others speak)

A recorder takes notes on what all the participants in the group are identifying as impact on their churches. When everyone has had a chance to share, have the recorder read back what has been recorded. Then go on to the next question:

3. Consider Palo Duro Presbytery as a community of faith communities:
 - Given the impact of these issues on our congregations, which of these issues must be key for the presbytery as it looks to the future and why?

We are not looking for solutions here, but to understand further the nature of these issues and what priority we might need to assign to them as we continue the transformation process.

After everyone in your group has had a chance to share, go on to the next step:

- Identify the top 2 or 3 priority issues and why these must be priority for our Presbytery life and mission together as we look to the future.

Record these on the feedback form. If time, share with the rest of the cluster gathering.

Group Meeting Feedback Form

Date of Meeting: _____ Location: _____

Name of contact person for this group: _____

Describe the make-up of those participating in this group discussion: _____

Reflect together on the questions of this form and return a single form for the group. Individuals are welcome to communicate to the Transformation Team also.

1. To what extent did you enter into the study, process, tasks, and discussion of this meeting?

_____ Little _____ Somewhat _____ Quite a bit _____ A very great deal

2. How open were you to learning from and sharing with the other participants?

_____ Little _____ Somewhat _____ Quite a bit _____ A very great deal

3. How would you characterize your response to the work that was accomplished at this meeting?

4. How would you characterize your response to how this group worked together?

5. Is this grouping a helpful structure to use again in the Presbytery vision process? (why or why not?)

6. What other structures would you recommend for meeting and discerning with others in the Presbytery Vision process?

Summary of discussion around Key Issues Facing Us

1. Observations we wish to share about the impact Key Issues are having on our congregations:

2. Which Issues must be key for the presbytery as it looks to the future and why?

Names of participants in this group discussion (optional): _____
