

Healthy Congregations

The Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley has trained persons to facilitate ‘healthy congregations’ workshops. The aim of these workshops is to strengthen congregations and pastoral leaders in their ministry. These workshops are not intended for congregations that would consider themselves “unhealthy,” rather for congregations that want to enhance and deepen their health.

The Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley currently has 13 trained facilitators and 1 trainer of facilitators who have been approved by Healthy Congregations, Inc. and are part of the Healthy Congregation Facilitators Team of the Presbytery working in coordination with the Committee on Ministry.

There are a variety of workshops in 6 areas that may be provided by a team of facilitators. Each of the six areas includes a focus on the development of useful skills for congregational leaders. Participants learn how they, as leaders, influence the health of the communities where they serve.

Area 1: Creating Healthy Congregations

This area focuses on the congregation’s ability to accept differences and to lead based on strength and mission.

Area 2: Healthy Congregations Respond to Anxiety and Change

This area encourages the promotion of health as “responding” to anxiety and change, rather than “reacting” to it. It also lifts up the ability of communities to manage rather than deny conflict and to promote flexibility and creativity.

Area 3: Leadership in Healthy Congregations

A major premise of this workshop is that leaders promote health through their presence and functioning, rather than programs or skills. It focuses on leadership through the lens of the leader’s ability to challenge and to provide healthy boundaries for the congregation.

Area 4: Relationships in Healthy Congregations

Relationships in healthy congregations include both grace and truth. There is discussion of the development of care and empowerment in healthy congregations.

Area 5: Healthy Congregations Develop Generous People

Stewardship in this area is expanded as recognition of the Creator’s interdependent design of life. The area focuses on developing gratitude and generosity through the ability of the community to make decisions that combine money, resources, abilities and day to day living.

Area 6: The Spiritual Life of Healthy Congregations

Spirituality is discussed as the ability to share and participate, rather than focus on the self. Hospitality for all and looking at life as a series of new beginnings is also a part of this resource.

The workshops enable participants to:

- Gain a renewed sense of purpose and mission
- Cultivate strong leadership capacities to challenge the congregation
- Learn how to develop healthy patterns of living together in community
- Learn to focus on strengths, resources, and options for the future
- Boost confidence in responding to challenges and opportunities
- Learn how to lead calmly and with thoughtfulness
- Reflect theologically about relationships

- Move the congregation toward healthy functioning

Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley – Healthy Congregations Facilitators Team

Parrish Bridges

Judi Gage

Doug Horne

Charlie Mays

Mark Montfort

Marilyn Myers – team leader

Robert Peak

Pat Raube

Monica Styron

Cynthia Walton-Leavitt

(Deb Fleming- currently inactive as a facilitator)

(Lisa Heckman – currently inactive as a facilitator)

If you are interested in learning more about the Healthy Congregations workshops, please contact a member of the team. If you would like to schedule a workshop, please contact Marilyn Myers at mmmyers@stny.rr.com.