

How can Des Moines Presbytery Improve?

1. Already reorganized.
2. Attention to the importance of Worship and Fellowship at Presbytery meetings as crucial for the nurture of those gathered from far and wide.
3. Because we are a yoked congregation (with Disciples of Christ Christian Church) we are not bound strictly by Presbytery rules. Therefore, when expectations come along that we prefer to not comply with, this does not bother us. I really do not know how Presbytery could be improved because we are in a unique situation which allows us to ignore much of what Presbytery does.
4. Becoming more fiscally responsible and addressing outmoded polity issues that pastoral and lay leadership are no longer capable of addressing with limited leadership in our declining churches.
5. Being more actively involved. Giving information.
6. Better and quicker communication.
7. better communication. Occasional visits.
8. Better listening to local concerns.
9. combine with the other 2 presbyteries and just be one big presbytery with one or 2 executives
10. Coordinating outreach actions in the community.
11. "Creating questionnaires that are more open-ended. Many of these questions I truly had no answer for....not a choice that fit mine. Leave room for comments or put NA
12. I have only been to several Presbytery meetings so have little experience to suggest any input. But I would have no problem with change if it improves how things are done. If problems can be solved, members' needs met with a better organizational plan, I'd support it.
13. P.S. I don't HAVE to be a Presbyterian to be a growing involved Christian. I just ended up at the church I am in and am comfortable there. I have thought for years that we need to think outside the box to be future oriented."
14. developing practical programs that the local church could implement. We have desire and energy; what we lack is knowledge and imagination. These programs could be related to mission, stewardship, worship, church growth. They can not be a one size fits all. What works for Des Moines will not work in Sigourney. These should be turn-key ideas that don't require going to a meeting somewhere.
15. Do not know.
16. Doing OK but regret losing Presbytery presence. I think area church connections have suffered a bit. I suspect Presbytery committee involvement might be lessened.
17. Easing the process of hiring a new pastor.
18. Eliminating staff, simplify record keeping, joining the modern age. That form we have to submit each time we donate is so outdated and irrelevant.
19. "Fewer administrators.
20. More ministers that put in 8 hrs / day. learning about their current congregations and addressing the congregation concerns.
21. Get rid of activist ministers.
22. Presbytery does not currently manage money very well. If you are given more money, you will continue foolish spending."
23. "Focusing on helping struggling churches, but not robbing Peter to pay Paul by overwhelming a pastor with multiple churches....especially part-time or regular pulpit supply pastors....particularly elderly pastors.

24. If a church struggles with very low membership and inability to secure a pastor, then work with them to help them move on (close, find another church)
25. Instead of church building and furnishings going to Presbytery after closing, allow church to sell and give money to community and missions."
26. Guiding the small churches so they feel as important as the larger churches. This has improved over time.
27. Haven't been here long enough, or involved enough to know.
28. Having a local church camp with more than one week of date options
29. Having more contact and information available for Presbyterian Women
30. High quality people
31. Holding workshops or meetings on how churches can stay alive and serve as church finances go down.
32. I do not have an idea.
33. I don't feel qualified to answer this.
34. I don't know.
35. I don't know.
36. I think our Presbytery is in a much better place than it was 7 years ago when I came here. I LOVE sharing our execs with the other 2 Presbyteries and having joint meetings.
37. "I think the way we do things needs a complete overhaul. Burn it down and start from scratch. Our way of doing business is not sacred and could easily stand reformation to be more effective. We waste people's time, and often focus on things that are not THE MAIN thing, which is sharing God's love with everyone in word and deed.
38. I recall an extended discussion at a council meeting about the name of a task force. Seriously, is there nothing better or more urgent to do than that?"
39. I'm not sure.
40. Improving the call process to better ensure a good fit for newly installed pastors.
41. Including some lay pastors in Presbytery. Also, I get the feeling that Presbytery has no problem with small churches closing so they can get the assets.
42. Increased involvement of all
43. It seems like we do things the same way we always have - same committees, same jobs. I think our not clergy leaders (maybe clergy too) need more training to think differently and be spiritual, not how to run a meeting or follow the book of order. Our pastor says we are spiritual leaders but I don't know how to do any of that
44. Letting parishioners know what a Presbytery's "mission statement" is and what its designated responsibilities are. I really don't know what it is/does other than being a part of the church's table of organization.
45. Like all other church's Presbytery is struggling with membership and getting members to be involved. A lot of times I think we feel like we have NO support and we're not important because we are such a small church.
46. "Like almost all of our congregations, the Presbytery too is struggling to find new ways to fulfill its calling in the midst of diminishing resources (both fiscal and membership).
47. It will take creativity, imagination and discernment for the Presbytery to do this. But if it can, it will be a wonderful way to model to our congregations about how they can do it too! I suspect that will mean for all of us to pray together, discern together and work together to bring this into reality."
48. Living within the budget. Businesses don't operate in the red and I don't feel the Presbytery should.
49. Miss the southern Iowa regional Presbytery group.
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51. more communication with local sessions
52. More emphasis on doing things together. Mission trips are a good example, but in lots of other areas, too.
53. More energy into supporting youth ministry and youth programming
54. More focused and understanding of local support and needs.
55. More unity among the churches.
56. more visibility to the local members
57. Not supporting CROSS Ministry. It's great for Des Moines churches, but most outlying communities have their own comparable programs that need help from the local churches.
58. Not sure
59. Not sure
60. Not sure
61. "Offering more lay services to each church, or a group of churches. Such as a presbytery having ""classes"" at local churches, helping sponsor mission fundraisers, bringing more hands on learning about the Arabic Church in our Presbytery. Most information the Presbytery publishes does not make it to the average Presbyter. Most learn about it at their own church and sadly most churches don't bring the greater Presbytery on an intimate journey within the local churches. If volunteers through the Presbytery could commit to once, preferably twice, a year attending a Sunday service at a program and have an informational, hands-on learning experience during coffee time it would be most beneficial.
62. Giving a more detailed list, reason why, we should donate to Missions, as a broad category, at the Presbytery.
63. Offering Missions kits that an individual church could work on - such as making blankets for a specific mission project, sending seeds to a mission project (including the best types of seeds to send), sending sewing supplies (a list of supplies would be very helpful - needles, thread, patterns, buttons, zippers, fabric (type), sewing machine, yarn, yarn needles and/or crochet hook), etc. Our church benefits from having an identified project/mission that we are working on. Makes it feel more personable. We have become very active in the last three years of doing boxes for Operation Christmas Child. It would be nice to build upon that by having smaller group mission projects going on year round. I know we receive in the mail the missions projects individuals can donate to. It becomes much more intimate when we work on it at a church level knowing exactly where our dollars are going to.
64. As I have said, we have benefited from Presbytery services when we ask for them. Presbytery needs to become more forward thinking in providing information about everything the Presbytery does for us and for the world. Take your information on the road with more volunteers, hopefully from every church. I know I would feel extremely inadequate in presenting information at another church. I'm not the expert on the Bible. Somehow we need to empower our own."
65. "Paring down its staff to reflect its income. Part of the function of Presbytery is no longer needed in today's digital world where members can access information easily. We simply don't need Presbytery to transmit information like we used to do.
66. Providing useful assistance to struggling local churches, not impose mandates that cost them money and hasten their demise. Which just means that Presbytery has more money to generate from the sale of closed churches. This is a really sore point with me.
67. Presbytery executives should visit our church. Not for an evaluation, but to visit to get to know us.
68. Quicker response to questions.

69. Recognizing our financial realities and downsizing to a sustainable level
70. Reduce the number of Executive Directors, three is beyond reason. One Director and increased staff to meet the needs of local churches is a stronger model. Churches need a different level of support and communication.
71. "Reducing the number of executive directors. Three makes no sense, I believe our staffing is misaligned.
72. Work with local churches to determine specific needs."
73. Refraining from deficit spending.
74. Stop running a deficit operation and reorganize (again) so that the future does not depend on spending more than what comes in to keep functioning in the near term.
75. Strengthening its outreach to members... especially sharing with all church members within congregations newsletters, and available resources. If Presbytery increase their visibility by collecting email and begin regular communication vs the current approach waiting for someone within a congregation to share a bit of this or that. It would increase the visibility of what the church is doing all across the state and may lift up the impression of what the church is today.
76. Strong, active leadership that help church and pastoral leadership to adapt to this changing time.
77. Supporting local churches to grow
78. Supporting local churches to grow
79. Supporting our church by attending a service, getting to know us. Being more interested in our church family rather than how much money do we have to give them
80. This is a loaded question. Like our churches, our presbytery would be improved by more resources: volunteers, staff, money, energy... But like our churches, we're all just doing the best we can.
81. "Understanding the concepts of the Fourth Great Awakening and working within those concepts for a brighter future for Christians and other folks every where to become a better climate for the kind of spiritual/religious setting/climate/environment that is evolving.
82. This needs to be studied and implemented before organized religion dies--there is a place for organized religion--we need to fit into the new mode.
- 83.
84. I see below a question about 1st Arabic. It is a church--the fastest growing church, per capita in DM. The congregation is totally engaged in the best way that Jesus would want. The members in the church have difficulty financially supporting the church because:
 85. -They are less financially successful because they are immigrants
 86. -They are black and that carries its own issues
 87. -They are trying to financially assist their family members in Sudan and South Sudan, a country embroiled in Civil War --their family members are starving and dying by the millions
88. We need to support this fine church in ways that may not be in our ""rules"". These are sincere presbyterian Christians who are because of tragedy. Jesus would have helped them and we should follow that example."
89. Unsure.
90. Using much larger share of foundation funds from closed churches. Those funds should be fully used to start new churches!
91. Visiting the churches in their area and making the services better known to their members. I don't think most members understand what Presbytery does and how they work with all churches, large and rural.

92. Visits to our community
93. "We do miss the convenience of having a presbytery office in Des Moines.
94. Going forward, it would be nice to have an overview - via Zoom - of what took place at the General Assembly."