

History of the Synod's Visioning Task Force

The Synod Visioning Task Force was elected by the synod in November 2023. Our members include:

- Rev. Holly Dillon, General Presbyter of Tampa Bay Presbytery
- Rev. Jamil el-Shair, Synod Commissioner and Pastor of Altama Presbyterian Church, Savannah Presbytery
- Rev. Andy James, Stated Clerk of Greater Atlanta Presbytery (co-chair)
- Rev. Danny Murphy, General Presbyter of Trinity Presbytery
- Rev. Christina Greenwalt, Synod Commissioner and Stated Clerk of Central Florida Presbytery
- Elder Jacquelyn Rembert, Synod Commissioner from New Harmony Presbytery (co-chair)
- Elder, Billie Sutter, Synod Commissioner from Cherokee Presbytery
- Elder, Catherine Byrd, Charleston Atlantic Presbytery



The Task Force gathered for its first meeting in-person at Calvin Center in Hampton, Georgia, from January 14-16, 2024. Over the course of our time together, we shared stories and meals and engaged in deep conversation and discernment about the past, present, and future of the Synod of South Atlantic. We spent time with scripture and the Book of Order, particularly the charge of the synod as described at G-3.04, to listen for how God might be speaking into our process through these foundational documents. Our initial conversations were led by Rev. Daris Bultena, Executive Presbyter and Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of South Florida, who guided us through an imaginative process that created the basis of our work.

By the end of our first full day together, we discovered that the traditional ideas of a vision and mission statement were not the best fit for where we found ourselves as a task force—or for where we believe that our Synod is at this moment in our life together. Our mission and vision became clearest when we understood them to be a part of our *journey* together. And so emerged the proposed journey statement that we present to you:

The Synod of South Atlantic, PC(U.S.A.) **embodies** the grace and love of Jesus Christ, **cultivates** authentic community within and across presbyteries, and **inspires** impactful ministry, developing leaders so that the Church becomes united in faith, hope, love, witness, and service.

This journey statement gives us three clear actions that guide all our work on our journey together as a synod. First, we are called to **embody** the grace and love of Jesus Christ by coming together from our various presbyteries and perspectives to live together in this way

on our journey. We are also called to **cultivate** *authentic community within and across presbyteries* to build the kinds of relationships in our life together that allow health and wholeness to sprout up all across our synod. Finally, as a synod we are called to **inspire** *impactful ministry*, joining in what God is already doing and breathing new life into places that need a message of hope.

Since we cannot do this work on our own, these three actions are supported by the work of *developing leaders* across our synod to support the faithful ministry of our sixteen presbyteries and the hundreds of congregations within our bounds. All of this work builds toward a common goal so *that the Church becomes united in faith, hope, love, witness, and service*.

A journey of this sort needs not only a statement about what we are doing together but also some values to guide us along the way. The eight guiding values of grace, love, authenticity, transparency, unity, hope, faithfulness, and reforming are intended to guide the next steps of our task force and the full implementation of this journey so that we have some guidance for how we agree to work together. We believe that lifting up these values will help our task force and the whole Synod in the future to better discern the priorities for our life together.

From here the Synod Visioning Task Force has developed a plan for the next steps on our journey. Over the course of the summer and early fall, we expect to open up space for conversation across the synod so that we can listen broadly and deeply with one another for how God is inviting us to shape the journey that is ahead.

We are deeply grateful for your prayers as we continue on this journey together!