

### Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley: Our Statement of Purpose

As believers, our faith flows from living water as we seek to fulfill the Great Commission: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all things that I have commanded you.” (Matt. 28:18-20) This living water runs through the stories of our lives as God’s covenant people and through the life of the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley. From creation and baptism to the Congo and the Cahaba, we are connected by life-giving water. We are refreshed by it; we are nurtured by it; we are saved by it. Living water is our past, our present and our future.

As covenant people, we are life-sharing people. It is through our shared life together that we live in relationship with God and with each other. This shared life is lived out through our congregations, which are the primary agents of God’s mission in the world. As the connectional expression of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in central Alabama, we are called by grace to life-giving service to our congregations, engaging, equipping, nurturing and empowering them in their collective witness to God’s for all people in Jesus Christ.

As believers reformed and always being reformed *according to the Word of God*, we are participants in God’s ongoing creation, embracing the transformative power of God’s saving grace through Jesus Christ. In our shared life as the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley, we are challenged by the radical call of the Gospel to boldly, consciously and intentionally live out this transformation with imagination and joy.

As the expression of our shared and transformed life together, the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley commits, with God’s help to:

- Support congregations both large and small by serving as a resource for and an enabler of their ministries in their communities and throughout the world.
- Equip our lay and ordained leaders, and partner with them, to create and sustain healthy and growing worshipping communities that are faithful and vital witnesses of Jesus Christ.
- Nurture and enhance the many and various gifts God has given the members of our congregations and engage those gifts in the service of the wider church and all God’s people, which affirms the relational connection of the Presbyterian Church (USA).
- Empower our congregations and our leaders to be flexible in structure, dynamic in practice and imaginative in their service of the Gospel in a changing world.

To further these purposes, the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley will itself need to be transformed by *the Holy Spirit as it creates* new structures, redirecting its mission, reconnecting its members and refreshing its leaders to better serve God’s people in this time and place.

