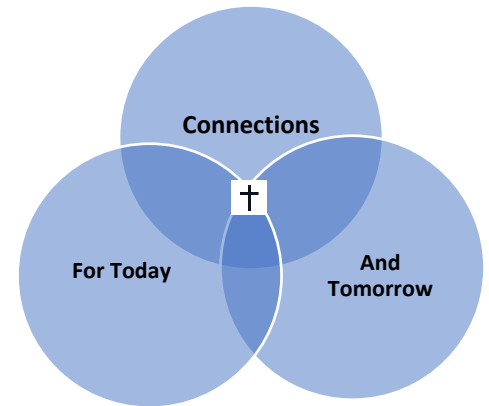


# JCP Connection Activity: Let's Make Connections

**Before you leave today, read and respond below. We will tally, send you a copy, and use the information to help each other strengthen our congregations and plan for future Presbytery Education Times.**



**Doing Church Differently:** In January 2024, Catherine Neelly Burton published an article in the Outlook titled “The Future of the PC(USA) is Pastor-Less, and That’s OK.” Several responses quickly followed with the same forecast. Across denominations, congregations are growing smaller, and pastors are retiring faster than seminary students are graduating. Brekke (2024) asks, “What are small churches to do?”

Burton (2024), a Presbytery Mission/Ministry connector, reminds us that “a church doesn’t have to have a pastor to be a viable church.” On that positive note, she and others describe a couple of new leadership models that are working:

- A. One model is to empower church members to lead congregations. Commissioned ruling elders (CREs) or CREs-in-training can pastor the congregation with a visiting pastor officiating communion, baptisms, and ordinations.
- B. CREs, pastors, or a combination of the two can yoke with two or more churches within an area.

And in addition to these and other new church models, Neelly, and others encourage congregations to connect with one another to share their challenges and experiences.

Help us connect by responding below and emailing to Patty Orchard at [jlopdo8@hotmail.com](mailto:jlopdo8@hotmail.com):

1. What challenges are most pressing for your congregation? \_\_\_\_ How to connect with youth and young adults?  
\_\_\_\_ What will we do without a pastor? \_\_\_\_ How can we provide music if we don’t have an accompanist?  
\_\_\_\_ How can we share our worship electronically without breaking copyright? \_\_\_\_ Other – list below
2. Would you like more information about Commissioned Ruling Elders (CREs)? Yes \_\_\_\_
3. I would like more information about different church leadership models. Yes \_\_\_\_
4. I would share information on one or more of the following challenges: \_\_\_\_ how to deliver electronic sermons,  
\_\_\_\_ using electronic worship music without breaking copyright, \_\_\_\_ using Zoom for Bible Studies,  
\_\_\_\_ how to develop CREs, \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_ (Describe, please):
5. \_\_\_\_ Place me on a connections list to receive a summary of the ideas and/or challenges shared today.

Name:

The name of your church:

Email Address:

Burton, C. N. (January 2024). The future of the pc(usa) is pastor-less, and that’s ok. *The Presbyterian Outlook*. [Pres-outlook.org](http://Pres-outlook.org).

Brekke, G. (February, 2024). Doing more with less: Smaller pc(usa) congregations face new leadership realities. *The Presbyterian Outlook*. [Pres-outlook.org](http://Pres-outlook.org).