

Presbytery of the Highlands  
Stated Meeting  
Funds Development Report  
- Financial Sustainability Plan Update -  
September 9, 2025

*Submitted by the Funds Development Team of the ACT*

The Presbytery's Financial Sustainability Plan was initiated in 2016 with the vision that, within ten years, we could become financially stable and self-sustaining. The premise was simple but critical: if the presbytery is not financially healthy, then our congregations will struggle as well.

The plan was built on several key elements:

- Developing and clarifying funds and related policies.
- Modeling and promoting a Legacy Giving program.
- Creating a communication strategy to share the Presbytery's story.
- Establishing new financial resources, including the Chesnutt Fund and the Mission and Ministry Fund.
- Working with the General Assembly to explore a more sustainable funding model beyond per capita contributions.
- Equipping congregations to strengthen their own financial health.
- Increasing the number of congregations contributing to the presbytery's shared mission.

Since 2016, progress has been steady though slowed a bit because of the Pandemic. We have learned that many of these elements are not tasks that can simply be checked off. They require ongoing attention and commitment.

Highlights of our work to date:

1. Funds and Policies: We created a clear Funds Policy and defined descriptions for each fund to ensure that resources are used effectively in service to congregations and the presbytery.
2. Legacy Giving: A Legacy Giving program was launched and initially gained momentum, though energy waned during the pandemic. Revitalizing this effort is on the agenda for the upcoming season.
3. Communication Strategy: We have improved how we tell the Presbytery's story, though we recognize there is still room to grow.

This commitment is reflected in the upcoming budget, which dedicates resources to communications and a communications coordinator.

4. Financial Planning and Funds: The Chesnutt Fund has been established with the threshold of \$200,000 before income is drawn. The Mission and Ministry Fund is steadily moving toward its \$6.5 million goal, at which point it will generate income to support the presbytery without additional contributions.
5. General Assembly Funding Model: In 2017, we successfully overtured the General Assembly to reassess per capita as a funding model. This led to the creation of a GA Funding Model Team, which continues to develop a more sustainable approach to funding the larger church. Our presbytery's work in financial sustainability is part of this broader denominational effort.
6. Congregational Resourcing: We continue to resource congregations in their own financial health, knowing that healthy congregations strengthen the presbytery and vice versa. Through workshops, projects, and the Financial Sustainability Project, we have provided guidance and tools for congregational vitality. We know more is needed.
7. Increased Participation: More congregations now contribute to the presbytery's funding. This growth has been fostered by stronger relationships and leadership that emphasize collaboration and shared responsibility.

Overall, the Financial Sustainability Plan remains a living, ongoing project. While not all elements are complete, we have made significant progress, and the work continues to ensure a healthy, sustainable future for our presbytery and its congregations.