

Summary of the 171st Stated Meeting of the Shenandoah Presbytery
Saturday, August 13, 2016, at Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church, Shepherdstown, West Virginia.

The 171st Stated Meeting of the Shenandoah Presbytery convened in the sanctuary of Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church, Shepherdstown, West Virginia, with the host congregation of Shepherdstown Presbyterian providing a warm welcome into their very historic sanctuary. Attendance for this summer meeting totaled 124, with 55 Ruling Elders, 42 Teaching Elders and 27 guests and visitors gathered in the pews.

As so stated in the Docket, registration was opened at 8:30 AM. Members of the host congregations greeted participants outside of the building, offering directions to parking sites close by, and shepherding everyone into the structure, where check-in tables, information tables and morning snacks and beverages were provided. As has become the norm for our presbytery, the host congregation provided a warm and inviting setting for our time of gathering, fellowship, work, lunch and a safe send-off back to our homes. Great job, Shepherdstown congregation!

As the morning progressed, there was time set aside for New Ruling Elder Training, provided by Rev. Roy Martin. This will be a regular part of each meeting, as we hope to prepare our first-time-attending ruling elders on how a meeting works, what to look for, and why some of the things happen the way that they do.

Promptly at 9:30 AM, Moderator Rev. Cushwa called the meeting to order with prayer. The worship that followed included a cantor, a sermon from one of our new pastors, and a wonderful blend of music. The worship reflected much of the ethos of the host congregation, and all who were there were afforded the means to worship and prepare for the work of the day.

The meeting convened following worship at 10:15 AM. The quorum was affirmed and the moderator reminded all participants of our procedural rules. A first time elder from Trinity Presbyterian was presented by their pastor, and the moderator assigned two assistant clerks to help facilitate the meeting's business. The minutes of the previous meeting were presented and confirmed as accurate, there was no new business from the floor, so the docket was adopted as presented.

The Stated Clerk presented his report at 10:20 AM. Within the report is a request for host congregations for 2017, with the clerk asking for volunteers so as not to have to volunteer congregations (the correct date for February, 2017 is the 11th). The Stated Clerk attended two installation services, handled many reports from various groups within the presbytery, reminded the body that Pisgah Presbyterian Church closed their ministry with a worship service on July 31, 2016, and brought reports of four installation commissions (Falling Waters, Gerrardstown, and a clergy couple for New Monmouth). TEs that had requested an excused absence were granted that request.

The Stated Clerk requested that the presbytery approve and appoint the current LRT for Windy Cove Presbyterian Church to become the Administrative Committee for Windy Cove Presbyterian Church, with RE Josh Elrod, Lexington Presbyterian, being added to the current members of the LRT: RE Bonny Wilson and TEs Deb Klein and Martin Stokes. The presbytery voted to affirm this action. The last item to note concerns the work of the office staff to update contact information for TEs, REs KCCs, congregations and others who carry out the ministry and mission of the presbytery. Cards were passed out and returned with the correct and/or updated data recorded for the staff. Additionally, if individuals or congregations that had not responded to e-mail request for this information, please do so.

At 10:23 Transitional Presbyterian Martin presented a brief report, stating most of his report would come before the body during the time of the report from the Transition Team. TE Martin did speak words of thanks for the work of the Nominations Committee in their task of bringing individuals into the work groups of presbytery.

TE Randy Tremba, pastor of Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church, and sounding much like Garrison Keillor, welcomed the presbytery to this sanctuary. It was noted we had gathered at the “fringe of the presbytery,” and invited us to check out all of the closets in the building save for one, very special one. This congregation dates back to 1743, and the current members believe they are following the example set so many years back by participating in, and being sure to celebrate, mission and ministry in all that they do.

TE Tremba then invited a member of the congregation, whom I shall call “Dan,” invited us to marvel at the 60 solar panels recently installed on the premises. In the near two years of their operation, they have generated roughly \$4,000.00 in revenue. Dan explained briefly how they were able to install \$50,000.00 worth of panels for a net cost to the congregation of \$1.00. Contact Shepherdstown for details!

Ethel Hornbeck of Shepherdstown was briefly introduced, as the campus ministry facilitator and a spiritual development facilitator. TE Tremba invited those interested in either area to reach out to her.

At the close of the welcome, it was noted that comfort rooms were available on several levels, and that they were available “with no ID required.” It took the Stated Clerk a few minutes to figure out all that this announcement covered.

The Committee on Pastoral Transition (CPT) began their report at 10:38 AM. Within their report, TEs Steve Willis, Casey Clark, Karen Greenawalt and Jim Lunde would be presented. Please note that each of these candidates were examined by the proper committees, and they were received into the presbytery by commission authority granted to them by presbytery.

At 10:39 AM TE Steve Willis was presented. TE Willis comes from Peaks Presbytery, and will be serving as the interim pastor at Collierstown Presbyterian Church. Once presented, there were no questions from the floor. TE Willis signed the Book of Obligations and received a package from the office with important things inside.

At 10:41 AM TE Casey Clark was presented. TE C. Clark will be part of the clergy couple at New Monmouth Presbyterian Church. RE Paul Dana, at the appropriated time, inquired of the TE “How are we doing?” TE C.Clark replied with sincerity that “We can do better.” In both cases, this is the Stated Clerk’s paraphrase. Upon completion of this portion of the presentation, members of New Monmouth were asked to stand, a signature was placed in the Book of Obligation, and another one of those envelopes were presented.

Starting at 10:45 AM, TE Karen Greenawalt was presented. TE Greenawalt is serving at Gerrardstown Presbyterian Church. The TE answered a question from the presenter and upon having no questions from the body, acknowledged members of Gerrardstown in attendance, signed the book, and got the envelope.

TE Jim Lunde was presented to the presbytery at 10:50 AM. The usual format of a question from the presenter was given and answered, and a question from TE Burton followed: “You say the Holy Spirit empowered “us,” who exactly is “us?” Again, this is a paraphrase of the question by the Stated Clerk,

and that applies also to the answer: “Those whom the Holy Spirit, God, has moved through them, that is us.” TE Lunde was officially received, signed the book and got the envelope.

The Committee on Relational Ministry began at 10:56 AM. TE John Leggett, the vice chair, presented their report. TE Leggett called the body to note the report of the Sessional Records Sub-committee. His request on behalf of the subcommittee, CRM and the Stated Clerk is this: IF your congregation is on the list reporting some form of error, please let us help you! We wish to get everyone comfortable with this vital tool of ministry, and the committee is there to help congregations and clerks of session.

CRM welcomed and then presented TE William Caperton into the presbytery, transferring as Honorably Retired from Peaks Presbytery. When asked to give some sense of his ministry, TE Caperton replied “Old Timers like/dislike change” (or something close to that!). TE Caperton lifted up a portion of ministry with the Roma population, and invited all to consider our own ministries. While retiring to Sunnyside, he still felt he should contribute to the life of a presbytery, and has begun to honor that thought. He would sign the Book of Obligation, get the envelope, but then asked “Just what is that book?” There was no clear, concise answer given.

CRM moved that both TEs Dax and Johnson be granted the status of Honorably Retired, and TE Burton moved unanimous consent which was honored by Moderator Cushwa. The item dealing with the Care of Christian Educators as found in the report will be brought to the November, 2016 meeting of Presbytery.

Promptly at 11:06, Susanne Taylor brought CPM actions to the presbytery. In the verbal report, it was noted the Candidate Gwen Carr passed the final assessment and would be able to accept a call into ordained ministry once one was secured. This action was possible due to commission authority given to CPM at our May 10, 2016 meeting of Presbytery. Briefly noted was that liaison training was being perfected and carried out as well.

Within the report from CPM was the examination of TE Rachel Clark. It was reported that CPM had conducted all the necessary requirements and that the candidate was able to accept the calling as co-pastor to New Monmouth Presbyterian Church. TE Clark was the preacher for our morning worship, and centered the sermon on how to pray, as taught to us by Jesus (well, as He taught the disciples, we got to listen in, thankfully, by the hearing of Scripture and its proclamation!).

At 11:08, Rachel Clark was formally asked to stand before presbytery. Within the time of presentation, four questions were asked of the candidate, and they were answered confidently. In a moment of honesty, the Stated Clerk missed some of the Q & A time, dealing with an issue with the docket and working to adjust timing opportunities within our docket. The presbytery offered no further questions from the floor. The protocol of signing the Book of Obligations and receiving the large envelope was duly given to TE Clark.

The Committee on Mission and Outreach brought their report at 11:19 AM. The theme of this portion of the docket centered on YAV's—Young Adult Volunteers. In this case, past and present. Former YAV Alex Haney came before the body and allowed us to glimpse a bit of the ministry, mission and faith formation that a year of service can bring about. Three items have remained in the mind of the Stated Clerk: One: Alex worked to live on \$2.00 a day; mimicking the reality of most of the world and a vast number our own citizens. Two: 95% of the world lives on less than what our own “poor” live on. Three: There is still much work to do. There were other parts of his time at the microphone that I am sure I missed, so I am hopeful the readers of this document will remember the things that stuck to their memory.

Alex was there to set the stage for two present YAV's: Lydia Griffiths and Rebekah Witt, members of congregations of our presbytery. Each are to spend a year in the life of a YAV-Lydia overseas and Rebekah in the far mid-west. They were dutifully prayed over and commissioned by the presbytery, and they are looking for prayer support and readers of the respective blogs as they live what Alex has labeled "a great year of being a Christian!"

The Committee on Nominations was able to bring their report a bit earlier than anticipated, starting at 11:33 AM. The body approved TE John McDonald to serve on CPT; RE Kate Lewis Brown to serve as vice-moderator/moderator to be of the presbytery; Kelley Connelly to serve on CCR; RE Dee Sparger to serve on CNCD; RE Beverly Riddell to serve on CNCD; and RE Joyce Tipton to serve on CPT. Susanne Taylor was selected to be a representative to Synod. RE Cox also called to our attention the volunteer form found in the presentation of the new manual as a tool for our use and encouraged individuals to actually use it by filling it out and turning it in to the committee.

It was time to hear from our General Assembly commissioners next, with their verbal reports beginning at 11:36 AM. Transitional Presbyter Martin began by thanking the commissioners for their work, and tried to explain to the body the amount of time and preparation that each of these individuals put in to properly be ready to serve. Our commissioners then took to the microphone, with TE Hoover Haney speaking first, followed by YAAD Isaac Haney, RE Mary Lou Cox and RE Dave Thalman. TE Betty Dax was not in attendance. Each of the commissioners provided a written summary of their work, and spent their time at the microphone recounting items not in their report. It would seem that each commissioner found several moments, incidents, decisions or relationships that almost went beyond words, and had a profound impact on their time in Portland. A heartfelt thanks to all of them.

The 12:00 hour was reached, and the host congregation made it possible to begin lunch 25 minutes ahead of schedule. Our lunch was prayed over and for by host TE Tremba, and the body was able to "pack their own lunch" and eat it somewhere on the grounds. A nice surprise was the arrival of a local ice cream truck, bringing free ice cream for everyone!

At 1:10 PM intercessory prayer was offered by TE Burton.

The presbytery then resumed the tasks before it at 1:17 PM, with the Committee on Educational Resources bringing a time of education. A video presentation of the one week of Summer Camp this year a Paddy Run was shown, followed by verbal reports from the volunteer leaders of CPR. The key they lifted up was "People, not budget."

TE Robertson then dismissed the body to discussion groups based upon the size of their congregations, with this time starting at 1:40 PM. In those smaller, break out groups, topics for further consideration around camping took place, with the information gathered to be used by CER in discerning their work for the November meeting of presbytery.

The body gathered back at the sanctuary at 2:18. The Stated Clerk took an "un-official" roll at that time, and noted that roughly 50-55 individuals were in the sanctuary, with 12-14 congregations represented (this infers the Stated Clerk knew the individuals he saw to be members of specific congregations) and that there was roughly a 50/50 ration of TE/RE present. Yes, the Stated Clerk does indeed count commissioners.

The Transition Team brought to the presbytery the revised manual for review and then to be voted upon as the new manual. Several members of the Transition Team brought various chapters of the manual to

the presbytery. It was acknowledged and then stated in the final motion that the manual is still a “work in progress,” and that grammatical errors or easy to repair omissions or add-ons would be addressed by those compiling the manual, so as not to have to bring a revised version to the next meeting of presbytery.

Questions from the floor were minimal, with TE Olivia Haney asking for information concerning the Hunger Action enabler, the location of the past “communications committee” and a mention of the Strong Minister’s Fund. Each either are in the works by specific committee, or if omitted by accident, to be reinstated into the document. There were several questions concerning the chapter on the Presbytery Corporation, which would be addressed as well. At 2:50 PM a motion to approve the manual was made, seconded, and received a majority of YES’s in the voice vote, with several NO votes echoed.

Transitional Presbyter Martin moved at 2:52 PM that the Transition Team be thanked and dismissed and this was passed by the presbytery.

Adjournment and prayer was announced and prayed by Moderator Cushwa at 2:53 PM.

The above summary is taken from the notes of the Stated Clerk, as well as from the docket itself. Actions that are contained in the individual reports of committees generally are not listed in my summary, or added in the text when this is completed. The “highlights” of those written reports are listed now.

We affirmed our Presbytery Report to Synod Committee on Representation early in the morning. CPT’s report listed many actions taken, and bear reading by all. A short summary reads like this: Added a pastor to the Supply List; conducted 5 examinations; approved 8 contracts; transferred two TEs; approved 5 Terms of Call; appointed 4 moderators; dissolved 2 pastoral relationships; approved 1 CAT Assessment; and authorized 3 MIFs.

CRM also provide a written report of actions taken by them, which include granting AC status to a LRT; approved 6 contracts; formally adopted a new online ARE/CRE program with Union Seminary; as well as the items presented at presbytery today.

It also bears witness to note that the work of the presbytery staff to receive and then incorporate all written reports into a single docket is something we do not always offer thanks for. Within the docket are written reports from four committees, statements of faith and biographies from five pastors; a clerk’s report; a near 50 page manual document; as well as follow-up work that shows itself in the supplemental report. Then there is the work to coordinate with host congregation, the time spent to develop a docket with time frames listed, and the work of the group that oversees the worship at each presbytery meeting. Each host congregation has many questions and they will flow through the office staff as well. When we leave a meeting of presbytery, it was no accident that almost always things went well, because each meeting of presbytery has been a work in progress for at least the three weeks prior to the actual meeting time. So thanks to the staff at the presbytery office; the volunteers of each host congregation; the individuals tasked with preparing reports and minutes and documents for the docket; the many REs, TEs and members of our congregations who work on and with committees to accomplish the tasks so easily described with words but so prayerfully and dutifully accomplished with actions; to those who attend and for those who pray for each meeting, Thank You All. It seems that we are quite possibly at our best when we are together. So be it.