

Summary of the 172nd Stated Meeting of the Shenandoah Presbytery
Tuesday, November 1, 2016, at Opequon Presbyterian Church, Winchester, Virginia

The 172nd Stated Meeting of the Shenandoah Presbytery convened in the sanctuary of Opequon Presbyterian Church, Winchester, Virginia, with the host congregation of Opequon Presbyterian providing a warm welcome to the presbytery. Attendance for this fall meeting totaled 168, with 74 Ruling Elders, 64 Teaching Elders and 30 guests and visitors gathered in the pews.

As is our tradition and hope, registration opened at 8:30 AM, with members of Opequon present and assisting the arriving commissioners and guests to the assembly. There were sign-in tables, snacks and drinks, information booths and friendly faces aplenty, and the care provided by our host congregation was once again exemplary.

The 9:00 AM hour offered a class for first time Ruling Elder training, with one first time RE in attendance (there seems to have been 6 new REs in attendance on this day). Worship began at 9:30 AM and provided a wonderful medium to worship of Lord God. Thanks to all who prepared, sang, read, preached and prayed.

At 10:15 AM a quorum was established and the necessary steps of preparation took place. The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed and approved; appointments by the moderator made, a welcome extended by both the moderator and then later from the TE of our host congregation. Once the docket was established, the work of the day began.

From the Stated Clerk's Report, two actions were presented. In the first action, the Administrative Commission working with Pisgah Presbyterian Church, as presented by TE Patrick Pettit. The body voted to empower the commission to take all necessary steps to honor past deed requests and bequests, and transfer ownership of all parcels of land that comprised the Pisgah Presbyterian Church compound to the original donor family, the Stephenson's. This the body passed unanimously.

The next item of business concerned granting a property right-away for a water line to cross the property of Seneca Rocks Presbyterian Church. With the backing of the Session of Seneca Rocks, the presbytery so voted to grant the right away.

Three commission minutes were received by the presbytery, celebrating the installation of TE James Lunde at Warrenton Presbyterian Church; TE Patrick Lanaghan at Timber Ridge Presbyterian Church and to ordain TE Kristy Ray of Tinkling Spring Presbyterian Church.

The Stated Clerk, in compliance with the Book of Order G-2.0509 informed the presbytery that, as of October 2, 2016, Tully Hunter, former pastor of Tinkling Spring Presbyterian Church, formally renounced jurisdiction by the PCUSA and has sought vocation elsewhere.

Following these actions a verbal report from the Transitional Presbyter was received, highlighting the fact that as of this meeting, TE Roy Martin had participate and/or preached in 90 of our congregations, with the hope to complete worshipping in all of them very soon. Noted also was the work of nominations to fill the committee slots to enable the continued implementation of the new leadership model for Shenandoah Presbytery.

The Moderator noted at 10:29 AM that the Synod's Report was located on the presbytery website, as it was multi-paged and had photographs, presenting a cost/benefit analysis of whether to print it or reference it. It was referenced.

At 10:30 TE David Witt officially welcomed the presbytery to Opequon Presbyterian Church, with advice on how to navigate the building, and a reminder that the “ASK ME” buttons really did mean “ASK ME” if you had logistical questions.

Nominations asked for and received a change in reporting time, bringing their report at 10:34 AM. Their report was found in the supplemental report, bringing the committee assignments to near capacity. Due to an inquiry by the chair, it was noted about 10 attendees of this meeting had never served on a presbytery committee. It is believed someone did indeed take names.

CMO (the Committee on Missions and Outreach) presented at 10:39 AM. RE Keith Folsom presented on behalf of Moffett, relaying at BAJA Mission moment involving God’s providence and actions in the mission field. For those in attendance, just remember the child’s pink jacket!

Further, CMO recommended to presbytery that the Ethiopian Partnership continue. This occurred at 10:46 AM with the body agreeing by voice vote to continue this ministry. Within the CMO report were two updates from YAVs Lydia Griffiths (serving in Korea) and Rebecca Witt (serving in Colorado).

CPA (the Committee on Presbytery Administration) presented at 10: 53 AM. RE Trobaugh introduced Clayton Rascoe and Daniel Crofts of Massanetta Springs, and reported that the location of the Resource Center is now up and running, and needing staffing volunteers. Please reach out to Massanetta Springs if there is an interest.

In turning to the CPA report at 10:55 AM it was noted that Winchester First Presbyterian Church was the first congregation to return their 2017 asking letter, and yes, with a pledged amount! The budget will be presented at the February, 2017 meeting of Presbytery.

CPA brought a motion changing the BOP classification of the Transitional Presbyter, which maintains current levels of coverage and benefits but reduces the total cost of the package by \$6,400.00. By voice vote, with possible one “NO” vote the motion passed.

CPT began its report at 10:59 AM. In addition to the work of the committee detailed in the docket, a policy was brought before presbytery for its action. The policy is titled “Policy and Covenant Regarding the Relationship of Departing Ministers to Their Former Congregations,” and was included in the docket. TE Randy Tremba and RE Kate Lewis Brown had crafted the document and presented it.

The policy discussion brought to life many of the issues and concerns facing congregations in transition, and several amendments were proposed, seconded and discussed. The concerns were noted, and in the end, the amendment themselves failed. An additional amendment passed, changing the word “Session” to “Congregation.” The main motion made its way back to the floor, and the policy, with the single change, was voted up and will become presbytery policy.

Within the work of CPT, note that interim contracts were passed, search committees established for interims and associate positions, new pastorates begun and times of transitions also beginning, and the continuing work of the consultants using HolyCow Consulting tools continues.

CNCD (Committee on New Congregational Development) was due up next, but paused to lift up the congregational members representing Timber Ridge Presbyterian Church, who just recently installed TE Patrick Lanaghan on October 23, 2016. Applause and prayers for all!

At 11:29 AM CNCD brought their work before presbytery, a more complete list of duties. The body voted to accept them as presented.

CRM began its report at 11:32 AM (that is the Committee on Relational Ministry). Contained within their work was the move to form an AC for working with Buffalo Gap Presbyterian Church, suggesting a 1.5% COLA adjustment for TEs, and renewing contracts with supply pastors and others for several of our sister congregations.

The work that CRM brought before the presbytery were all voted upon in the affirmative by the body. The major point dealt with dismissing ministers-at-large to other presbyteries by CRM, with each action reported to the presbytery, and celebrating the ministry of TEs Paul O'Gorek and Bradford Langdon. TE Langdon spoke to the presbytery, highlighting his sense of call. And finally, Andy Wing was formally presented to presbytery after being received as a member-at-large by CRM.

Time was open on the docket so CPM brought their report at 11:42 AM. Their one recommendation was upheld by vote by the Presbytery.

The Order of the Day came at 12:00 Noon, with TE John Vest bringing a program on evangelism to the presbytery. With the use of graphics and real-life stories, evangelism was lifted up truly as "going to where the people are." Reference materials and suggested readings were provided. Lunch and break-out groups would follow, all in the hopes of continuing the conversation.

Lunch was provided by our host congregation, and the Stated Clerk had the honor of eating at the "children's table" in the other room! We were told that we had double portions of dessert, so that "sat well with everyone in the room!" Opequon were great hosts, and the mealtime was wonderful.

Breakout groups formed following lunch, and guided conversations took place with the context of churches of similar sizes. This time of education is intended to be a springboard for our congregations, so as "you spring ahead" be sure to let us in on what is going on!

At 2:20 PM Intercessory Prayer was presented by TE Bob Osborne.

The Corporation met at the 2:26 PM start point, with the meeting opened with prayer, the business conducted and the meeting closing with prayer at 2:34 PM.

CNCD brought forth two names-RE Bill Burslem and TE Scott Crannell to add to their committee as members.

This brought us to the CPC portion of the meeting, beginning at 2:38 PM, with the main topic being the presentation of the revised policy on dissolution. This topic brought forth some very important observations, attempts to perfect, background conversation and theological and real-world implications. Representatives of the task force were present and spoke as needed. Thanks to TEs George Evans and Andy Sale and RE Bill Blair.

There was one slight glitch in the reporting, with a first recommendation concerning the manual being inserted into the conversation. The manual change vote was unanimous.

Turning back to the policy revision, discussing resumed. A motion to refer the document back to the task force was defeated by voice vote, with perhaps only 2 votes to refer and the balance not to refer. Several revisions failed to gain a majority. A "move the question" motion was heard, and the body voted 64 to 15 to indeed move the question. A vote was taken to accept the revised policy with a 77 to 9 majority in favor of the revised policy. TE Burton presented a written complaint to the clerk, with the details of the complaint to appear in the final minutes.

In a slight departure from “norms” the moderator for 2017, Kate Lewis Brown, was installed at the end of the meeting, as the current moderator will not be available for the February 2017 meeting. RE Brown graciously accepted the gavel, and great thanks to our outgoing moderator TE John Cushwa.

The time of adjournment was accomplished, and the presbytery departed.

Sincerely summarized,

Rev. Kerry Foster, Stated Clerk
Shenandoah Presbytery