

Summary of the Special Meeting of Presbytery
March 4, 2017, Massanutten Presbyterian Church, Penn Laird, Virginia

Shenandoah Presbytery gathered in a Special Meeting of Presbytery on Saturday, March 4, 2017, in the sanctuary of Massanutten Presbyterian Church, located in Penn Laird, Virginia. Attendance for the day numbered 104, with the tally being comprised of 47 Ruling Elders, 49 Teaching Elders and 8 guests. The purpose of the meeting was included in the docket sent out by the staff of the Presbytery, with the two items of business centering around the report of the Search Committee for the position of Associate General Presbyter, and staffing changes dependent on the action taken by Presbytery.

Registration officially opened at 8:30 AM, though the doors were open before that time. Massanutten Presbyterian Church provided the space, light snacks and the needed personnel to guide commissioners to the proper locations.

9:30 AM Moderator Kate Lewis Brown called us to order, and offered our opening prayer. At 9:33 AM TE Burton, who had missed the opening prayer and therefore was unable to participate in the first prayer, requested an opening prayer. TE Olivia Haney offered up a second prayer on behalf of Presbytery, and the tasks at hand began.

The docket contained this statement: *Ruling Elder Kate Lewis Brown, Presbytery Moderator, has called a Special meeting of Presbytery that will meet on Saturday, March 4, 2017, at Massanutten Presbyterian Church As per the Shenandoah Presbytery Manual of Operations, adopted August 13, 2016, the moderator may call such a meeting as this (Chapter V; 5.1.2.B). The Search Committee will present their nominee for the position of Associate General Presbyter to be examined, voted on, and installed. Additionally, to complete the transition of the staffing model, the timeline and process concerning the Stated Clerk will be addressed pending the actions of presbytery in reference to the first item of business. The meeting commences at 9:30 am with anticipated adjournment at 12:00 Noon.*

With that in mind, the Stated Clerk affirmed a quorum of Presbytery present (his visual count just before that moment was “87” commissioner/guests on hand; and no, he/I did not see TE Burton at that time).

The Moderator reminded the Body of the Procedural Rules and provided for the seating of any corresponding member; named the assistant clerks, and moved that the docket be adopted, which it was.

TE Haney, chair of the Search Committee, built upon the written report in the docket, outlining that not only the process but some of the discernment process employed by the Search Committee in arriving at this particular candidate. The high points of the work centered on actions taken by Presbytery in its transition work, including but not limited to the structure of Presbytery; the committee structures; the scope of committee work requiring execution/general presbyter input and support; how the new structure impacts the new position (i.e.: will support many of the Presbytery committees, have a role in the Coordinating and Planning Commission of Presbytery; support both congregations and pastors), and to provide a bridge for the eventual hiring of the General Presbyter/Stated Clerk.

Time was devoted to the funding of this position, which in short is the combining of the financial portion of the past Communications Officer and Stated Clerk positions (reminder: This means the cost of the positions mentioned, not the duties), in addition to funds from the First Harrisonburg settlement. This brings about the fiduciary aspect to be sustainable, but in essence, provides a “three year make good” period. At that time, Presbytery will be in a position to determine future staffing concerns. There were no questions from the floor on the process for the chair.

At 9:41 AM, Reverend Nancy Meehan Yao was introduced. Flyers were passed out to the Body at this time, containing introductory materials and a photo that could be taken to the congregations of the Presbytery as a means to introduce the candidate/newly hired and installed Associate General Presbyter.

A short reflection of the biography/flyer indicated TE Yao is a second-career pastor, married to “Jim” who is also a TE, and that she comes with a background in education. TE Yao expounded some on her pulpit presence, sense of call, her life experiences and such.

9:45 AM, TE Bunker, member of the Committee on Pastoral Transitions and chair of CPT's Exam Subcommittee, having been tasked to have the subcommittee exam the candidate, came to present their report. One question presented in front of Presbytery, in reference to her Christian Experience, and then framed in the by-line, "Why Us?" prompted a reply centered on past experiences, the joy and concern as leader as a lay person and as clergy in our congregations, and lifting up her first response to new settings of "Listening."

At 9:51 AM, TE Yao's Statement of Faith was discussed. The short version of the question was "How is the PCUSA doing?" The reply included a beginning point of Acts chapter 2, and moved on to the diverse calling process of the early, and hopefully the present, church. A key response was quoting Luke in saying "**Go and Tell,**" and that as a denomination, we need to work on that one. TE Yao then reminded us all that in almost every occasion when one encounters the word "YOU" in Scripture, it means "YOU ALL" (clerk's paraphrase of her reply). She relayed several stories of small churches growing almost despite themselves, once they began to venture from their comfort zones.

9:58 AM brought forth a question of "talk about your/our greatest challenge?" The reply focused on responses to situations, whether they are technical or adaptive, and whether or not the response chosen matched the need presented. Responding to Scripture, as TE Yao illuminated, means we are often called to adapt rather than re-invent, as the fishermen Jesus reached out to left behind their nets and normal fishing grounds for a different type of quarry-humanity.

The 10:03 AM moment of confirmation generated the oddly placed admission that "TE Yao was not a New York Giants fan" (Having not noticed any NFL merchandise in the foyer, not sure what to make of that appraisal.)

Then TE Bunker opened up the exam process to Presbytery.

Questions from the floor then followed. TE S. Wing inquired as to the level of excitement that the candidate perceived in our Presbytery, and the response centered on our current work with small congregations, hoping to expand our concept of neighbor, and the query of "What/Whom is God calling us to be?" The hope seems to be to move us from "not having 'whatever' to 'what can we do?'"

TE Crumley, chair of one of the committees that will work with the Associate General Presbyter, asked about the current level of experience being brought to the Presbytery in the area of new church development, the 1001 Worshiping Communities and in small churches. The response included experiences at the Presbytery level of new church development, and seeing 2 of 3 fail. The key success seemed to center on the ability to see ministry and mission opportunities essentially "just across the street" and doing something about it. The concept that seemed to guide this response centered on changing our perceptions of success and failure. The example of Vacation Bible School was given, as many VBS do not increase enrollment in Sunday school: Does that mean VBS is a failure?

TE Witt, chair of Committee on Church Redevelopment, asked the candidate to expand on the concept of "pastor's pastor." TE Yao responded that there has been time served on COM, and she had worked with congregations and pastors. She noted that TE's exist in an "odd world" in that many different facets of congregational life impact TE, but not all congregations see that. Her desire is to enhance the vision of all parties in the life of our Presbytery.

TE Bethard at 10:13AM inquired about the things the candidate did for self-care? Among the response of taking time for the self, devotions, exercise and such, the concept of learning one new thing was lifted up, the most recent task being "knitting socks"(for gifts; apparently not like Paul and his tent-making activity). In continuing in this lighter vein, TE Hay noted a shared time in seminary and the sharing of singing, and he earned a reprise of a former activity. This was followed up by the inquiry of "which hymns help us today?" The response, almost immediately, was "Be Still My Soul," and a reference to it being used by the Finnish underground as a means of finding allies and enemies.

At 10:19 AM, TE Bunker noted no new questions from the floor, and stated the exam subcommittee of CPT endorsed the candidate as far as the exam portion of the process, and then returned the presentation process to TE Haney. At this time, TE Bunker and TE Yao exited the sanctuary.

TE Haney then brought before Presbytery recommendations #1 and #3, with the addition that moving expenses are to be included in the call package. To recap these items:

1. That Presbytery sustain the examination.
3. Approve the following terms of call between the Presbytery beginning April 10, 2017:

Annual Cash Salary	\$38,500.00
Housing Allowance	\$14,000.00
Dental	\$ 443.40
Automobile Expense	\$ 6,000.00
Continuing Education Allowance	\$ 1,500.00
Major Medical	\$13,993.00
Pension and Disability	\$ 6,353.28
<u>Required SECA</u>	<u>\$ 4,016.25</u>
TOTAL COMPENSATION	\$84,805.93

There was a pause, seeming to indicate the Body was ready to act. TE Holden inquired, and then moved that we vote by voice, upon advice from TE Peterson. Having no objections from the Body, a voice vote was taken, with YES's being called out, and no NO's being offered following.

At 10:21 AM, it was then moved by TE Haney items #2 and #4:

2. Enroll as a member of Presbytery to be the Associate General Presbyter following the signing of the Book of Obligations.
4. Approve the following commission to install as Associate General Presbyter:

Teaching Elders: Olivia Kincaid Haney; Richard Cardot; Roy Martin.

Ruling Elders: Kate Lewis Brown, Presbytery Moderator; Bobby Spurgeon of Hot Springs; Harriett Kopp of Gerrardstown, and Bill Burslem of Opequon.

TE Fetterman inquired to the absence of RE Emerson Dietz, absent due to a death in the Tinkling Spring congregation; it was deemed proper to continue with the revamped roster. TE Burton inquired concerning "are we free to install," with the reply being this is a "transitional call" and that the COM of the candidate will be informed of the following actions. TE Bethard inquired as to "why install today," and TE Haney affirmed that the timeline of transition was behind these actions. The action today would allow the arrival on the field in mid-April to begin the process of learning the Presbytery prior to the May meeting of Presbytery. No further questions came forward, and by voice vote of all YES's and no NO's this was affirmed.

10:26 AM TE Yao was invited back to the sanctuary, and informed of the action of Presbytery. After a time of welcome and applause, the Moderator asked for a motion to dismiss the Search Committee with our thanks; the motion was made, seconded and voice voted in the affirmative.

10:27 AM the Search Committee, TE Yao and others retired from the sanctuary to prepare for the installation service.

10:28 AM Committee on Presbytery Administration's TE Held brought forth this motion:

"Presbytery approve termination of the term of Kerry Foster as Stated Clerk following on May 15, 2017 with gratitude for his service and elect Roy Martin, Transitional Presbyter, as Stated Clerk effective May 16, 2017 and continuing to the conclusion of his contract as Transitional Presbyter on October 14, 2017."

Questions from the floor: TE S. Wing: "Why this timeline?" Response: "TE Yao will not be available to begin service until April 10, 2017. The time from that date to the May meeting of Presbytery will be a time of training by TE Martin, and having the duties of Stated Clerk not in play at that time would be a benefit." Additionally, the Stated Clerk aids in setting the docket, and so the time spent in that task would detract from time for training with the new Associate General Presbyter. It was also noted that TE Martin's compensation stays the same, so new financial concerns for the 2017 budget. TE Lanaghan inquired as to the amount of compensation provided for the Stated Clerk position? The response was \$8,000.00 per year for a ten hour work week (a rather low time estimate, by the way). The vote was taken and it passed with no "NO" votes.

TE Held concluded the report with a reminder that the new resource center was up and running at Massanetta Springs and invite the Presbytery to make good use of that facility.

10:34 AM a thank you was offered to the current Stated Clerk

10:35 AM: a call for a short recess;

10:40 AM: The Service of Installation commenced.

11:41 AM: Moderator Brown adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted:

Rev. Kerry Foster, Stated Clerk