

Stated Clerk Summary of the 174th Stated Meeting
of the Shenandoah Presbytery, Tuesday, May 9, 2017
Mt. Olive Presbyterian Church, Hinton, Virginia

The Shenandoah Presbytery gathered together for the 174th Stated Meeting of the Presbytery on May 9, 2017 at Mt. Olive Presbyterian Church in Hinton, Virginia. With the meeting duly announced and materials electronically distributed, the meeting was called to order by the moderator, opened with worship followed by the commissioners completing their tasks of representing their congregations and completing the work of the Presbytery. On this day, 69 Ruling Elders, 72 Teaching Elders and 47 guests in attendance, participated in the meeting.

Registrations opened at 8:30 AM. For those who came to the main entrance, you may have noticed a small portion of the parking lot set aside, for a killdeer (I was told that was the bird's species) had set up a nest amidst the gravel of the parking lot, with at least two eggs in the nest and protected by said killdeer. A class for new ruling elders was held at 9:00 AM, with nine present to receive some guidance and information from the Transitional Presbyter and Stated Clerk concerning how this particular part of Presbyterianism worked.

The Moderator called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM with prayer, and our morning worship began. Teaching-elder-to-be Jacob Singleton (Staunton Third Presbyterian Church) brought our message using the Burning Bush passage from Exodus as our starting point. The congregation participated with hymns, prayer and message, and the service concluded at 9:59 AM.

The moderator called us to order at 10:01 AM, and the business of the day was begun. A quorum was present; our rules of engagement pronounced; guests welcomed; first time commissioners recognized; assistant clerks appointed; minutes adopted; and the privilege of voice given to Stacey Meyerhouffer, the lay leader of Mt. Olive Presbyterian Church among the early actions taken. Among our guests were two international commissioners, who partner in ministry with our Presbytery.

Written and verbal reports were given by the Stated Clerk, Associate General Presbyter and the Transitional Presbyter. An impromptu moment of thanks occurred with a gift of Subway "tokens" to the Stated Clerk in recognition of his service to the Presbytery. This was the last meeting of Presbytery for this particular Stated Clerk. The Transitional Presbyter lifted up the CRE Training Program hosted by Union Presbyterian Seminary, and the Associated General Presbyter report highlighted the adept by-line of "I don't know" (with "I will find out" implied) and to "Invite me to your event, please!" TE Tom Holden and Lay Leader Stacey Meyerhouffer greeted the commissioners and guests to Mt. Olive, with Mr. Meyerhouffer detailing his journey with God that brought him to Mt. Olive, and their ministry to the "nones and dones" as a highlight of the life of Mt. Olive, and TE Tom Holden, who moderates the Mt. Olive Session, lifting up the echoing chorus of "Welcome!"

The clock registered 10:23 with TE John Cushwa, chair of CPC, bringing to the body two items of business. Highlighted in the report was the formation of an Administrative Commission for Little Falls Presbyterian Church, and the changing of the dates of the meetings of Presbytery: the meetings generally will take place the fourth week of our usual months rather than earlier in the month.

TE Lisa Wilson, chair of CPT, member of CPC, brought forth the names of TE Patrick Lanaghan to serve on Nominations and TE Stephanie Sorge-Wing to serve on COR. Please note that these committees are staffed by CPC rather than Nominations, as per our manual, with the intent to empower both Nominations and the Committee on Representation to have the resources needed to complete their stated tasks.

TE Cushwa then moved the one item of business from CPC, the new Background Check Policy for the Presbytery to use. This policy is intended for new members coming into the Presbytery as well as new staff. The move to have a policy like this reflects the current trends and needs present in our society. TE Joe Condro provided a short introduction of the policy, and the floor was opened for questions and possibly motions. A discussion did follow. Several motions were made but did not pass, though one motion, dropping the word "history" from Section III. e. was passed. Concern and debate followed, with the concerns centering on the use of searches based upon Social Security numbers, what the intent, or by-product of such as search might be, and record retention protocols and ownership. Roughly fourteen individuals participated in the discussion, with the final act of the body to be to refer

this policy back to CPC. This last action occurred at 10:54 AM. For those who seek additional information or wish to contribute to the work on this policy, please contact the chair of CPC.

At 10:55 AM, RE MaryLou McMillin, chair of CPM, brought before the body candidate Jacob Singleton to be examined by the Presbytery. The PNC of Third Staunton and guests were recognized by the chair (nine individuals it would seem). In the following presentation, questions and answers were offered by the candidate in response to the CPM questions of sense of call and the experience of the Trinity in the life of the candidate, and follow-up questions from the floor. One of the candidate's answers contained this phrase that the Clerk remembered: "I did my first funeral before my first sermon!" The life of a parish pastor to be sure! At 11:17 AM, RE McMillin offered a prayer for the candidate, who then signed the Book of Obligations and received his "Welcome pack" from the Presbytery.

At 11:20 TE Lisa Wilson, chair of CPT, came forward for a presentation of a policy for the body to consider. The proposed policy provided the framework for a current associate pastor to become the next installed pastor of the same congregation. In the ensuing discussion, the points raised were "isn't this possible already"-which it is, but this policy will provide the protocols for the beginning of a search process, rather than at the end, in order to provide a fair and reasonable process before a situation could arise, rather than afterwards. Asked if this applies to Presbytery staff positions, it was duly noted that it does not. (Stated Clerk note: There is an existing policy concerning Interim Ministry in this presbytery, which does not allow for an interim to become an installed pastor in the congregation being served). The policy was presented and a voice vote produced only a few "NO" votes, so the vast majority agreed to this policy.

CMO chair RE Doug Sensabaugh came to the podium at 11:29AM, lifting up the ministry that the Presbytery is currently involved in, setting the stage for the Education Event to follow. Our international missional partners spoke briefly to the body, and the RE Sensabaugh presented to Education Hour to the body, and at 11:35 AM the Order of the Day began.

Following the 11:35 AM Order of the Day was the second Order of the Day, Lunch. This began at 12:30 PM and continued to 1:30 PM. At 1:31 PM, Intercessory prayer began, and by 1:36, the second worship service began, highlighted by candidate and CRE Tom Forbes presenting his sermon from John's Gospel.

The worship service ended, and the body came together at 1:55 PM. The Moderator requested that the body amend the docket, timewise, as the earlier work of the Presbytery altered the projected timeline. The body affirmed this request.

CPM came to the forefront at 1:56 PM, presenting candidate/CRE Tom Forbes to the Presbytery. As was true in the morning session, questions were presented to the candidate and answers given, as well as time for questions from the body itself. Two questions from CPM were answered, as well as two questions from the floor. The CPM requested the spouse of the candidate to join him up front, a prayer was offered, and the candidate signed the Book of Obligation and received a welcome packet from the Presbytery as well.

2:10 PM brought the chair of CPT, TE Lisa Wilson, to the podium area to complete the work of CPT. A policy for follow-up from the CAT survey and mission tool was presented and adopted. Following this, chair of the exam subcommittee of CPT, TE Jonathan Bunker, began his portion of presenting the work of CPT and presented three TE's entering into the Presbytery. TE Rosalind Banbury will be the interim at Tinkling Springs Presbyterian Church; TE Fred Noll will be the interim at Bethesda Presbyterian Church and TE Tracie Martin to membership in the Presbytery. TE Scroggins was recognized as well, but would not be joining our Presbytery. Each individual was greeted warmly by the Presbytery, and carried out the necessary documentation items to complete this process.

At 2:29 PM, TE Lisa Wilson presented TE Dan McCoig as the candidate to fill the vacant head of staff pulpit at Winchester First Presbyterian Church. A series of questions were presented to the candidate by the chair; no questions from the floor, save for RE Dave Thalman asking that Winchester First folks be recognized (they were). TE Dan McCoig then left the sanctuary, and a vote was taken to fulfill both our policy recently adopted and Book of Order requirements, with the final tally of 102 YES votes and 0 NO votes. TE McCoig came back to the assembly and was informed of the results. The final protocols were then completed. TE Wilson reminded the body of the upcoming installation services celebrating the new pastors in the Presbytery, and reminded that these are open to the entire Presbytery, so if you are close, why not celebrate with your sister congregations?

TE John Leggett, chair of CRM, came to the podium at 2:40 PM. TE Leggett moved that the Presbytery affirm the changes in terms of call of the installed pastors, with the body affirming 100% in a voice vote. The next action requested by CRM, in conjunction with CPT, was the transfer of the CRE (Commissioned Ruling Elders) responsibilities from CRM to CPT. Several questions followed for clarity details. The new format has CPT overseeing the CRE training process and in aiding congregations to connect with CRE's; CRM, once a congregation is being led by a CRE, will assuming its usual responsibility of support and nurture of the CRE and congregation. A voice vote was taken, with the majority saying "YES" and perhaps three "NO" votes. Next item presented was the revised Clerk of Session manual, which was also passed by the body.

TE Jim Lawton was presented for membership in the Presbytery, and was received as well. And all protocols followed.

TE Randy Tremba, pastor of 42 years with Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church, was presented to the body to honor his request to be honorably retired, and this was made so. TE Carl Howard spoke of TE Tremba's long tenure at Shepherdstown, a "post card from home" was given to him from Shepherdstown, and TE Tremba highlights his ministry with a few words, celebrating the blessings and accomplishments of this congregation, in areas ranging from the care of the planet to being a place of welcome for all who came to the congregation.

At 3:02 RE Kim Kline, chair of Sessional Records, presented a report, noting that two sets of minutes were delivered to be read at this meeting, and making it known that they are there to serve clerks and congregations in the maintenance of minutes.

3:04 PM was to be the presentation of the amendments, but a scheduling need for a presenter of CPA prompted a change in timing. At 3:05 PM, CPA came before the body with several recommendations.

The first portion of the report was to celebrate that all congregations have now responded to the letters of asking, and that the pledges totaled \$533,851.63, which exceeds the budgeted expense projection of \$513,960 for 2017.

Moving to the recommendation, CPA requested permission to sell one of the six lots on the current grounds of the Presbytery Office to JMB Acquisitions, LLC (the property arm of Dollar General Stores) for a total in the range of \$200,000-207,500, depending on the final negotiations. Questions concerning our relationship to our neighbors, the entry way to the current office space, the issue of water control and to our relationship with the new entity to our right were raised and answers as complete as possible given. In the end an affirmative voice vote was given. A second recommendation was asked for, and given; to allow CPA to act on behalf of the Presbytery should this company desire to acquire a second parcel of land.

At 3:18 PM, the Stated Clerk brought to the body the amendments proposed by the 222nd General Assembly for our affirmative or negative vote. A discussion centered on the procedure of providing the amendments to the Presbytery was raised (the current process is electronic transfer of data). A second inquiry concerning the knowledge that all amendments had reached the voting threshold of being passed already was presented, with the short answer being we are bound by our polity to vote on these amendments, and all votes need to be counted and recorded. Of the amendments presented, and using the shorthand of the GA, 16-A, 16-B, 16-E, 16-F, 16-H all were voted in the affirmative. GA reference 16-C, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, 16-D and 16-G were voted in the negative. These results will be forwarded to Office of the General Assembly to be recorded in their registry of presbytery voting results.

During the discussion phase of several of these amendments, and the discussion would center on those that failed, it was noted that voices were heard that may not have been heard had this Presbytery just not voted, or chose to offer a blanket "yes or no" response to the OGA. It is important in the eyes of the current Stated Clerk that as many voices and opinions be expressed in our deliberations, and yes, even if our final vote "does not matter." It does matter that we voted and honored our call to be full participants in Presbytery and Denomination.

At 3:42 Nominations chair RE Mary Lou Cox brought forth the names of those asked to serve and agreed to so, and the body voted in the affirmative. An attached form for volunteers was lifted up as a means to aid nominations in their work, so please take time to take this form back to your congregations.

At 3:49 CER Chair TE Punker Robertston came to the podium with revised committee duties and new forms. They were affirmed by the body. A short report on Paddy Run was given, and a few highlights of upcoming events were given.

At 3:55 PM, the moderator offered a prayer for the gathered, and at 3:56 PM the body adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted:

Rev. Kerry Foster, Stated Clerk
Pastor, Bridgewater Presbyterian Church