

## **Recap of the 254<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Scioto Valley February 18, 2020**

The 254<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Scioto Valley was called to order with prayer by Moderator, Rev. Mark Gauen at 3:30 p.m. Upon the motion to proceed with the agenda as presented, an amendment was offered to move the stated New Business – Worthington PC's motion to form a "Discernment and Design Team" Administrative Commission – was made and after some deliberation was passed. With the agenda set – and after greetings from Rev. Todd Tracy, the host pastor – the Presbytery got down to the serious business of worshipping our God.

Rev. Sarah Juist, pastor of Newark Hanover PC, provided the sermon, "Give What You Have," based on Acts 3:1-10, reminding those gathered to utilize well what our God has provided us (and, maybe, casting side eyes at pastors in skinny jeans). The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was celebrated by the Revs. Todd Tracy, Newark Second PC, and Justice Ofosuhene, Columbus Ramseyer PC.

As our business continued three individuals were seated: Elder Don Niece, Presbytery of Miami Valley (who also provided a moving and personal testimony to the good work Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has provided in Miami Valley following both a series of tornados and a mass shooting in 2019), the Rev. Chris Roseland, Presbytery of Ohio Valley, representing the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Rev. Jim Rissler of the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program.

The Consent Agenda was approved, including the formation of an Administrative Commission to close First Presbyterian Church, Reynoldsburg and staff reports were delivered. Executive Presbyter, the Rev. Dr. Jeannie Harsh, noted that her 20 years of presbytery service has included her in seven different job positions, signaling just how much change and transition is actually the norm. Rev. Jeffrey A. Schooley, Stated Clerk, reported on the actions of the Administrative Commission (AC) formed by General Assembly(GA) in 2018 to investigate the Synod of the Covenant. In the days prior to this Stated Meeting, the GA AC had assumed original jurisdiction of the Synod of the Covenant, relieving all staff and officers of their responsibilities and shuttering nearly every facet of Synod life for the next six months. He reported that as more details materialized that they would be shared with the Presbytery.

The body then turned their attention to the motion from Worthington PC, which had concurrences from First Presbyterian Church, London; Broad Street PC; and Bethany PC. Deliberations were lengthy and the motion was

amended once (a final version of the motion can be read in the forthcoming Minutes from this meeting). Ultimately the Presbytery voted by voice vote to

form the "Discernment and Design" AC. Because one of the conditions of this AC involved the selection of an advisory committee to work alongside the Moderator in selecting the 9-12 members, a motion was made lifting up two candidates. Further deliberation led to an election of two candidates – out of three nominations – with Rev. Dr. Tim Jones (honorably retired) and Elder Kathi Bubb (Mifflin PC) ultimately being elected as the members-at-large to the advisory committee.

The Nominating Committee reported that as a result of a misunderstanding that the Presbytery had elected one too many ruling elders and teaching elders as Commissioners to the upcoming General Assembly in Baltimore, MD. Through the graciousness of two of the elected members, who voluntarily stepped down from this responsibility, our slate of elected commissioners was now decent and in order.

The Bills and Overtures Committee brought two overtures before the body for consideration. One of the overtures – The Tree Fund – did not yet have a sponsoring presbytery, so Christian Educator Brittany Porch presented it to the Presbytery. It was voted to send this overture to General Assembly. Additionally, the Bills and Overtures Committee brought forward the Lake Huron overture, regarding representation of Synod Commissioners, also received a concurrence from the presbytery upon their vote.

Rev. Mary Gause presented a review of actions taken by the Commission for Nurture and Outreach (CNO) and then invited Rev. Chris Roseland to share about the *Matthew 25 Initiative*, which highlighted the many ways that the Presbyterian Church was refocusing its energies and work on missional service in the world.

Next up was Ruling Elder Jim Hines, chair of the Commission for Presbytery Operations (CPO), who reported that the Kingston-Whisler property had been sold for \$30,000. He then presented on the presbytery's ongoing per capita discussion, providing key figures and some recent-historical overview. The 2020 budget was then presented, which included a \$2.00 per capita increase (bringing total per capita for 2020 to \$37.75), which passed via voice vote. Finally, a first reading of a Per Capita Relief policy was presented, in which churches who reduced their rolls by 10-percent, or more would be given immediate relief on the loss of membership, rather than paying two additional years on those (now, non)members. As a first reading, only questions for clarification were permitted with a second reading, and time for questions as to the merits of the policy, coming at the May 2020 Presbytery meeting.

Rev. Adam Anderson, chair of the Commission for Congregational Life (CCL), expressed gratitude for everyone in the work they are doing to support their churches and help tell their church's stories. He then noted some changes to how CCL connects with individual churches before inviting Rev. Jim Rissler of the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program (PILP) forward to speak to the benefits of this program and to award reimbursement checks to churches who have completed their loans.

Rev. Ann Melick, chair of the Commission for Church Professionals (CCP), reviewed actions taken on behalf of the Presbytery through CCP and then welcomed Jim Zippay as a Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE). The Revs. John and Becky Hart were then celebrated for their many years of service at Liberty PC, which will conclude with their retirement effective June 1, 2020. The assembled body participated in a liturgy of celebration, concluding with singing the doxology, giving thanks to God for the Harts' service. Next, Melick invited Rev. Juist forward for the second reading of the Sabbatical Leave Policy, which presbytery approved.

The last piece of business came from the Coordinating Team with Elder Carla Mavis and Rev. Mark Gauen presenting the Presbytery's new mission statement – "Inspire, Strengthen, and Challenge Congregations for Christ's Mission" – which came after a year of conversation, discernment, and prayer. Mavis then presented on the number of efforts the Coordinating Team and the various standing Commissions and Committees of the Presbyter are undertaking in order to lead the Presbytery through much needed transitions and changes, including an upcoming leadership retreat in March that will focus on revitalization. Finally, Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) Christine Burns presented on behalf of the Ministry Initiatives Board, calling on the Presbytery to bring their big dreams and bigger ideas to seek material support.

The evening closed with a series of announcements:

- Rev. Charlise Ramsey announced that her name is being used for fraudulent appeals for money. Please do not send funds to these people.
- Rev. Desiree Youngblood announced that London First will invite Rev. Roseland to come speak the weekend after Memorial Day.
- Rev. Karen Chakoian announced that Granville First is working in partnership with other organizations to plant trees.
- Rev. Ginny Teitt announced the New Wilmington Missionary Conference, which will take place the last week of July.

Rev. Mark Gauen adjourned the meeting with prayer at 8:10 p.m. The next Stated Meeting of the Presbytery is scheduled for Tuesday, May 19 at 3:30 p.m. at Broad Street PC, Columbus, Ohio.