

Presbytery of New Covenant
Stated Meeting
November 15, 2014

Moderator John Jo called the meeting to order at 9:37 am, at the Lodge at the Indian Reservation in Livingston, TX. There were some challenges with technology that delayed the start of the meeting.

We sang "To God Be the Glory" to convene the meeting, after which John asked us to pass the peace. The led into our worship service (constituting opening with prayer) which was co-led by TE Jeff Smith (Houston, St. Andrew's) and CRE Debbie Battise-Kleinman. Jeff read Titus 2:11-14 as the scripture on which his sermon, "God's Denouement" was based. He challenged us in our discipleship, reminding us that the journey is first up, second in, and lastly out. The Faithwalking program has been key in the life of the congregation of St. Andrew's. We celebrated communion together. The service ended with five of the women from the tribe signed the Lord's Prayer to end the service.

The business portion of the meeting opened at 10:50 am. Sue Hyde, South Dakota; David Sawyer, Mid-Kentucky. Jim Chaffin was welcomed as a new minister member of the presbytery. The omnibus motion was approved. This contained the minutes of the July, 2014 meeting which was held at College Station. Moderator John Jo shared his remarks. He introduced these people as tellers for the meeting: RE Alba Herrera (Houston, St. Stephen), TE Becky Downs (Houston, John Knox), TE John Wurster (Houston, St. Philip) and RE John Lemen (Houston, St. Philip). Nominees for Nominating Committee: Class of 2015: TE David Northcutt (HR, Parish Associate, Mo. City, Southminster); Class of 2017: TE Melissa Krabbe (Galveston, Westminster), RE Lisa Velasquez (???) and RE Nancy McElhinney (Houston, John Knox). No nominations were made from the floor.

The Stated Clerk, TE Lynn Hargrove, reminded us that her report is in the packet. The offering for Kid's Free Clothing Exchange was \$2, 829.50.

CONFESSION OF BELHAR: TE Greg Han had 10 minutes to present information about the nature of confessions and how The Book of Confessions is amended. TE Winfield "Casey" Jones (Pearland, First) and TE Brent Hampton (Brenham, Brenham) spoke to the motion. The ballots were distributed. There was concern that ballots might have been distributed to some who are not voting commissioners.

CELEBRATION OF MINISTRY: While the votes were counted, Greg Han shared about his work with Interfaith Ministries.

161 ballots were cast: 85 in favor, 76 against. The motion passed. TE Sam Knight asked for a revote due to the concern over people voting that were not eligible to vote. TE Rose Niles raised a point of order asking if we were going to vote to revote. A standing vote was taken on the approval of the Confession of Belhar. The motion passed 81 to 75, with a total of 156 votes cast.

GENERAL COUNCIL: TE Laurey Murphy complimented Greg Han on his presentation and Jeff Smith on his sermon. She referred us to pages 46 and following for the written report of the council. She highlighted the items in the report.

Motion 1: The General Council moves that the proposed revisions to the Reconciliation and Dismissal Procedure that were presented at the July, 2014, meeting of the presbytery. The motion passed with a voice vote.

Motion 2: The General Council moves that the proposed revisions to the Gracious Reconciliation and Dismissal Procedure (GRP) as found on pages 54-65 be offered as a first reading, with the intention of approving these revisions at the March, 2015, stated meeting of the Presbytery of New Covenant. Laurey introduced the writing team of RE Mort McPhail, RE Jody Harrington and TE Katie Cummings. Mort summarized the newest revisions to the GRDP. The newest changes reflect what the Writing Team heard during the five conversations and other email correspondence.

TE John Hirling (Chair of COM) rose to offer the amendment from COM which is found in the addendum, to be added to the first reading. Laurey answered that GC made the decision to not allow amendments at this time, and that the time for that is the March, 2015, meeting. John countered that he could not remove the amendment language. John Jo said that this will be referred to the March meeting. TE Casey Jones suggested that other amendments be received well in advance of the March, 2015, meeting. The motion passed by a voice vote.

Motion 3: The General Council moves that Rev. Lynn Hargrove be elected to a three year term as Stated and Recording Clerk of the Presbytery of New Covenant ending December 31, 2017. The motion passed by a voice vote.

Motion 4: The General Council moves that RE Peter Koester (Webster, Webster) be elected to a three year term as Treasurer of the Presbytery of New Covenant ending December 31, 2017. The motion passed by a voice vote.

CONGREGATIONAL RESOURCING: TE Charlotte Kibler invited the attendees to consider the impact of mental health concerns on our congregations and ourselves. There will be a Mental Health Symposium in early 2016 which will cover the causes, research and our response to mental illness. Charlotte is heading up the task force to plan the symposium, and asked for volunteers to assist with this symposium.

CELEBRATION OF MINISTRY: Dick Humphrey shared about "Powerful Tools for Caregivers," and Interface Samaritan Counseling Center. He also volunteered to serve on the task force with Charlotte. He invited people to take part in the six week program to learn more about caregiving.

Debbie Battise Kleinman offered a blessing before lunch, which was sandwiches, chips, cookies and fruit. Over the lunch, we enjoyed a presentation by the hosts which included a demonstration of stickball and tribal dancing, and the signing of "Go, My Son". We had a moment of silence for a tribal member who passed away this afternoon.

The meeting recovered at 1:24 with the singing of the first verse of "Blessed Assurance." The first order of business after lunch was the installation of Lynn Hargrove as the Stated and Recording Clerk, and Pete

Koester as the Treasurer of the Presbytery of New Covenant for a three year term ending December 31, 2017.

CELEBRATION OF MINISTRY: Sam Locke from the Presbyterian Mission Agency thanked the presbytery for our support of the Special Offerings for the PCUSA, the agency that Sam directs. He shared that the average gift amount per person is only \$2.00 for Special Offerings. If we were to double our giving, that would result in about \$20 million annually. The Special Offerings are One Great Hour of Sharing, the Peace and Global Witness Offering (formerly the Peacemaking Offering), the Pentecost offering, and the Christmas Joy Gift. He showed us the "Presbyterian Giving Catalog" which offers alternative gift opportunities for holiday shopping. The people in his office can assist with design for materials. He mentioned that next year is the 10th anniversary of hurricane Katrina and there will be additional giving opportunities around that event.

VISIONING: TE David Sawyer was introduced. He led us through a time of questions which were answered in conversations around the tables. A time of lively conversation followed.

THE WORD: Greg Feigh, chair of Nominating, introduced Laureen Suba was introduced as a candidate for ordination. She preached using Exodus 15:9-20, Miriam living her life to the fullest. She reminded us that song/music can be healing, and to dance as an act of worship. These are ways to pass on our faith to the next generation. Greg asked for questions about the sermon. None were asked. The motion was made to sustain the sermon portion of the examination. The motion passed by voice vote.

John Hirling made the motion on behalf of the Committee on Ministry to sustain the examination. Greg reminded the commissioners that the examination was not complete. He asked Laureen about the role of the sacraments in worship. After her answer, John made the motion to sustain the examination of Laureen Suba. The motion passed by a voice vote.

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY: John Hirling made the motion to approve the policy entitled, "Teaching Elder Ethics in Cases of Disagreement with Denominational Policies, Statements, and/or Decisions in the Presbytery of New Covenant". RE Bart Henson made a motion to postpone the vote on this policy until the March, 2015, stated meeting of the presbytery. His motion was seconded. He made three points: 1) it is premature; 2) it discriminates against teaching elders; 3) it is late in the day for this vote.

RE Mort McPhail responded that this is not part of the GRDP. TE Vicky Jones agreed that it should be postponed, and asked that the COM would have time to clarify, as this seems fairly broad in scope. TE John Hirling responded this is not intended to be part of the GRDP, and the objections point to the need for the policy. TE Linda Herron responded that this puts TE's "on notice" that there are consequences for actions, and that this policy helps to clarify this. TE Sam Knight spoke in favor of the postponement and against the policy. TE Helen DeLeon pointed out that the previous speaker was out of order. TE Guinn Blackwell-Eagleson spoke against the postponement saying that clarity is really important. TE Alex Cornell asked to call the question on the postponement. TE Casey Jones pointed out that we need to vote on ending the debate. A motion was made to close debate and passed by a voice vote. A voice vote to postpone the approval of the policy was not clear, so a standing vote (division) was requested. The motion to postpone the approval of the policy passed 58 to 55.

We celebrated the retirements of Sam Hsu, Linda Sharon, Debbie Leo and Mark Stoub. Linda and Sam offered words to the presbytery. The motions were made separately, and all passed by voice vote.

MINISTRIES DIVISION: RE Jody Harrington introduced TE Mike Cole who introduced Louise Flippin, the director of CUPS. He corrected an error in the Outreach Committee report, to tell us that \$2000 are given by the presbytery. Mike then introduced Linda Evans (Woodlands Community), Ed ??? from Webster. The congregation of Webster presented a handmade rug to the presbytery. Mike then introduced Rusty Edmunston and Sara Armstrong who are working for the PCUSA in Peru, who shared a little bit about the work of the teams from the presbytery.

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION: Jane Larkin introduced TE Becky Downs who went through the equalization report for the presbytery. The EAC brings the plan for approval which is effective January 1, 2015. The motion passed by voice vote.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE: RE Gayle Smith reported that 74 people are included in the report in the addendum. She added the name of John Bobbitt (Houston, First) to serve on Outreach in the class of 2017. No nominations were made from the floor. The slate of nominees was approved by voice vote.

COMMITTEE ON REPRESENTATION: RE Alba Herrera introduced TE Hector Rivera Velez from the COR on the national level. He gave us a history lesson on the development of COR to ensure representation at all council levels, and invited us to consider serving.

COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY: TE Laura Grice said that the report is found in the packet and addendum.

CELEBRATION OF MINISTRY: Guy Bratton brought greetings from Camp Cho-Yeh. There is now a mobile van to bring the camp experience to individual congregations and organizations.

A motion to extend the meeting time by 10 minutes was offered by Mort McPhail. The motion passed. John Jo took a moment to introduce his wife.

The final action was to install TE Laurey Hartwell Murphy as the Moderator of the Presbytery for New Covenant for 2015. John presented the moderator's cross and stole, as well as a gavel to Laurey.

There was no new business submitted by the deadline.

The meeting adjourned with prayer at 4:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Hargrove

Stated and Recording Clerk