

The Presbytery of New Covenant Stated Meeting, November 9, 2013 Atascocita Presbyterian Church

We gathered in the sanctuary by singing, "I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord." Moderator Winfield "Casey" Jones opened the meeting with prayer at 9:02 AM.

Worship: Moderator Casey Jones brought an inspiring message, based on Romans 7:24-25a, entitled "Are We Desperate for God?" which focused on revival. The morning offering was designated for the Pastor Special Needs Fund, and totaled \$1863. An additional \$137 was given after the meeting, which brought the total to \$2000.

Opening business: TE Lynn Hargrove, stated clerk, declared a quorum was present. The docket was adopted. TE Rev. Jackie Hannan welcomed us to Atascocita Presbyterian Church, and shared information about the facilities. First time commissioners were asked to stand and be recognized. Miguel Carlin and Eldon Sheffer were introduced as corresponding members. Miguel is from Cincinnati, Ohio, representing Presbyterians for Disability Concerns (part of the Presbyterian Health Education and Welfare Association). Eldon is from Mission Presbytery, representing Schreiner University.

New Minister members were introduced: Shelly Craig, HR, returning home from Kansas; Paul Hooker, who is serving at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary; J. Howard Edington, serving as interim pastor at Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church in Houston.

The Omnibus Motion was approved, which included approving the minutes from the June presbytery meeting, and to approve a proposal from the Synod of the Sun to change the terms of commissioners to the synod meetings from two years to three years.

Report of the Stated Clerk: Lynn Hargrove shared that the report could be found on pages 12 and following in the meeting packet.

Tellers appointed: TE Steve Rehrig (Woodlands, Timber Ridge), TE Jim Currie (Pasadena, First), RE Mort McPhail (Houston, Northwoods), and Dian Thomasson (Pearland, First).

Nominating Committee: The moderator put into nomination four people: RE John Cronk (Houston, St. Thomas), RE Sabrina Hergert (Houston, Grace), TE Robert (Bob) Murphy (Galveston, First, interim), and TE Steve Rehrig (Woodlands, Timber Ridge).

Ecclesiastical Affairs Committee: RE Tim Hardy spoke to the overture representing College Station, Covenant, who offered the overture, "On Supporting Middle East

Peacemaking”. There were no questions. The overture was approved to be sent to the General Assembly for their consideration.

Celebration of Ministry: RE Eldon Sheffer brought stories of some of the students and the work of Schreiner University.

Keynote Address: Mary Marcotte introduced our keynote speaker, TE Ray Jones, Coordinator of Evangelism Ministries for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Ray shared his call to help to revive the denomination. Each of us, as a follower of Jesus Christ, has a story of life change that can be shared with someone else which helps people engage the gospel once again. Help others as well grow as followers of Jesus Christ. It is all of us who are sent on mission in the world in our own contexts. There is revival and renewal within the denomination. He shared stories of churches across the nation who are making a difference and bringing people to make a profession of faith. We need to learn to be with one another life on life. We are here to be generous because we serve a generous God. We remember our baptism as our marked through the precious waters of baptism. We had a time of questions and answers. Casey offered prayer for Ray and his ministry.

Open space discussions over lunch: Ray Jones, Miguel Carlin (disability concerns), Louise Flippen (CUPS), RE Patricia Beach (CEDEPCA)

We recovered after lunch by singing, “O For A World”.

Candidate Preaching: TE Marie Mickey (chair of the examinations subcommittee of COM) introduced Melissa Krabbe, candidate for ordination, who is serving the congregation of Westminster Presbyterian in Galveston. Her sermon was based on Exodus, which examined the goodness of God. There were no questions about the sermon. The sermon portion of the examination was sustained. Marie asked Melissa to speak about an essential tenet of the Reformed faith that has had an impact on her life. She spoke about God’s sovereignty. No questions were offered from the floor. The rest of the examination was sustained. Melissa was welcomed as a new minister member of the presbytery.

Congregational Resourcing Team: TE David Green encouraged us to attend the upcoming Church Officer Enrichment event scheduled for January 25, 2014.

Celebration of Ministry: Louise Flippen shared stories of the ministry of C.U.P.S. (*Comunidades Unidas por Salud* – Communities United for Health), who has served the communities south of Brownsville along the border for more than 24 years. Two youth groups from the presbytery may go there on a mission trip next summer to build carts for those who are mobility impaired. She asked for prayers for CUPS, for the good people in Mexico and for those who are not so good in Mexico.

Administrative Division Steering Committee: Chairperson RE Jane Larkin stood to say that the report was in the packet.

Finance: Chairperson RE Celia Morgan stated that the report was in the packet.

EAC: Parity Plan – Chairperson TE Becky Downs presented the parity plan for approval. The plan was approved. She also introduced TE John Wurster, the other member of the committee, and made a plea for a third member to serve. She also asked for locations for 2015 meetings.

Committee On Ministry: Chairperson RE Shelley Hernandez presented the minimum terms of compensation for teaching elders for 2014. They were approved.

TE Sam Knight (Houston, Grace, interim) rose to ask questions about “A COM Policy for Those Serving in Temporary Pastoral Relationships in the Presbytery of New Covenant.” He asked the background and rationale for the policy, as well as how many congregations were being served by those in temporary relationships. Shelley and General Presbyter TE Mike Cole answered the questions. Sam asked if the policy could be lifted out and ratified by the presbytery. Casey suggested that concerns could be raised. TE Pam Morgan (PNC, at large) asked if the policy should be lifted out to look at the stress placed on those in temporary positions. Sam pondered the task of strengthening the bonds of denominational affiliation and if it was different for temporary pastors than for those who are installed in their positions. His reasoning is that all pastors are under the authority of COM, and questions why those in temporary positions are singled out under this policy. He asked for the policy to be discussed by the commissioners. Shelley responded reading from the policy, and stated that nowhere in the policy does it say that the pastor can’t pastor the congregation. RE Jim Allison (Houston, Pines) moved *that the COM reconsider this particular policy at the earliest practical opportunity to report back to the presbytery at the next meeting.* He spoke to the parliamentary process of lifting out this policy for vote today. TE Ted Foote (Bryan, First) asked, “When the COM is asked to review this policy, does that mean that there would be a stay of enforcement while the policy is under review?” Shelley answered that the policy comes into effect when a contract is renewed. Sam moved to amend the motion *to have a stay of the policy until the report in March.* TE Linda Herron (HR) rose to ask a question about the policy being part of the new contract for someone in temporary pastoral leadership. Pam Morgan spoke in favor of the amendment. TE Sharon Gazaway (Jasper, First) spoke about the letter that she received that stated that the policy was in effect immediately, and asked a question. RE Bill Morris (Houston, St. Philip) asked how many contracts this affects. RE Jeannie Flowers (Houston, St. Philip) raised a point of order to get us back on track. The voice vote was unclear, so a division of the house was requested. The vote on the amendment to add the clause about a stay of the policy was 62-50. *The vote on the amended motion was 55-58. The motion fails.*

Service of Retirement: GP TE Mike Cole offered a service of retirement for TE Pam Morgan (PNC, At large), and asked her supporters to come forward. Pam was invited to share her thoughts about her retirement. Mike presented her with a certificate of

retirement and a book about Presbyterians. He offered prayer for her, and congratulated her on moving into this new phase of her ministry.

Question: TE Ted Foote asked that the COM might in good faith reconsider the COM Policy for Those Serving in Temporary Pastoral Relationship in the Presbytery of New Covenant to discuss the pastoral implications.

Celebration of Ministry: Marie Mickey introduced Patricia Beach who shared information about CEDEPCA – theological education, women’s ministries, disaster ministries and intercultural immersion trips – offered in Central America. CEDEPCA is in partnership with the presbytery in their ministry. She asked for continued prayers for CEDEPCA and support.

Committee on Preparation for Ministry: Chairperson TE Nora Fitch (Houston, St. Thomas) stated that her report was in the packet and addendum.

Nominating Committee: Chairperson RE Gayle Smith (Houston, First) presented on behalf of the committee. Corrections and additions to the addendum report include: Personnel: RE Ginger Benfield (Houston, MDPC) will not be serving there, but will be on Evangelism and Renewal (class of 2016); TE Jon Burnham (Houston, St. John’s) – Evangelism and Renewal (class of 2016); RE Phil Cummings (Houston, Grace) on Permanent Judicial Commission (class of 2018).

General Council: The motion was approved to endorse “Freedom Place”, a ministry that works with victims of human trafficking on a 110 acre campus in West Houston, to be a recipient of the Presbyterian Women “Thank Offering”.

Mike Cole was asked to come forward as John Jo was unable to be installed today. His installation will be December 1 at Korean Central during the morning worship service. Mike accepted the stole and others symbols of the office of moderator.

A motion to adjourn was seconded and approved. Casey closed the meeting with prayer at 2:47 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn R. Hargrove

Rev. Lynn R. Hargrove
Stated and Recording Clerk