

Presbytery of New Covenant  
Stated Meeting  
July 15, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 9:04 by Moderator David Green who welcomed us. We began the morning with worship which constituted our morning prayer. TE Fred Seay preached the sermon, and he and TE Kristi Click-Blankman officiated. We celebrated communion. We thanked Sarah Morgan, the organist, who is retiring this weekend. The offering of \$1,907 was given for the Pastor Special Needs Fund of the presbytery.

After worship, David asked for a quorum to be declared, and opened the meeting with prayer. The docket was approved. The omnibus motion was approved. TE Fred Seay offered the welcome from the host church. We welcomed first time commissioners to the meeting. Valerie Young, acting leader of the Synod of the Sun, was introduced as a corresponding member. TE Leigh Holder Bobo, and TE Chad Lawson were introduced as new minister members. Three exhibitors were introduced: Synod of the Sun, Congregational Resourcing Team, and Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services.

David introduced the Appreciative Inquiry portion of the meeting, using a passage from Isaiah and a short summary of Presbyterian history in Texas. He set the context for the Appreciative Inquiry portion of the meeting. He introduced Valerie Young, the synod leader, who added more explanation. We split into small groups for conversation around specific questions about the role of presbytery.

When the small groups finished their work, they blessed the lunch that was about to be eaten.

1:05 pm We reconvened with the singing of "Crown Him with Many Crowns", and moved into the reporting from the small groups convened by Valerie Young. TE John Wurster (Houston, St. Philip), RE Meghan Hansen (Woodlands, WCPC), TE Rachel Young (Houston, Clear Lake), TE Lindsay Hatch (Houston, Heights), RE Marguerite Priest (Houston, Spring Branch), RE Rachel Watson (Houston, St. Stephen), RE Gloria Ayers (Beaumont, St. Andrew's), and TE Ted Foote (Bryan, First) were the group reporters.

*Why presbytery?* Relationships, ministry opportunities, resources, the axle that the wheel around which it spins, a rudder, we can't do everything alone, diversity, quality control to keep things on task and moving forward, everyone is invited to gather at the table, connectional, PYCC, encouragement and responsiveness in difficult times, accountability and challenge to each other.

*When we are at our best:* facilitating peacekeeping and resolution among the congregations, joining congregations together for mission and education, open discussion, problem solving, hopeful and inviting, maintaining positive relationships even when we disagree, when we are planting churches; sharing in pastoral care for professionals in churches, affirmation, still loving one another despite our differences,

*What do we aspire to be?* Flabbergasted at average age – aspire to be younger; get groups of similar interest together to network; continue to build lay leadership; being more faithful and constantly reforming; clearer mission and purpose; be the beacon of the light of Christ; to be a community that can lovingly hold the tension of different perspectives; meetings could be structured where relationships are fostered;

*How can we be better connected?* Better communications – minute for mission from presbytery, newsletters; video-conference meetings; regional "clusters"; improved social media presence and website; how our committees meet; joint training and more regular regional gatherings; joining small youth groups together; commissioners report when they return to congregation; how can resources come to us rather than being centralized; how can we use our space better, or sell it and use the financial resources; be more intentionally

inclusive through language and other things that we do; how to access the bureaucracy; streamline larger committees, make use of task forces, rotate through outlying communities; more use of technology; structure is top heavy; need strong leaders to help cluster functionality; concern about the future of the presbytery and need for change; structure is not an end in itself

*What are you willing to do?* Go back to congregation and tell what is going on; commitment to work; pray; affirm more than criticize; offer suggestions in love; figure out how a smaller amount of people can reach further; make clear what the opportunities are to be involved; strength of PYCC; naming the gifts in people that have leadership qualities; humility and openness to God's spirit and what we are being led to become; do a better job of asking people so that they will say "yes"

The moderator appointed TE Ed Wolf (Galveston, First), RE Ben Svoboda (Sugar Land, First), RE Anna Marion (Cleveland, St. Luke's) and RE Jim Allison (Houston, Pines) as tellers. Nominating committee new members proposed: 2018: Jake Gonzales, Gary Weinburger; 2019: Chad Lawson, Nancy Benson-Nicol. The names were placed in nomination and there were no others from the floor. The nominees were elected.

Shout Outs: TE Lauren Suba shared about St. Paul, Houston and their last service at their current facility at 7200 Bellaire Blvd., as well as their need for storage of musical instruments in air conditioned facilities. Worship begins August 6 in their new temporary worship facility. They also have air conditioning units available. TE Joe MacDonald (Livingston, First) offered pews for gift or sale. TE Lindsay Hatch (Houston, Heights) shared about the rededication of their sanctuary after the reconstruction after the fire of three years ago. They will be doing 114 acts of community service in the Heights neighborhood in honor of their 114<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and are looking for other church partners. RE Licia Cook (Houston, Pinecrest) told about their "Summer Youth Employment Program" which is partly funded by grants from the presbytery.

#### Report of the Stated Clerk

TE Kevin Keaton offered this motion regarding the purchase of the St. Paul property: That the Presbytery of New Covenant communicate to the Session of St. Paul Presbyterian Church of Houston that according to G-4.0206a: "A congregation shall not acquire real property subject to an encumbrance or condition without the written permission of the presbytery transmitted through the session of the congregation" and therefore, the Presbytery shall temporarily suspend the permission to purchase land on which to build until the presbytery's attorney is able to review and report favorably on the conditions of the purchase. Furthermore, under G-3.0303b which deals with the Presbytery's Relations with Sessions and its responsibility to "control the locations of new congregation and of congregations desiring to move," that the presbytery approves the location pending the favorable review of the presbytery's attorney regarding the conditions of the sale. The motion was seconded. The purpose of this is to protect both the presbytery and the congregation in this transaction, and to maintain the fiduciary responsibility of the presbytery. TE Lauren Suba offered more explanation about the transaction. TE Brent Hampton and TE Ted Foote asked for further explanation. The motion was approved.

#### Administrative Division Steering Committee

TE Brent Hampton offered prayer prior to the report of the finance committee. He directed our attention to page 7, the Operating Cash Flow Analysis and offered an explanation of the figures there. There is a payment of \$175,000 from Houston, First, that we will receive only one more time. If that is backed out, then we are still in the black. If there was a salary being paid to the General Presbyter, then we would be in a negative status, or somehow to break even. The challenge is to balance the revenues and expenses. While we have \$3,392.066 in reserves, \$1,445,890 are restricted. There were no questions. A motion was approved to accept the report.

There was no report from the Ecclesiastical Affairs Committee.

Moderator Elect Bob Patterson offered the report of the Personnel Committee (found on page 12 of the addendum). TE Kristi Click-Blankman was introduced as the new Director of Youth Ministries for the presbytery.

#### Committee on Ministry

TE Margaret Desmond offered this report which contained the following motions:

- 1) To approve the pastoral call between Beaumont, St. Andrew's and their Interim Pastor Emmett Powers as Designated Pastor for a four year term effective August 1, 2017 and ending July 31, 2021. This requires a  $\frac{3}{4}$  vote of the presbytery. The motion was approved.
- 2) To approve that TE Marie Mickey (Bryan, First) be granted Honorably Retired status effective June 15, 2017. The motion was approved.
- 3) To approve that TE David Wells (Seafarers Chaplain) be granted Honorably Retired status effective July 1, 2017. The motion was approved.

A service of retirement was offered for Marie and David.

- 4) To approve that TE Andrew Dearman (Validated, Fuller Seminary) be granted Honorably Retired status effective October 16, 2017. The motion was approved.
- 5) To approve that TE Winfield "Casey" Jones (Pearland, First) be granted Honorably Retired status effective August 31, 2017. The motion was approved.
- 6) To approve that TE Rick Myers (Houston, Memorial Drive) be granted Honorably Retired status effective December 31, 2017. The motion was approved.

TE Kevin Keaton offered updates from the Board of Pensions, including an increase in the amount paid for pastor participation, and a reminder for the Call to Health.

#### Committee on Preparation for Ministry

RE Bill Hargrove offered the report on page 49 of the packet which required no action. He asked the commissioners gathered to offer resources for grants and scholarships for funding for seminary education or to reduce their outstanding liability for their education.

#### General Council

RE Bob Patterson offered the report on page 50. There were two motions.

- 1) To approve the nomination of TE Lynn Hargrove to be the Stated and Recording Clerk of the presbytery for a three year term of 2018-2020. There were no nominees from the floor. The motion was approved.
- 2) To approve the nomination of RE Cathy Bliton (Katy, New Hope) to be the Treasurer of the presbytery for a three year term of 2018-2020. There were no nominees from the floor. The motion was approved.

#### Ministries Division Steering Committee

*Congregational Resourcing Team:* TE Mirjam Haas Melchior (Needville, St. Paul's) and TE Ed Wolf (Galveston, First) offered a skit about the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation. The Reformation Challenge is to have 500 people participate in "Opening Doors to Discipleship". RE Carol Davis offered more information including a way to remember the password of 31627. She pointed out the Coffee, Curriculum and Conversation event that is happening on Thursday and Saturday, and also the PW "Whistle Stop" introduction to the Horizons Bible Study. She mentioned the success of the Youth Mission Trip, a "Save the Date" for the new confirmation rally, and the Presbyterian Leadership Enrichment event which features Joan Gray as the keynote speaker.

*Outreach:* TE Kristi Click-Blankman offered information about the Outreach and the Peacemaking grants offered through the presbytery. The report is found on page 16 of the addendum.

Nominating Committee: RE Sharon Carey offered the report which is found on page 13 of the addendum. Additionally she offered the nomination of Carol Jordan (Houston, Clear Lake) to the Finance Committee – class of 2019 who was not voted in at the March 2017 presbytery meeting.

TE Laureen Suba was added to the Presbyter Nominating Committee.

There were no nominees offered from the floor.

All of the nominees were approved.

There was no new business submitted by the deadline for consideration.

David offered his remarks including his appreciation for our presbytery. He closed the meeting with the Lord's Prayer at 3:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Lynn Hargrove*

Stated and Recording Clerk

Reported attendance: 155 Voting: 63 Minister Members; 83 Ruling Elders; 6 Elders with Privilege by Virtue of Office; 2 Former Moderators; 1 Fellow NACBA  
13 Non-Voting: 1 Corresponding Member, 13 Visitors; 1 Presbytery Staff; 1 Inquirer/Candidate under Care