

Resource Presbyterian Report

For May 18, 2024, Stated Meeting

*See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.*

Isaiah 43:19

It was just about a year ago that I stood before the Presbytery to begin my journey with you as your interim resource presbyter. Now, as I prepare to say, “goodbye,” I look with fondness at the things we have accomplished together and with hope for what is still to come.

When I arrived, the presbytery was just leaning into a new structure. By my review, this was the fourth structural change in the last 15 years. As can be expected with any modification, unexpected omissions arose that required attention. Primary among those requirements were a need to review and update the Presbytery’s standing rules and bylaws. Thanks to the efforts of our former temporary clerk, the Rev. Amy Loving Austin and moderator, the Rev. Garrett Anderson, a framework is now ready for the Presbytery’s review and vote.

Bylaws are important. They tell those both within and outside the organization how we conduct business -- from who is eligible to vote at meetings to roles and responsibilities of committees and staff. Bylaws also help to ensure that we are operating within the constitution of the PCUSA. It is important to bear in mind that when our organizational structure changes, the bylaws must change, too.

Another important consideration for the presbytery is the prospect of a possible merger with Susquehanna Valley. As you are aware, members from Cayuga Syracuse have been in conversations with Utica and Susquehanna Valley on what a collaboration or merger might look like. These conversations are nothing new. Some might say we’ve been talking about this for decades, however, there now seems to be positive momentum on the benefits of working together. As the Isaiah passage illustrates, our calling is to discern what God is doing culturally and contextually within our region today. A merger of presbyteries offers the opportunity to build a new foundation that is both missionally and financially sustainable for years to come. The decision to merge, however, remains in your hands.

The future for our presbytery may seem quite daunting, yet our future is still waiting to be written. Already, we have welcomed a new pastor into our midst with hopes to welcome several more clergy before summer’s end. We are being challenged and stretched to re-examine our beliefs and fears on race and racism; called and claimed to live fully as a Matthew 25 Presbytery. We are the Church, and whether here together or miles apart, we are called to serve.

So, as we say goodbye, I leave you with these words from John O'Donohue:

*We seldom notice how each day is a holy place
Where the eucharist of the ordinary happens
Transforming our broken fragments
Into an eternal continuity that keeps us.*

*Somewhere in us a dignity presides
That is more gracious than the smallness
That fuels us with fear and force,
A dignity that trusts the form a day takes.*

*So at the end of this day, we give thanks
For being betrothed to the unknown
And for the secret work
Through which the mind of the day
And wisdom of the soul become one.*

In Christ's Peace,
Kathy
Rev. Kathleen Dain
Interim Resource Presbyter