

REPORT OF THE STATED CLERK:

Siblings in Christ,

I wanted to offer an update/rationale for some of the changes you will begin to see in the documentation sent for presbytery meetings as we move forward. Please note the following:

1. You will notice that times have been removed from the meeting agenda/docket. No, I am not suggesting that meetings are now endless so breathe. The reason for this is parliamentary procedure. According to our guiding procedure (aka *Robert's Rules*), using specific times can have the effect of limiting flexibility within a meeting because noting time means adhering to that time. So, at any point, a call to order could be offered that might interrupt or prematurely end discussion of important issues. More importantly, the work of the church requires the allowance for Spirit movement; so, it simply makes sense for us to allow higher flexibility in our meeting agendas. The Moderator still keeps things moving, calls the meeting to order at expected times, and adjourns within reasonable timeframes. The Moderator also has a better ability to move us along when times are not etched in stone.
2. The Consent Agenda has changed A LOT. This is another approach to meeting structure that aligns more closely to procedural guidance and helps us act in good order. Previously, the Consent Agenda contained reports from various areas that were a mix of informational items and action items. Moving forward, the reports will be included as attachments to the docket and action items needing affirmation by the presbytery will be in the actual Consent Agenda. This may take some time to get used to and it will result in more attachments. The other reason for this is that reports from committees and commissions and staff don't actually need a vote to be received. They are received by way of your receiving them in the mailing. The minutes will reflect that the reports have been received and filed.
3. Our minutes may begin to change in order to make them an efficient record of actions taken. To date, no huge difference.

There are a few other items to consider as we move forward also:

1. I know that the issue of parity has been in the background in the absence of a parity report at the annual meeting. The truth is that I am still analyzing parity and what that means for us. One of the sacred principles of our system of governance is the idea of fair and equal representation. There is another practical aspect of parity in minister and elder representation and that is the concept of "expected attendance." Parity can align with attendance trends and other concepts that tend to skew representation toward elders or toward ministers. There is also no set standard or formula for parity beyond one minister and one elder per church which requires a deeper dive and more deliberate analysis. Parity looks at all of the members and all of the different ways we pattern our own view of how we are best and most comprehensively represented. This will take time and I would propose that, in the absence of new guidance, we continue to follow the parity currently in force until a new model can be presented at the annual meeting.
2. Covid has changed the way we do almost everything as churches and communities and recent data indicates that this will continue. To that end, our records review process has

Report of the Stated Clerk to the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse

11-14-2020

Page 2 of 2

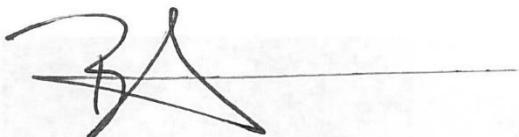
been altered a great deal and will not be started or completed in the time we may be used to. My work is to keep you safe and make sure the process is useful, meaningful, and efficient. As the November deadline to sign up for the “buddy system” comes to a close, I will be sending out more comprehensive information and buddy lists.

3. Please keep statistical reporting on your radar as it is fast approaching.

Friends, most of all I want you to know that as I do the work of Stated Clerk and as I look into all of the above items and more, I am guided by the principle that process, procedure, polity, and order ultimately serve equality and fairness in the deliberative body. Any changes made or proposed ideas are in the service of that fairness and that equity. We have so much good work ahead of us and process should be efficient enough to not get in the way and fair enough to encourage and empower every voice in the presbytery.

It is my honor to serve you.

God's peace be with you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Fitzgerald-Fye".

Rev. Ben Fitzgerald-Fye
Stated Clerk