

PRESBYTERY OF TAMPA BAY, INC.
Stated Meeting
Thursday, August 29, 2019; 9:00 a.m.
Saint Andrew Presbyterian Church, Sun City Center, Florida

MEETING SUMMARY

GATHERING

Call to Order & Prayer

The Moderator, Rev. Loli Ros Reiter, called the August 29, 2019 Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Tampa Bay to order at 9:03 a.m. The meeting served both as a meeting of the ecclesiastical governing body of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and a meeting of the Presbytery of Tampa Bay, Inc., a non-profit corporation of the State of Florida.

The Moderator opened the meeting with prayer by leading the presbytery in a responsive call to order and prayer.

Opening Sentences

The acting stated clerk, Rev. William Wildhack, declared that a quorum was present.

The docketed agenda, titled as “Docket and Order of Worship & Service” was amended by acclamation to move one item to slightly later in the meeting.

Rev. Mark Salmon, Pastor of St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, welcomed the Presbytery, told a bit about the ministry of this church, including Stephen Ministries (www.stephenministries.org) and his excitement about the church’s involvement in Presbyterian Pilgrimage & Cursillo (pilgrimagecursillo.org).

The Moderator then welcomed first-time Commissioners, Corresponding Members, and new minister members, asking them to rise and introduce themselves.

Rev. Libby Shannon, Associate Presbyter for Emerging Ministries, introduced us to the flow of our worship and work today by inviting us to “upend and subvert those assumptions, expectations, comforts, and familiarity” we have about how we worship and work in session, presbytery, and commission meetings. We were challenged to rethink the ways worship and work can inform and contribute to our faith, and how our work both contributes to and is an extension of faith. She called attention to the section headings in the “Docket and Order of Worship & Service” as dividing our work using familiar headers of worship (GATHERING, WORD, EUCHARIST, RESPONDING TO THE WORD, BLESSING AND CHARGE), and called us to take notice that, “as the day progresses we will weave our worship and work together, just as one informs the

other.” Libby ended this introduction to the day by calling us to “join together in being the church faithful; faithful in all we do.”

The Presbytery then voted to adopt the following Consent Agenda:

Reports without Motions or Oral Presentations (receiving for information):

Report of:

Board of Trustees
Commission on Church Vitality (CCV)
Synod Commissioners (Synod Stated Meeting Summary)
Presbyterian Women for the Presbytery of Tampa Bay

Reports with Motions:

Coordinating Team

That the following dates be set for stated meetings of the Presbytery in 2020:

- a. February 20, 2020 (Thursday)**
- b. May 16, 2020 (Saturday)**
- c. August 27, 2020 (Thursday)**
- d. November 12, 2020 (Thursday)**

Acting Stated Clerk

That all requests for excused absences be granted for today’s meeting.

Confession, Pardon, and Passing of the Peace

Reverend Lawrence Rush, Jr., a chaplain at Tampa General and will soon to be part-time pastor at Trinity, St. Petersburg, led the presbytery through a call to confession, unison prayer of confession, assurance of pardon, and passing of the peace followed by a sung response.

Committee on Nominations and Representation

Rev. Vicki ByRoade presented the following for election to the positions and terms noted:

- Marilyn Cummings, CFW-E (0)- Board of Trustees
- Kathy Ables, EFW-E (1) - Commissioner to Synod of South Atlantic
- David Shelor CMW-W (2) - Commissioner to Synod of South Atlantic
- Steve Negley CMW-E 2019(0) Commission on Ministry
- Tim Reinhold EMW-C 2019(0) Commission on Preparation for Ministry

In anticipation of approval of the position description for Stated Clerk, the following were approved for nominated to serve as the search committee per the bylaws of the Presbytery of Tampa Bay:

- John Snapp, EMW-E, FPC Lakeland
- Jim Gregory, EMW-C, Forest Hills PC
- Jeff Guild, CMW-W HR, Trinity Seven Springs
- Nicole Partin Abnour, CFW-C, Palma Ceia PC
- Gloria Aguayo, EFH-C, St John PCC

After an opportunity for nominations from the floor, all nominees listed above were elected.

Commission on Ministry: Part 1

Rev. Laurie Palmer began her report by making the following motion on behalf of the Commission:

That, as requested by Lake Hamilton Presbyterian Church, an Administrative Commission be appointed to walk alongside the session and congregation as they discern their future ministry.

After a brief discussion, the motion was adopted. Following our bylaws, the moderator will appoint members to the administrative commission and their names will be published on the presbytery's website.

WORD: PART I

Commission on Ministry: Part 2

Laurie then introduced Rebecca Anne Bryan to preach and then be examined for ordination and installation as Associate Pastor, Forest Hills Presbyterian Church. Following her sermon, the presbytery proceeded to the examination. After answering several questions from the floor on her faith journey, call, and the constitutional questions asked at ordination, the following motion was made, seconded, and approved:

That the examination be sustained, and that Rebecca Anne Bryan be approved for ordination to ministry of the Word and Sacrament and installation as associate pastor at Forest Hills Presbyterian Church.

Following the vote to approve, members of Forest Hills and Christ Largo (where she served as youth leader), and other supporters surrounded Becky for a time of prayer.

WORD: PART II

Regather with Song

Following a brief recess, the presbytery reconvened with song and the Moderator appointed the following tellers: Sam Picard, Bill Cooley, Kittie Ginn, Denise Lay, Robert Shaw, Philip Hollins.

Greetings from Presbyterian Mission Agency

Sy Hughes, Presbyterian Mission Agency Mission Engagement Advisor, Southeast Region, brought greetings from the board of PMA and executive director Diane Givens Moffatt. Sy thanked the churches of the presbytery for participating in the PC(USA)'s four church-wide Special Offerings:

- One Great Hour of Sharing (supporting Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and Self-Development of People),
- Pentecost Offering (supporting ministries with children-at-risk, youth, and young adults),
- Peace & Global Witness (focusing on ministries of peace and reconciliation around the world), and
- Christmas Joy (supporting leadership development for communities of color, and providing support for Presbyterian church workers in their time of need).

In addition to the churches listed below Sy especially recognized First, Saint Petersburg, for supporting all four offerings for 22 years—noting that 22 years is as far back as PMA has records of individual church participation, so the number of years is likely higher. The other churches Sy acknowledged for supporting all four special offerings in recent years are:

Bayshore, Tampa
First, Auburndale
First, Dunedin
Good Samaritan, Pinellas Park
Hope, Clearwater
Maximo, St. Petersburg
McLeod, Bartow, FL
Northwood, Clearwater

Parsons Memorial, Yankeetown
Peace Memorial, Clearwater
Presbyterian Church of Bloomingdale,
Brandon
Seffner
Temple Terrace
Trinity, Clearwater
Woodlawn, St. Petersburg

With the reminder that “we are saved to serve,” Sy invited and challenged the churches of the presbytery to join the Matthew 25 initiative. He noted that both the 222nd and 223rd General Assemblies (2016 and 2018) challenged us to act boldly and compassionately to serve people who are hungry, oppressed, imprisoned or poor as described in the story of separating the sheep from the goats in Matthew 25:31-46. He invited us to visit the Matthew 25 website (www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/) to learn more and consider the

invitation to commit to becoming a Matthew 25 church, focusing on one or more of these three main challenges:

- Building congregational vitality
- Dismantling structural racism
- Eradicating systemic poverty

Report of the Coach and Coordinator

Patrice Hatley began her comments by saying “the report is sponsored by the Mark of Vital Congregations called ‘*Outward Incarnational Focus*.’” She suggested if *Discipleship Formation* is about learning and living the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus and *Authentic Evangelism* is about intentionally sharing the Good News in relationships, then *Outward Incarnation* is about not limiting where and to whom we share the Good News. Patrice asserted that we go not because we have a strategy for new membership, but because we have a savior who commanded us to be on God’s mission. She said:

We go because God’s saving love in Christ cannot be inwardly contained in our buildings when we are actually living with neighbors who are in need and in a hurting world. The church is meant to be a beacon of Christ’s grace, justice, freedom and love. We follow Jesus into the marginalized of society, the poor among us, the suffering and sick, the stranger, the enemy, the down-trodden and ‘the least of these’. We are the hands and feet of Jesus.

Patrice concluded her remarks with comments about hurricane safety, taking care of each other, and reminding everyone that some of our presbytery’s FLAPDAN volunteers would be calling every church both before and after Hurricane Dorian—as they do for every hurricane that may impact our presbytery—to check in and touch base, and to help coordinate assistance if needed.

The Word Read & Proclaimed

Rev. Jen Daysa, pastor of Good Samaritan Church (UCC/PCUSA), Pinellas Park, read Deuteronomy 31:1-8. Rev. Joyce Lieberman, Synod Executive/Stated Clerk, Synod of South Atlantic, then read from Matthew 28:1-10 and preached a sermon titled “We Lived Our Lives in Fear.” The sermon challenged us to move beyond fear, and to live

EUCHARIST

Offering

Rev. Sally Campbell-Evans, a member of this presbytery and former Co-moderator of the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) Advisory Board who now serves as Pastor of Congregational Care at Hyde Park United Methodist Church in Tampa, described some of the work of PDA worldwide and the Florida PDA Network (FLAPDAN) in Florida. She also brought

greetings from Kathy Broyard, Executive Director of FLAPDAN, who was planning to be with us for today's meeting but had been called away to coordinate preparations for Hurricane Dorian.

A total of \$2165.43 was received in the offering today. It will be delivered as an undesignated gift to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance in grateful appreciation for the work it is doing around the country and world today and that it has done—and will be doing again—in Florida.

Communion

Commissioned Pastor Andy Staley of First Presbyterian Church, Lake Alfred, officiated at the celebration of communion. Others assisting in serving communion included: Rev. Lolimarta Reiter, Rev. Jen Daysa; Rev. Joyce Lieberman, Rev. Sally Campbell-Evans, Commissioned Pastor Andy Staley, Rev. Larry Rush; Ruling Elder and Candidate for Ministry Becky Bryan, and Matt Shick. Communion ware today included not only that of the host church, but also chalices used at the 209th (1997), 217th (2006), and 223rd (2018) meetings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

RESPONDING TO THE WORD: PART I

Introduction to Breakout Groups and Prayer for Mealtime

Libby Shannon introduced the breakout groups based on the Seven Marks of Vital Congregations. She called attention to a two-page handout in the meeting packet taken from the Vital Congregations Toolkit (<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/theology-formation-and-evangelism/vital-congregations/>) for more detailed descriptions of both what the Seven Marks are and what they are not. She also announced that the Presbytery would soon be releasing a series of liturgies based on the Seven Marks for churches to use in exploring them and noted that the liturgy used for today's elements of worship came from those resources. Libby concluded her comments with a prayer for our mealtime which would follow the breakout groups.

Vital Congregations Breakout Groups

Groups gathered in various rooms to discuss the Seven Marks, with each group focusing on one of the marks.

RESPONDING TO THE WORD: PART II

Regather with Song – Fellowship Hall

After lunch, the moderator called the presbytery back to order, this time around the tables at which everyone ate in the Fellowship Hall.

Updates from Covenant Partners

Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center

Matthew Shick, Program Director, brought greetings from Cedarkirk and reported on the summer programs just concluded and plans for the year ahead. (See more about Cedarkirk at <http://cedarkirk.org/>)

Beth-El Farmworker Ministry

Rev. Kathy Dain, Executive Director, brought greetings from Beth-El and updates on its important ministry. (See more about Beth-El at <https://beth-el.org/>)

Prayers of the People

Moderator Loli Reiter invited all present to enter a time of prayer around the tables, using a seven-day cycle of prayer based on the Seven Marks of Vital Congregations as a framework for their prayers.

Items for Information and/or Action

Treasurer's Report

Elder Terry Dennis joined us by phone from his office at Florida Southern---where he was coordinating hurricane preparations---to give his report. Terry called attention to a few things people might miss in looking at the financial reports in the packet:

- **Mission giving:** our mission budget is \$20,918 lower, with YTD receipts lower by \$23,070, but he noted that we are within \$100 of last year's numbers for ***undesignated*** giving, ***with the shortfall all in designated giving*** to congregation-identified missions across the board.
- **Per Capita:** tracking up about 3% compared to the prior year.
 - As of the end of July, 33 of our congregations had paid at least 50% of their share of the per capita budget, with 15 of those at 90% or higher - THANK YOU!!
 - Expenses for per capita are running right on target - with 59% of the year behind us, we have spent 53% of the budget.
- **Balance sheet:** The Presbytery continues to have a strong balance sheet, with over \$7.5 million in total assets.
- **Investment performance:** about 79% of our investments are held by the Texas Presbyterian Foundation, with the balance split between the Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program & the PCUSA Foundation. Since we started with the Texas Foundation in December 2016, our overall performance has been 11.89% compared to a composite index of 7.68% for that period.

- **Process:** In recent years, at this meeting we have presented our proposed per capita rates for the upcoming year to you. This year, we plan to present both the per capita proposal & the per capita budget at our next meeting.
 - This is being done to give us a little more time to lock in to our staffing changes (one motion involving staff on the agenda today), and also to be a little more accurate in our forecast for per capita receipts next year by having a few more months of the current year behind us.
 - A couple of facts to keep in mind
 - Our per capita rate this year is \$21.75 per member. **That has been unchanged since 2017.**
 - In this year we forecast the need to draw \$28,420 from reserves in order to balance the budget - meaning we projected to receive 85% of the per capita allotment. ***If receipts reach 94%, then we have a fully balanced budget*** and will not need to draw from reserves.
 - **Putting it simply - the higher our percentage of actual receipts, the lower we can keep the individual rate in order to pay our expenses** - so thank you in advance for keeping the Presbytery in mind as you prepare your individual budgets.

Coordinating Team (CT)

Rev. Norm Hatter, Chair of the Board of Trustees, presented the report of the Coordinating Team. In addition to the dates for stated meetings in 2020, Norm reported that Rev. Cindy Kohlmann, Co-moderator of the 223rd General Assembly, has agreed to preach and give a keynote presentation at the February meeting and that Rev. Diane Givens Moffett, Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, has agreed to preach and give a keynote presentation at our May meeting.

Norm then moved the following on behalf of the Coordinating Team:

That the position description for Stated Clerk and Manager of Communications be approved.

After a few questions about why it is a 3/4-time rather than full-time position (mostly because of realigning duties for website design and development to outside contractor(s) rather than the stated clerk), the position description was approved, and Norm noted that the search committee elected earlier in the meeting would now use it in searching for a permanent clerk.

Commission on Ministry: Part 3

Laurie Palmer returned to the platform to recognize the upcoming retirements of Mark Salmon and Ramiro Ros-Mitchell. Both were recognized in turn separately with comments from friends, colleagues, and a parishioner or two. We ended this moving time of joyful celebration with the presbytery singing "My Shepherd Will Supply My Need."

Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)

Rev. Deb Belusa, chair of CPM, reported on scholarships granted by CPM using funds from both the Presbytery of Tampa Bay and the Synod of South Atlantic. The offering taken at ordinations and/or installations helps fund those scholarships.

Deb also reported that CPM had approved Eileen Jewell, who was scheduled to be introduced to us as a Candidate for Ministry of Word and Sacrament at this meeting, was unable to attend because of an unexpected medical need in her family.

Items for Information and/or Action (cont.)

Moderator

Rev. Loli Reiter reported on her work as Moderator and her recent sabbatical, lifting up some of what she'd learned in conversations with pastors serving in long-term pastorates and recommending the following books to the presbytery for individual or group study:

- Canoeing the Mountains- Tod Bolsinger
- The Guide to Prayer – Henry Nowen
- Mere Christianity – C.S. Lewis
- Generous Orthodoxy – Brian McClaren
- The One Minute Manager Meets the Monkey – Ken Blanchard
- Liturgy of The Ordinary – Tish Harrison Warren

Acting Stated Clerk

Rev. Bill Wildhack offered his thanks for the efforts of so many to put this meeting together, and to all those who helped us test out an online form for RSVP, meal count, and excused absences. He also noted ongoing progress in reviewing session minutes and gathering annual terms of call for review by COM.

As required by the Book of Order, he also reported on the formation of an investigating committee earlier in the summer and the renunciation of the jurisdiction of the church by a now-former minister of Word and Sacrament as the accused in a disciplinary proceeding. Bill noted that, because jurisdiction ended upon the renunciation during an investigation but before any determination had been made under the Rules of Discipline (D-10.0202) whether formal charges would be filed, there are no charges to report. Because of questions he'd heard or anticipated as the renunciation had been reported to the COM and CT, he also noted that the matter did not include allegations of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct toward any person. He will shortly be sending a letter to moderators and clerks of session notifying them of the renunciation and reminding them of the provisions of G-2.0509 as amended this year that prohibit any congregation

or entity under the jurisdiction of the PC(USA) from employing, “for pay or as a volunteer, a former minister of the Word and Sacrament (teaching elder) who has renounced jurisdiction in the midst of a disciplinary proceeding as the accused.”

Unfinished Business and Thanks

Loli thanked St. Andrew Presbyterian Church for hosting us, especially several of the volunteers who had worked most closely with us directly, and the Presbytery for its work during the meeting. She then invited Libby Shannon to return to the podium to offer some closing reflections on the day.

Closing Reflections

Libby offered some reflections on the day, walking us through how different parts of the day matched up with the Seven Marks of Vital Congregations:

- Ecclesial Health: recognition of ordered ministries formally beginning (ordination) and ending (retirement) and our work as a connectional church.
- Caring Relationships: checking in with one another, lifting each other up in prayer, visiting with colleagues long known and just met.
- Spirit-filled Worship: elements of worship throughout the day, the Word read and proclaimed (twice!), communion, and joyful singing.
- Empowered Servant Leadership: commission members and moderators leading the way, celebration of a candidate for ministry of Word and Sacrament moving to ordination and recognition of an inquirer moving to candidacy, and “a gentle and focused moderator.”
- Authentic Evangelism: sharing of faith stories, celebrating ministries happening across the presbytery, sharing of ideas and creating new ideas.
- Lifelong Discipleship Formation: hearing about the Matthew 25 initiative and the Seven Marks, celebrating another summer of remarkable ministry with children and youth at Cedarkirk and hearing about upcoming opportunities for rest and renewal, and reflecting on and celebrating decades of faithful service by retiring colleagues.
- Outward Incarnational Focus: remarkable generosity toward Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, a powerful call in scripture and sermon to go into God’s world with courage in all we do, an a reminder of how important and life-changing our commitments at Beth-el Farmworker Ministry in Wimauma and the Judeo-Christian Health Clinic hosted at St. John Presbyterian in Tampa can be.

Libby ended her reflection with these reminders: “Friends, the church is vital. This is the work we are doing every day and are called to continue to do in exciting, challenging, and compelling ways.”

BLESSING AND CHARGE

The presbytery voted to adjourn at 2:44 pm.

Moderator Loli Ros Reiter adjourned the meeting with prayer, and dismissed the presbytery with a blessing and charge.

Submitted by,

Rev. William A. Wildhack III, Acting Stated Clerk for the Presbytery of Tampa Bay