



The Rhythm of the Synod

Faith Notes from the Summer Conference Meeting of the Synod of the Trinity
Gathering at the Penn Stater Conference Center
State College, Pennsylvania June 5-7, 2011

"A Church for the Community – A Community for the Church" was the Summer Conference theme this year. Speakers were the Rev. Carol Howard Merritt (minister and author) and the Rev. Phil Tom (Director, U.S. Department of Labor's Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships). They presented compelling ideas and inspiration for becoming an important presence in the community where churches are located. They also challenged listeners to be increasingly spiritually significant for various people groups who represent a diversity of ages, a variety of ethnicities, and a multiplicity of socio-economic backgrounds.

Three worship services featured excellent preaching by the Rev. Dr. Sheldon Sorge (Pastor to Pittsburgh Presbytery); the Rev. Aisha Brooks-Lytle (Mt. Airy Presbytery Church); and the Rev. William Carter (Clarks Summit Presbyterian Church). All three pastors are talented jazz musicians, so worship and other events were especially enjoyed by participants as Dr. Sorge played the piano, the Rev. Brooks-Lytle sang, and the Rev. Carter led the group PresbyBop in a wide range of jazz music.

Worship music and a concert were also provided by the delightful young singer/songwriter Brittany Ann who played the guitar and sang in a folk music style. She provided ethereal melodies, intricate instrumental methods, and astute observations of life in her lyrics.

Elder Cynthia Bolbach, Moderator of the 219th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), spoke in a general session, as well as with people gathered in small groups. Her presence was greatly appreciated and Presbyterians were pleased to interact with her.

Offerings taken during the worship services will be divided equally between the Laughlin Memorial Chapel in the Presbytery of Upper Ohio Valley and the "Not for Sale" Campaign working to stem the tide of slave labor around the world. Both mission projects benefit children and a total of just over \$1,600 was collected help the youngest members of our population have better lives and healthy opportunities to live freely and to be treated fairly.

At the Synod stated business meeting, Commissioners voted to maintain the Synod per capita at \$2.20. Synod Presbyterian Women Moderator Mary McElroy reported that this was her last Synod meeting in this role. The new Moderator will be Susan Mummert. Commissioners also approved a rationale for Synod support of Campus Ministry and Congregational Based Campus Ministries, as well as a list of criteria to be used for evaluating these kinds of ministries.

The 2011 Summer Conference Co-Chairs, Barb Smith, Executive Presbyter (Clergy, Lackawanna) and James Ihlenfeld (Elder, Beaver-Butler), faithfully, gladly and creatively led the planning team that developed this event. Team Members were: 2011 Synod Moderator Nan Best (Elder, Donegal), R.C. Smith (Clergy, Lehigh) and William Carter (Clergy, Lackawanna) along with Synod staff Lesley Shoup and Catherine Gray. Special assistance for worship was provided by Linda Williams and Delinda Donovan (Christian Educators, Pittsburgh).

The next stated business meeting in this 294th year of the Synod of the Trinity will be held Monday – Tuesday, October 10-11, 2011 at the Penn Stater Conference Center.

Submitted Joyfully in the Name of Christ,
The Rev. Lesley Imler Shoup, Associate Executive/Stated Clerk