

The Synod of the Trinity
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Special Called Virtual Meeting

Tuesday, March 8, 2011 at 10:00 AM

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Moderator Nan Best (Elder, Donegal) welcomed Commissioners, Ex Officio Members, Corresponding Members, technical assistants and guests as they logged into the meeting by computer, telephone, or both. She declared the meeting in Session at 10:00 AM and offered this prayer: "Gracious, Loving God, we are joyful for this day and all its possibilities. Thank You for the beauty of creation around us, for the very breath of life itself. It is in that breath that we may be the face of Christ to all who pass our way. We ask for continued healing for Bruce Stevens, our Synod Executive who is recuperating from heart surgery. Indeed, You are our Healer brining wholeness in our weakness. Now lead us in our business. We are grateful for the technology which brings us together. May we be the Body of Christ even as we connect by Internet. In the name of Jesus, Amen."

Tips for Participating in This Virtual Meeting

Moderator Best asked participants to adhere to some basic best-practices for participating in this meeting:

1. Turn off cell phone if not using it to call into this meeting.
2. Turn off nearby radios or televisions.
3. Utilize the "raise hand" feature on the computer. After recognized, "lower hand".
4. If only participating by telephone, mute the phone when listening. Unmute and request to be recognized to ask a question, make a comment, or respond to a vote.
5. Remember that the meeting is being recorded to assist with minutes and training of Moderators for future meetings.

Attendance

Synod Commissioners Present (* indicates second term)

Beaver-Butler

The Rev. John Porter, Class of 2011; Elder James Ihlenfeld, Class of 2012*

Carlisle

The Rev. Dale Williams, Class of 2012*; Elder Debra Hough, Class of 2013

Donegal

The Rev. Bill Netting, Class of 2011*; Elder Nan Best, Class of 2012*

Huntingdon

Elder Kate Sillman, Class of 2013

Kiskiminetas

The Rev. Ann Miner, Class of 2012; Elder David Murphy, Class of 2011*

Lackawanna

Elder Margo Tomlinson, Class of 2011

Lake Erie

The Rev. Mary Kathryn Crom, Class of 2011; Elder Audrey Beckes, Class of 2012*

Lehigh

The Rev. Barty Abdelnour, Class of 2011; Elder Regina Olson-Lash, Class of 2012*

Northumberland

The Rev. Philip Sanders, Class of 2013; No Elder Commissioner

Philadelphia

The Rev. Barbara Chaapel, Class of 2012; Elder Priscilla Peters, Class of 2011

Pittsburgh

The Rev. Douglas Portz, Class of 2013

Redstone

The Rev. Neal Galley, Class of 2013*; Elder Susan Nesti, Class of 2011

Shenango

The Rev. Robert Dayton, Class of 2013*; Elder Ella Lee, Class of 2011

Upper Ohio Valley

Elder William Alexander, Class of 2012

Washington

The Rev. Noah McIntee, Class of 2013; Elder David Leslie, Class of 2013

West Virginia

The Rev. Jim Robinson, Class of 2012; Elder Mavis Grant-Lilley, Class of 2013*

At-Large Racial/Ethnic Commissioners Present

Carlisle – Elder Seong Hwan Kim, Class of 2011*

Huntingdon – The Rev. Stanley Bhasker, Class of 2013*

Philadelphia – Elder Barbara Adams Smelter, Class of 2011

Pittsburgh – Elder Madelyn Formley, Class of 2011*

Synod Commissioners Excused

Lackawanna – The Rev. William Samford, Class of Class of 2011*

Pittsburgh – Elder G. Ann Strong, Class of 2012*

Upper Ohio Valley – The Rev. Robert Nagy, Class of 2013

Synod Commissioners Absent

Huntingdon - The Rev. Bob Dunkleberger, Class of 2011

At-Large Racial/Ethnic Commissioners Absent

Donegal – The Rev. Gemechisa Guja, Class of 2012

Lehigh – The Rev. Mihee Kim-Kort, Class of 2011

Ex Officio Members of Synod Present

Presbytery Executives

Beaver-Butler – Alan Adams

Donegal – Erin Cox-Holmes

Huntingdon – Joy Kaufmann

Kiskiminetas – Wayne Yost

Lackawanna – Barbara Smith

Lake Erie – David Oyler

Northumberland – William Knudsen

Shenango – David Dawson

Upper Ohio Valley – Royce Browder

Washington – Charles Perrine

Committee Chairpersons

Grants and Scholarships – John Dickey, Clergy, Beaver-Butler
Nominating – Janet Kephart, Elder, Huntingdon
Presbyterian Women – Mary McElroy, Elder, Upper Ohio Valley
Self Development of People – Eugene Brown, Elder, Philadelphia

Synod Staff

Lesley Shoup, Associate Executive and Stated Clerk, Clergy, Washington
Susan Faye Wonderland, Associate Executive, Clergy, Lackawanna
Chantal Atnip, Treasurer, Carlisle
Marcia Humer, Administrative Assistant

Young Adult Advisory Delegates (YAADs)

None

Corresponding Members

Steve Cureton, Synod Communications Work Group, Clergy, Northumberland
Gregg Hartung, Synod Communications Work Group, Elder, Beaver-Butler
Jean Kennedy, 2005 Synod Moderator, Elder, Pittsburgh
Gary Lyon, 2007 Synod Moderator, Clergy, Kiskiminetas
William Reinhold, Associate Executive, Clergy, Philadelphia
Suzi Souder, Associate for Office Management, Elder, Carlisle
Mary Speedy, 2008-2009 Synod Moderator, Elder, Carlisle
Buddy Ward, Clergy, Lake Erie

Technical Assistants for This Meeting

Beaver-Butler - None
Carlisle - Suzi Souder
Donegal – Erin Cox-Holmes
Huntingdon – Susan Ferguson
Kiskiminetas – Wayne Yost
Lackawanna – Barbara Smith
Lake Erie – Buddy Ward
Lehigh – Robin Matthias
Northumberland – Steve Cureton
Philadelphia – William Reinhold
Pittsburgh – Roy Burford, Gregg Hartung
Redstone – None
Shenango – Autumn Covert, Debbie Forsberg
Upper Ohio Valley – Cathy Cipriani
Washington – Noah McIntee
West Virginia – Sheri Walker

Quorum

A quorum of Synod Commissioners according to the requirements of the *Book of Order* (G-12.0202: “A quorum shall be determined by the Synod. The quorum shall include an equal number of Elders and Ministers, representing at least three Presbyteries or one-third of its Presbyteries, whichever is larger.”) and the Synod Standing Rules (Standing Rule 10.31:

"A quorum of the Synod shall be twelve commissioners, at least six of whom shall be Elders and at least six of whom shall be Ministers representing at least six Presbyteries.") was met. The Synod could conduct business under the requirements of the Constitution. This was the first special called meeting of the Synod of the Trinity in its 294th year.

As there were no questions or objections, the Moderator declared the quorum was met and the Synod Commissioners could go forward with the meeting.

Docket (Attachment A)

The Associate Executive/Stated Clerk reported that the docket was on the left hand part of the computer screen – on the same page where the names of the participants was listed. It was available on the website prior to the meeting and was also sent out by regular mail.

As there were no questions or objections, the Moderator declared the docket approved.

Synod Nominating Committee

Chairperson Janet Kephart presented the name of the Rev. Hendrik Bossers to serve in the Class of 2012, first term, on the Self Development of People committee. The Rev. Bossers was elected by the Presbytery of Pittsburgh as a nominee to this position. Synod Nominating Committee members also approved of this nomination at their last meeting, so this motion does not need a second.

Moderator Best invited anyone who wished to nominate someone else for this position to indicate so by using the "raise your hand" feature on the computer or by unmuting the telephone and asking to be recognized.

Seeing no indication of any other nominations, the Moderator asked the Commissioners if they were in favor of closing the nominations and electing Hendrik Bossers to serve on Synod's Self Development of People committee.

Participants were invited to vote by voice when speakers and telephones were unmuted.

The motion was approved.

Finance and Budget Committee Report (Attachment B)

The Moderator called on Synod Treasurer Chantal Atnip to give this report from the Finance and Budget Committee.

The Finance and Budget Committee requests that the Commissioners renew the yearly commitment (since October 2007) to assist Presbyteries involved in court cases associated with property/separation issues. The details are on the Attachment. There is no second needed since this comes from a committee.

The motion was approved.

Middle Governing Bodies (MGB) Commission of the General Assembly

The Moderator called on Associate Executive/Stated Clerk Lesley Shoup to update the Commissioners on the Synod's interaction with the Middle Governing Bodies Commission that was formed by the last General Assembly in Minneapolis, Minnesota. On May 4, a variety of persons

from around the Synod (with at least one person from each Presbytery), will meet with two people who sit on the MGB Commission. The information gathered at this event will go directly back to the MGB Commission. On May 11, a member of the MGB Commission will have a conversation with the Presbytery Stated Clerks of this Synod in the afternoon and another conversation with the Presbytery Executive Presbyters in the evening. In addition, a member of the MGB Commission met with the Synod Executive, Associate Executive, Treasurer, and the Associate Executive/Stated Clerk to help us learn more about what is happening with this Commission.

Synod Committee on Representation (COR) (Attachment C)

The Moderator called upon former Moderator and Corresponding Member Elder Mary Speedy (Carlisle) to make a motion in order to put a topic on the floor for discussion.

I make a motion that the Commissioners dissolve our current Committee on Representation and charge the Synod Nominating Committee with seeking diversity when seeking candidates for Synod positions.

There was a second for this motion.

A lively discussion ensued lifting up various concerns: the historical nature of the Committee on Representation in our denomination and other denominations; the Book of Order requirements to have a Committee on Representation, and to not merge its work with any other committee; the difficulty of the work for the Synod Committee on Representation; the reality that some Committees on Representation are not doing their work; the opportunity to let others know throughout the denomination that there should be a revision of Committee on Representation's work; the need for more training and education about the value and importance of the Committee on Representation; the lack of desire to have the Synod of Trinity stand in non-compliance with the Book of Order.

There was a motion to amend the main motion:

The Commissioners should direct the Nominating Committee to seek appropriate representation when searching for candidates for Synod committees based on current demographics for our overall membership within the Synod. (The maker of the amendment wanted it clear that this is not a motion to change the Committee on Representation or to disregard the Book of Order. This is asking for specific direction for the Nominating Committee.)

There was a second for this amendment.

There was a motion to table the main motion and the amendment.

There was a second (and no discussion due to Robert's Rules of Order).

This was approved by the Synod Commissioners.

(Note from Associate Executive/Stated Clerk: If it is the will of the majority to take this motion and amendment from the table at another meeting of the Synod, this can be done at any time. Please remember that no other motions on the same subject are in order that would either conflict with, or present substantially, the same question as the motion that is on the table. To consider another motion on the same subject, it is necessary first to take the question from the table and then to move the new proposal as a substitute, or to make whatever other motion is appropriate to the case.)

End of the Virtual Meeting

Moderator Best asked if there was a motion to end this meeting.

There was a motion, with support, to end the meeting.

The Moderator declared that unless there was an objection, the meeting would end.

Information about Synod Executive

The home address for the Rev. Dr. Bruce G. Stevens was placed on the computer screen for people who wished to send him a card as he recuperates from heart surgery.

Next Synod Meeting

The next regular stated meeting of the Synod will be on Tuesday, June 7, at 1:30 PM at the Penn Stater Conference Center in State College, Pennsylvania.

Closing Prayer

Moderator Nan Best closed the meeting with this prayer: "O Holy God, we have come together this day to accomplish some actions as a Synod. We have felt Your presence in this new way of connecting – scattered throughout our Presbyteries. You have created us with minds to develop amazing inventions. Help us to be good stewards of all the possibilities that come to us. Let us be Your Church together over all time and space – whenever and however we gather. In Christ's Name we pray, Amen."

Respectfully Submitted By,

The Rev. Lesley Imler Shoup
Associate Executive and Stated Clerk

Marcia Humer
Administrative Assistant and Journal Clerk

The Synod of the Trinity Special Called Virtual Meeting
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Tuesday, March 8, 2011
10:00 AM
Docket Dated: February 28, 2011

Please begin to get into the meeting between 9:30 AM and 10:00 AM

10:00 AM Call to Order Opening Prayer and Instructions for participation in the
Special Called Virtual Synod Meeting – Moderator Nan Best

10:10 Quorum Statement and Presentation of Docket (Attachment A)

10:12 Nominating Committee Report
The Rev. Hendrik Bossers, Clergy, Pittsburgh, Synod Self
Development of People, Class of 2012, First Term

10:15 Finance and Budget Committee Report
Request to renew financial support for legal process (Attachment B)

10:25 Update on PCUSA Middle Governing Body Commission

10:30 Discussion about Synod Committee on Representation (Attachment C)

11:00 AM Closing Prayer

2011 MEETING SCHEDULE

Synod Summer Conference - June 5-6-7, 2011 (Sunday PM – Tuesday)
Stated Business Meeting on Tuesday, June 7, 2011 from 1:30-4:00 PM
Penn Stater Conference Center, State College, Pennsylvania

October 10-11 (Monday 1:30 PM – Tuesday noon) Synod Stated Business Meeting
Penn Stater Conference Center, State College, Pennsylvania

2012 MEETING SCHEDULE

General Assembly Meeting in the Presbytery of Pittsburgh - June 30 – July 7, 2012

2012 October Synod Stated Business Meeting to be announced

**The Synod of the Trinity
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
March 8, 2011
Special Virtual Meeting**

MOTION REGARDING FINANCIAL LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR PRESBYTERIES

Authorize the Finance and Budget Committee, under the advice and counsel of the Synod's Officers and legal representative, to approve the use of up to 5.0% (five percent) of the Synod's accessible capital assets calculated as of September 30, 2010, for assistance to Presbyteries requesting financial help with legal fees associated with property/separation issues.

The Synod Finance and Budget Committee, in consultation with the Synod Officers and Synod legal representation, is charged with determining how much of the total available amount may be provided to each individual requesting Presbytery, for approving or denying requests, and arranging a plan for recovery of funds, if possible.

Prior to approval of any allocation of funds, the Presbytery must present to the Finance and Budget Committee, the Synod Officers and Synod legal representative, a description of the legal action, the Presbytery's financial status causing the request for financial help with legal fees, its legal action strategy, and any other information the Finance and Budget Committee, Synod Officers, and Synod legal representative believe appropriate and necessary to make an informed decision.

Following approval of a request, the Synod's legal representative, in conjunction with the Synod's Officers, will monitor the progress of each case to assure the funds are being wisely and appropriately used.

Payment arrangements for the release of funds will be made through the Synod Treasurer and will be based on the individual situation (i.e. advancement of funds or reimbursement).

Approval of this authorization is requested for now through October 31, 2012. Before this financial assistance to Presbyteries for legal fee assistance may continue, it must be reconsidered by the Synod Commissioners at the 2012 October Synod Business Meeting.

The Synod of the Trinity, December 1, 2010
The Future of Committee on Representation in this Synod
Discussion Starter for Special Internet Synod Meeting on March 8, 2011
Lesley Imler Shoup, Associate Executive/Stated Clerk

Our Synod COR

At the last meeting of the Synod COR, I suggested that there is not a need for a Synod COR. The "New Initiatives" program that the Synod Commissioners just approved in October will free up potential funding for presbyteries that might wish to be involved in ethnic church ministry and multi-cultural congregations, as well as leadership development in these areas. I also pointed out that SDOP (Self Development of People) is doing a lot of good outreach in ethnic and minority areas. With the eventual restructuring of Synod in a comprehensive way, I believe it is good to begin finding creative ways to help presbyteries and congregations to engage in new and different kinds of outreach now, while we have the opportunity, and while we have a source of potential funding. Over the past six years, the Synod COR has set up meetings and attendance has been sporadic. Other meetings and conference calls have been cancelled or rescheduled because of what appears to be a lack of interest and commitment to a Synod COR.

Some Background

The Synod has consistently had six Racial Ethnic At-large Commissioners serving for three year terms, and some have served the longest possible time of six years. Most of these persons get to at least one Synod Business Meeting each year. Some Commissioners are racial ethnic and they are either the Clergy Commissioner or the Elder Commissioner from a Presbytery. Overall, there remains little progress in the hiring of minorities in churches, presbyteries and synods throughout the denomination.

Why Seek Change?

My interest is not only in dealing with the struggle of getting presbyteries to send people to serve on the Synod COR. I think it is exercising good financial stewardship and honoring time commitments if we can find other ways to address our interest in diversity.

A Possible Proposal

I propose that the Commissioners dissolve our current COR and charge the Synod Nominating Committee with seeking diversity when searching for candidates for Synod committees. The Commissioners need to understand that this is a variance from the *Book of Order* (new or old) and if the Commissioners agree to begin a new direction for addressing diversity, I would need to be directed to write a letter to the General Assembly Stated Clerk describing this action.