

Highlights of 2015 Winter Stated Presbytery Meeting

February 7, 2015

The Presbytery of St. Augustine

By: Alexandra (Sandra) Hedrick, Stated Clerk

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.” Ephesians 4:4-6

The Presbytery of St. Augustine held its Winter Stated Meeting on Saturday, February 7, 2015, at the Community Presbyterian Church in Atlantic Beach, Florida. Just few blocks from the sparkling blue ocean, we greeted one another, registered, and found our seats in the fellowship hall for the opening of the meeting. Ruling Elder Moderator Cynthia Graham (Lakewood) called the meeting to order with prayer at 9:00 a.m., and Peyton Hopkins (Associate Pastor at the Community church) offered a poetic welcome. Our attendance - including visitors and corresponding members - was approximately 175.

Morning worship was in a contemporary style, and our musicians included an enthusiastic children's choir. After reading Leviticus 19:33-34, Moderator Graham brought the morning message (“Radical Hospitality”). She shared many stories of migration from scripture and invited us to consider the issues of immigration with the foundation of God's love for people who migrate.

Following the morning message, we remembered by name and gave thanks to God for the teaching and ruling elders of our presbytery who died during 2014. More than \$1,100 was received in the morning offering, which was designated for the Jamaica Ecumenical Mutual Mission. During our joyful time in worship, we celebrated the Lord's Supper and followed the benediction into an intentional time of fellowship with a variety of snacks and beverages.

After fellowship, we gathered in the church's historic sanctuary for the rest of the meeting. During the meeting, we:

- Received and welcomed five new teaching elders into our presbytery: George Head (Palatka First); Charles Freeman (Grace in Gainesville); Holly Medearis (at-large); Bill Russell (honorably retired); and Craig Davies (honorably retired and temporary supply at Arlington)
- Approved our new Inquirers for ministry: James Kendrick (Palms), Scott Stuart (Gainesville First), and Page Walwik (Palatka First)
- Approved the retirement of Sam McCoy and shared memories and a prayer of thanksgiving for the lives of SherylLynn Frazier (1968-2014) and Oscar Floyd Hooker (1922-2014)

- Admitted to record the transfer of members Laura Joost-Kuhn to Santa Fe Presbytery and Tara Thompson to Tampa Bay Presbytery
- Approved the recommendations of the Administrative Commission for the First Presbyterian Church of Jacksonville to dismiss the congregation to ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians (ECO) and to transfer Robert Morris's presbytery membership to ECO
- Approved the transfer of Jesse Alexander (at-large member) to ECO
- Considered and approved each of the proposed amendments to our Book of Order, with a counted vote of 69-35-1 for Amendment 14-F (the section on marriage in the Directory for Worship)
- Received an update on the work of transition within the presbytery (including the upcoming "holy listening" visits) and re-designated the work and the name of the transition team as "Discernment and Design"
- Approved the 2015 operating budget (will be posted on our website soon on the Administration and Finance Committee page)
- Approved the sale of the property on Normandy Blvd. in Jacksonville that was previously occupied by the Nueva Esperanza congregation, which is now sharing the facilities at the Kirkwood church
- Approved the appointment of an administrative commission to work with the Northside Presbyterian Church (Jacksonville) regarding its session's request for a proposed closing of that church
- Elected officers, committee and commission members, including our new Moderator-in-Nomination, the Rev. Jeff Welch (Dunnellon)
- Received oral reports concerning Presbyterian Women (Patti Phillips, PW Moderator - Branford); the Mutual Mission Committee (Sheldon Steen - Jasper); Montgomery Presbyterian Conference Center (Jim Montgomery, Operating Board Moderator - South Jacksonville - and Terry Patterson, Executive Director); the College Conference at Montreat and plans for Presbytery Enrichment (Emily Proctor - Riverside)
- Received additional reports from the stated clerk, committees and commissions of the presbytery and approved proposed actions.

The Community church served us a delicious lunch of a green salad, chicken salad on croissant rolls, chips, and cookies. Old and new friends enjoyed table fellowship as the perfect break during a meeting that was (a bit) longer than usual! At the end of the meeting, we installed, charged and prayed for our new Presbytery Moderator, the Rev. Cynthia Montgomery, who will lead the presbytery in that role until the 2016 Winter Meeting. Ruling Elder Ralph Moulder (Starke First) is now our Moderator Elect, as Cynthia Graham transitions to Presbytery Council Moderator. Transitional Executive Presbyter Steve Benz gave his report just before the close of the meeting, highlighting our need for community and the upcoming "holy listening" training and visits. The meeting was closed with prayer at approximately 3:40 p.m.

The 2015 Spring Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of St. Augustine will be held at Montgomery Presbyterian Conference Center near Starke, Florida, on May 5, 2015, at 9:00 a.m.

Invitation to Host: We are looking for a church or group of churches to host the Presbytery's 2016 Winter Stated Meeting on Saturday, February 6. The meeting space needs to accommodate 140-190 attendees for welcoming refreshments, worship, business meeting, lunch, and parking. Space is also needed for several table displays. If you have questions or would like to volunteer your church (or a partnership of churches in your area), please contact the Stated Clerk, Sandra Hedrick (cell: 904-612-9766) or the Transitional Executive Presbyter, Steve Benz (904-733-8277 x125) by March 17, 2015.

Questions? It will be my pleasure to answer any questions you may have about these brief highlights or to provide you or your congregation/session with more information. I can be reached at sandra@staugpres.org or on my cell phone: (904) 612-9766. Also, you are welcome to contact our Transitional Executive Presbyter, Steve Benz, at steve@staugpres.org and (904) 733-8277 x. 125 or cell phone: (904) 608-0948.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rev. Alexandra (Sandra) Hedrick
Stated Clerk - Presbytery of St. Augustine

Prepared: February 9, 2015