



WINTER STATED MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Highlands United Presbyterian Church
By: Alexandra (Sandra) Hedrick, Presbytery Stated Clerk
February 9, 2019



*The mission of the Presbytery of St. Augustine is to support our faith community,
so that together we may witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

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[Invitation to Host 2020 Winter Stated Meeting](#)

During a meeting that many participants called "uplifting" and "spiritual," the Presbytery of St. Augustine came together as a family to worship, enjoy fellowship, and make decisions. The pastor and members of Highlands United Presbyterian Church were amazing hosts of our 2019 Winter Stated Meeting! The day was cool, windy and cloudy (mid-60s), but not rainy. There were about 130 in attendance, including minister members, commissioners, and many guests.

Moderator Mary Mickel (Woodlawn) and Pastor David Lee of the host church opened the meeting with prayer and warm greetings. After new commissioner and guest introductions, all of the items in the consent agenda were approved.



Worship centered on God's word in Isaiah 6:1-8 and Luke 5:1-11. In the sermon message "Go Fish," David Lee encouraged the presbytery and its people to cast again and again into the deep waters around us. As he calls us to follow, Jesus says, "don't be afraid... It's scary. But we've got to go deep. I know you're weary. I know you need rest. That's why I'm here. Come on. Let's go!" The message was followed by our time together at the Lord's Table, with David Lee and Jo Anne Dyson (Fort King) officiating.

During the service, we also remembered by name our teaching and ruling elders who passed away in 2018 and gave gratitude for their lives and service. In addition to commissioning the travelers going on the Mutual Mission Team's trip to Cuba, we collected \$1,122 in the offering for Mutual Mission. A great highlight of our time of worship was the leadership of past and present members of the Highlands Presbyterian Youth Connection (PYC).



During our meeting, eight churches were called on to share highlights of their mission and ministry, inspiring others to share at future meetings. We also welcomed three ministers new to the presbytery: Jo Anne Dyson (Fort King), Joy Laughridge (Lakewood), and Robert Mills (San Mateo). We remembered the life of the Rev. Benjamin Blumel who died in Ocala on the first of January. We were excited to meet Kevin Wright (Woodlawn), who has been received as a Candidate for Ministry under our care, and to hear some of his wonderful call story. Several members of the Woodlawn congregation came to show their support (pictured).



The Nominating and Representation Team presented a slate of nominees for election to serve as presbytery officers, commissioners, and team members. Among those elected are Chuck Atkins (Lakewood), who will continue to serve as Treasurer, and Edd Norris (Silver Springs Shores), our new Moderator-Elect.

During the Coordinating Council report, we approved the 2019 Operating Budget after a lively presentation about per capita and unified mission giving. The year 2019 was designated as a year with youth and young adults. The Coordinating Council is actively working on an initiative to add a youth-focused group to the formal structure of our presbytery in the near future.

As part of our presbytery-wide ministry and mission, we approved creating the "Gainesville Ministry Center" at the location most recently occupied by the Highlands Presbyterian Church in Gainesville, Florida. This center will specifically include the Gainesville Counseling Center (Larry Green, Director) as a focus and will also include current and future non-profit tenants including the church tenant known as Enduring Faith Ministries. In the next few months, this ministry will become a reality through the planning and work of the Trustees of the Presbytery of St. Augustine, the Coordinating Council, the Relationship Coordination Committee, the lead tenant, and many others.

Montgomery Presbyterian Conference Center (MPCC) was another focus of the meeting. Director Lexi Green, Development Director Maurie Dugger, and Board Members Tommy Lane and Jason Salvagni gave an update of progress, plans, and new program offerings and ways to show financial support. This year Montgomery Day will be held on March 10. We elected MPCC corporate officers and approved changes to the corporate documents so that the current members of the Executive Operating Board could be elected as the Trustees of the MPCC corporation. Tommy Lane (CRE - McIntosh) was elected President. Presbytery Manual of Operations changes were made to align with the changes in the corporate documents. We also took the following financial actions (a) ratified past approval to refinance the MPCC debt (up to \$750,000), including encumbering the property with a mortgage; and (b) authorized the presbytery to grant a "bridge loan" to MPCC to pay its ordinary business expenses, to be paid back within 90 days of the date of the funding of the bank loan, in an amount not to exceed \$50,000.



We heard reports from Gayle Bone (Faith), Moderator of Presbyterian Women, and Bob Bell (First Perry), Co-Chair of the Mutual Mission Team. We also welcomed Clare Lewis from the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program (PILP), a nonprofit corporation of PC(USA) created to provide low-cost loans to congregations, governing bodies, and related entities of PC(USA), and Cindy Howell from The Insurance Board, which focuses on providing insurance for churches and church-related entities.

The presbytery voted to approve all but one of the constitutional amendments forwarded to the presbyteries by the General Assembly. The amendment not approved was 18-C,

which would have added language to the Book of Order to prohibit the endorsement of candidates for elected office. However, that same prohibition is already contained in existing federal law.



The meeting concluded with the installation of our new Moderator, Pastor Diane Wilson of First Starke. Mary Mickel will lead the Coordinating Council as its chair through the 2020 Winter Stated Meeting.

Highlands United served us a delicious lunch that included smoked chicken with barbecue sauce, baked beans, macaroni and cheese, coleslaw, corn muffins, and cookie centerpieces. Everything was homemade!

The Spring Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of St. Augustine will take place at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, May 7, 2019, at Montgomery Presbyterian Conference Center.

Invitation to Host: We are looking for a church to host the 2020 Winter Stated Meeting on Saturday, February 1. The meeting space needs to accommodate 140-190 attendees for parking, welcoming refreshments, worship, business meeting, and lunch. The church will need to provide child care on site. Space is also needed for several table displays. If you have questions or would like to volunteer your church, please contact Stated Clerk Sandra Hedrick (cell: 904-612-9766) **no later than April 1, 2019.**

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