

Highlights of 2016 Winter Stated Presbytery Meeting
By: Alexandra (Sandra) Hedrick, Presbytery Stated Clerk
February 6, 2015

“I loved learning about the Jamaica Mutual Mission. I feel much better informed about where our 2-Cents-a-Meal offering goes!” This is what one of our newer teaching elder members said just after attending our Winter Stated Meeting on February 6, 2016, at First Presbyterian Church of Gainesville. A mission focus at the meeting was the Jamaica Ecumenical Mutual Mission (JEMM), which includes dental, medical and housing ministries as well as youth and adult exchanges. The morning offering for JEMM was \$1,663.

The host church welcomed about 115 teaching and ruling elder commissioners and 35 visitors, with volunteers offering warm hospitality in everything from parking and registration to a delicious meal and snacks. The morning message - “Soul Care” (Mark 8:34-38) - was brought by the Rev. Dr. Bob Shettler of the host church. He spoke of “soul care” in two aspects - first, the saving of our soul (our redemption), and second, “the restoration of the soul through spiritual growth that is transformative in daily living.” Bob suggested that all people engaged in ministry remember these ways that God has provided to care for our souls: silence, Sabbath, scripture, and time with the Shepherd. “The best things we can offer to ourselves, our families, our church is our own cared-for and transformed soul. To God be the glory!”

Following the message, we remembered by name and gave thanks to God for the teaching and ruling elders of our presbytery who died during 2015. We shared the Lord’s Supper and followed the worship service with a time of greeting and fellowship.

Highlights of the presentations and actions during the meeting led by our Moderator Cynthia Montgomery included:

- We welcomed four new teaching elders into our presbytery: Ruth Elswood (Chaplain - Palm Garden Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center); Bruce Hedgepeth (South Jacksonville); Sid McCollum (Honorably Retired); and Cliff Hayes (Honorably Retired). We also heard from Joe Albright (recently installed at our Geneva church) and a representative of Geneva’s pastor nominating committee.
- We approved the retirement of Dudley Weaver (Memorial) as of February 29, 2016.
- We elected officers and committee members, including our new moderator-in-nomination, Mary Mickel (Woodlawn), and our new corporate president, Murray Beard (Palms).
- We approved the 2016 operating budget ([click here to view](#)).
- We voted to designate the net proceeds of the sale of the church property on Normandy Boulevard to support the presbytery’s Hispanic ministry in Northeast Florida.
- We approved an amendment to the Manual of Operations that defines the structure of the presbytery’s Representation Committee. The first election of committee members should take place at the Spring Stated Meeting.

- We approved an overture from teaching elder Jim Black (St. Andrews) that speaks out against divisive rhetoric and behavior and calls us to love and honor our neighbor in our words and our deeds (click here to view).
- The Administrative Commission (AC) for the Korean Presbyterian Church of Jacksonville gave its final report concerning the congregation's restoration to health and highlighted the blessing of the relationships developed in the last three years of work together. The AC was dismissed with gratitude. In addition, we approved several recommendations by the AC for ways that we can support and nurture the congregation in the future.
- The Steering Planning Committee of our Discernment and Design Team provided an update of its efforts. The planned reporting date for the initial results of its work is the 2016 Spring Stated Meeting.
- On behalf of the St. Augustine Presbytery Disaster Assistance Commission, Lynette Kennison (Hodges Boulevard) made a presentation about disaster preparedness training that she can provide for our congregations. She can be contacted at 904-982-7060 (cell) or by email: lkennis@ju.edu.
- Reports were made on behalf of Presbyterian Women (Carol Graff, PW Moderator - Hodges Boulevard); the Mutual Mission Committee (Richard Kirk - First Ocala and others); Montgomery Presbyterian Conference Center (Jim Montgomery, Operating Board Moderator - South Jacksonville - and Terry Patterson, Executive Director); and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program (Clare Lewis).

The First Gainesville church served a delicious lunch of smoked pulled pork sandwiches, coleslaw, macaroni and cheese, and apple pie. As the meeting closed, we installed, charged and prayed for our new Presbytery Moderator, ruling elder Ralph Moulder (Starke First), who will serve as moderator through our 2017 Winter Stated Meeting. Our moderator-elect is now teaching elder Jeff Welch (Dunnellon).

The 2016 Spring Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of St. Augustine will be held at Montgomery Presbyterian Conference Center near Starke, Florida, on May 3, 2016, at 9:00 a.m. Click here for the list of churches that are invited to send one additional commissioner beginning with the 2016 Spring Stated Meeting.

Invitation to Host: We are looking for a church or group of churches to host the 2017 Winter Stated Meeting on Saturday, February 4. The meeting space needs to accommodate 140-190 attendees for parking, welcoming refreshments, worship, business meeting, and lunch. The church's ability to provide child care on site will be a factor when considering the proposal. 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 Stated Clerk Sandra Hedrick (cell: 904-612-9766) or Transitional Executive Presbyter Steve Benz (904-733-8277 x125) by March 16, 2016.

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