

Highlights of 2018 Fall Stated Presbytery Meeting
Montgomery Presbyterian Conference Center
By: Alexandra (Sandra) Hedrick, Presbytery Stated Clerk
October 2, 2018

*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.*

The Presbytery of St. Augustine met on October 2, 2018 at Montgomery Presbyterian Conference Center (MPCC). About 120 persons attended. The temperature was in the mid-80s, and the rain mostly held off until after we adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Morning Worship

Morning worship centered around part of the Elisha narrative in 2 Kings 6:8-23. The message was entitled “*Visions of Shalom*” and focused on seeing the power of God as both a mystic presence and a transforming experience which exhibits the kingdom of God heaven to the world. After the sermon, we met at the Lord’s Table, where Rhonda Link-Cummings and Chris Lieberman officiated with communion being served by intinction. Breads from around the world were presented as a symbol of Christ’s love for all people and our unity with one another. The offering taken for the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Program was \$846.00.

Area Gatherings

After worship, we divided into four smaller groups of ministers and commissioners for a half-hour of sharing and encouragement. The groups were led by area relationship coordinators Rhonda Link-Cummings, Joe Rigsby, and Earle Sickels. Chris Lieberman led a fourth group that makes up a geographic region that is currently without an assigned coordinator.

New Ministers Welcomed

We welcomed new minister members Natasha Sudderth and Jake Young. Natasha was installed as Associate Pastor of First Ocala on June 24. Jake, the new Pastor of St. Giles, will be installed on Sunday, October 28, at 4:00 (all are welcome to attend).

New Candidate for Ministry

We recognized and encouraged Erin Horne, who was approved as a new Candidate for Ministry under our care as of May 15, 2018. Erin is a deacon at our St. Johns church.

Special Resolutions

Carol DiGiusto and Laurie Furr-Vancini shared a touching memorial to Jack Swann, a retired member of our presbytery. Jessi Higginbotham gave thanks for the life and service of Peyton Hopkins. Both of these beloved brothers died suddenly this summer and will be greatly missed.

Montgomery Presbyterian Conference Center

Director Lexi Green and Executive Board Members Tommy Lane and Jason Salvagni gave a detailed report and answered questions about the action steps taken following the August 25, 2018 special called presbytery meeting. Upon the recommendation of the Coordinating Council, the presbytery took the additional step of voting to pay off MPCC’s mortgage debt of approximately

\$630,000 and any amounts that are carried as loans to MPCC on the presbytery's books. This was described by Council Chair Jeff Welch as making financial sense and "celebrating a jubilee year" so that MPCC "can truly start with a clean financial slate" and a jubilee from "blame-blame." The presbytery also approved the recommendation to give its financial guaranty for up to \$775,000 in additional loans that MPCC may take out to achieve the goals of the adopted overture including taking care of deferred maintenance and for operating capital.

Commissioned Ruling Elders and Validated Ministries

We recognized and thanked all ministers who serve in ministries outside of a congregation. We also recognized our commissioned ruling elders who serve six of our congregations, including Walter Laseter who has just been commissioned to serve our Weirsdale church.

Manual and Policy Updates

Three changes have been made to our presbytery policies. First, the minimum effective salary for full-time installed pastors has been raised from \$43,000 to \$43,860 (a 2 percent increase). Second, we will provide counseling support for inquirers and candidates for ministry under our care similar to that provided for minister members. Finally, we have given the Member Preparation and Call Commission the authority to approve Board of Pensions (BOP) grants and matching grants for members of the presbytery, such as seminary debt assistance, emergency grants, and special need grants.

223rd General Assembly Report

Joe Rigsby, who led our delegation to the General Assembly, introduced our commissioners and advisory delegates and thanked them for their service. Each had the opportunity to share a meaningful experience or impression from the event.

Mutual Mission Update

Bob Bell gave an update on past trips and upcoming travel plans and the ways that we can support this important ministry.

Presbyterian Women

Moderator Gayle Bone shared her excitement about the ministries, events and contributions of our Presbyterian Women.

Nominating and Representation Teams

We approved the Nominating Team slate that was presented by its chair, Patti Phillips. On behalf of the Representation Committee, Joe Rigsby challenged us to continue to broaden and deepen fair representation of the entire presbytery, including Korean and Hispanic members.

Special Presentations

Keenan Rodgers and Clark Simmons offered updates and information from the Board of Pensions. Jake Wilson (Texas Presbyterian Foundation) described some of the resources his group could provide to congregations and individuals.

Thanks to our Host!

We received the warmest hospitality ever from all of the MPCC staff! During our Friendship Lunch people were raving about the delicious menu created for us: Herb Crusted Pork Loin, Heavenly Potatoes, Oven Roasted Green Beans, Garlic Cheddar Biscuits, Italian Garden Salad, Strawberry Upside Down Cake, and Mounds Bar Brownies.

Next Stated Meeting

The Winter Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of St. Augustine will take place at 9:00 a.m. on **Saturday, February 9**, at the Highlands United Presbyterian Church, 10900 McCormick Rd. 32225, Jacksonville, FL. *Please note that this is one week later than it was originally scheduled.*