

**Spring Stated Meeting Highlights**  
**May 3, 2022 at Montgomery Center**  
**Jerie Lukefahr, Moderator**  
**Sandra Hedrick, Stated Clerk**

Before 8:00 a.m., cars began arriving at Montgomery Conference Center for our first in person presbytery meeting in two and a half years! In perfect 73 degree weather with blue skies and a light breeze, our volunteer check-in crew got to work setting up the welcome table so that they could greet each of our 120 participants, including visitors, with a smile and friendly word. A lavish spread of breakfast foods and snacks was waiting inside for nourishment and fellowship.

Moderator Jerie Lukefahr (RE - First Fernandina Beach) opened the meeting with prayer. She surprised past moderator Joe Albright (Pastor - Geneva) with a past-moderator cross to commemorate his service. A quorum was declared, and all of the action items in the consent agenda were approved. Before worship, Clark Simmons gave a brief Board of Pensions update, and Jeff Welch (Pastor - Dunnellon) honored Rev. Clyde Wray with a memorial resolution.

It was a joy to worship together in person! Jeff Beebe (Pastor - Trinity) preached the sermon entitled "In-N-Out" inspired by the 23rd Psalm and John 10:22-30. The message called us to trust in God's love that never fails, to actively engage our faith, and to come alive and wake up to new possibilities in mission and ministry!

As a part of the service, we commissioned our four 225th General Assembly commissioners: Steve Crowley (RE - First Palatka), John Diller (Pastor - Orange Park), Jennifer Hallberg (Pastor - First Jasper), and Connie Smith (RE - South Jacksonville). Stated Clerk Sandra Hedrick was also commissioned for her GA appointment as committee assistant for the International Engagement Committee. Jennifer Hallberg and Rebecca Putman (Pastor, Westminster) officiated at the Lord's Table. The offering received for Montgomery was about \$1,100, including online contributions to the date of these highlights. To contribute, you may use the presbytery meeting "donate" button on the homepage of our website ([www.staugpres.org](http://www.staugpres.org)) through Friday, May 15.

It was another nice surprise when Coordinating Council member Walk Jones (Interim Associate Pastor - First Ocala) announced that a Pastor's Retreat is being planned for October 17-19, 2022. The event will take place in Daytona Beach at a very reasonable price. Look for more details soon!

The Coordinating Council presented several other information items as well: a report on unified giving to the presbytery, an update on the Vital Congregations Initiative, and a reminder about the availability of grants from presbytery designated funds. Upon the recommendation of the Coordinating Council, the presbytery approved the election of an administrative commission that will help the Lake Shore Presbyterian Church discern its future, including possible closure.

An engaging panel discussion on Matthew 25 ministry followed the Coordinating Council report. Beth Touchton (RE - Fort Caroline) and Sherry Mills (RE - First Palatka) shared about the ministries of their congregations that included hot meals and groceries, shelter, clothing, and other ways that they serve Christ by addressing deep needs in their local communities. At the conclusion of the presentation, the presbytery approved a grant request from Fort Caroline to the Presbyterian Mission Agency that will increase its ability to respond to its neighbors' needs.

Other highlights of the meeting include our welcome to John Kirkham, new minister member (honorably retired), and reports from the Highlands Regional Ministry Center, Montgomery Presbyterian Conference Center, and Presbyterian Women. Patti Phillips (RE - Branford), Chair of the Volunteer Management Committee, shared about the blessing of serving on presbytery teams and commissions and invited participants to consider if they may be called to share their gifts in this way. We also give thanks to those who participated in the "Who is Presbytery?" video recordings, and especially George Barnett, our faithful videographer! We look forward to sharing the video this summer and plan on more videos in the future.

Most meeting participants stayed for a friendship lunch on the grounds. The tasty menu included barbeque chicken and pork, baked beans, spring succotash, coleslaw, salad, cornbread and banana pudding.

Our in person meeting was a welcome and special event for all who could attend. We thank the Montgomery staff and every meeting volunteer who showed the hospitality of Jesus Christ in so many different ways. The time in person together allowed us to make new connections, to strengthen bonds already in place, and to provide new inspiration for our mission and ministry as we serve Jesus Christ together as one body.

The next stated meeting of our presbytery is scheduled for Tuesday, October 4, 2022, at a time and place to be determined.

Sandra Hedrick – Stated Clerk  
Ed Kelly – Assistant Stated Clerk