

Winter Stated Meeting Highlights
February 4, 2023
by: Ed Kelly, Assistant Stated Clerk

Before 8:00 a.m., our wonderful volunteers (including MPCC staff) began assembling at Montgomery Presbyterian Conference Center for our 2023 Winter Stated Meeting. The weather was chilly for Florida (even in February), so our volunteer check-in crew set up the welcome table inside the center and began greeting the ____ (*insert number*) participants, including visitors. An impressive spread of breakfast foods and snacks were offered by the MPCC staff for a time of fellowship before the meeting began.

Moderator Jerie Lukefahr (RE - First Fernandina Beach) opened the meeting with prayer. We were welcomed by Rebekah Rodgers, the Transitional Director at MPCC, and Jimmie Steele, the newly elected chair of the board of MPCC. A quorum was declared, and all of the items on the consent agenda were approved. Brian Lays (Riverside) offered a moving tribute to Joe Meux in the form of a memorial resolution adopted by the Presbytery.

The Moderator gave special thanks to Sandra Hedrick upon her retirement after her ten years of dedicated service as Stated Clerk. Jerie advised the Presbytery how much Sandra had looked forward to her final Presbytery meeting as Stated Clerk but could not attend due to illness. Everyone was encouraged to express their thanks and good wishes to Sandra by signing a large banner at the reception desk, as well as to send cards and notes.

The worship service followed. The liturgist was John White (Community), and Beverly Dempsey (Highlands United) preached the sermon, entitled "May it be so" inspired by the Matthew 17:1-9. The sermon urged us to find unity in purpose and pursue unity in service. Also participating was Mark Poole (Orange Park). Adam Anderson (South Jacksonville) and Lauren Scott (Riverside) served as celebrants for communion. The offering received during worship, in excess of \$1,000.00 (including online donations made on the date of the meeting), was dedicated to Mutual Mission. As a part of the service, we commissioned our team traveling to Cuba to serve the Matanzas Presbytery: Mary Alderman, Amy Camp, Priscilla Durkin, Joe Medearis, Susan Rose, Martha Shafer, Michael Sullivan and Peter and Debbie Williams.

A highlight of the meeting the election of our new Stated Clerk, Charlie Evans, who will begin his work right away. Everyone welcomed Charlie, who comes to us with an extensive background in Presbyterian ministry and service. The Volunteer Management team also presented nominees for offices, commissions and teams of the Presbytery for the coming year, and all were elected unanimously.

We also welcomed our new Communications Coordinator Gabrielle Bellamy who introduced herself to the Presbytery.

Suzi Lemen, on behalf of the Coordinating Council, presented the 2023 Presbytery budget. After discussion, the budget was approved by the Presbytery. The Presbytery also approved a one-time exception requested by the Administrative Commission for the Lake Shore church to permit consideration of the allocation of limited gifts to special missions supported for many years by the church to be made from the anticipated proceeds of the sale of the church property.

Joy Laughridge, Chair of the Call Commission, introduced the Presbytery to Brian Mitchell, a new

candidate for ministry, Dana Riley, the new Pastor for Community Outreach at Riverside, and Roy Sharpe, the new stated pulpit supply at Covenant.

As the meeting concluded, we installed Susan Rose as our new moderator. As part of the installation, Jerie Lukefahr transferred the Moderator's Cross to Susan, who then presented Jerie with a special keepsake Moderator's Cross in gratitude for her dedicated service this past year.

Most meeting participants stayed to enjoy a tasty barbeque friendship lunch served up by MPCC staff.

The next stated meeting of our presbytery is scheduled for Tuesday, May 2, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. at Riverside Presbyterian Church. This will be a hybrid meeting, with both Zoom and in-person participation.