

PRESBYTERY DIGEST

A summary of actions & information from the meeting of Pittsburgh Presbytery
May 23, 2019
Hampton United Presbyterian Church

The meeting was called to order by Moderator Rev. Steven Werth at 4:00 PM and opened with prayer.

The Commission on Ministry (COM) announced no new calls had been extended since the last meeting of presbytery. The Rev. Brian Wallace led in prayer for the family and friends of the Rev. Dr. Terry Mann who was promoted to the Church Triumphant on March 15, 2019.

The Rev. Dr. Graham Standish presented opportunities for continuing education being offered by the Samaritan Counseling Center, of which he is Executive Director.

The Rev. Dr. Sheldon Sorge read the Scripture text of John 13:34-35 and shared a meditation entitled, [Credible Witnesses?](#) During worship, an offering of \$1,165.25 was received for equal distribution to the [Lazarus Fund](#) and the [Hunger Fund](#). This amount will be matched by the [Pittsburgh Presbyterian Foundation](#).

From the Executive Committee:

Recommended the following for presbytery action; **approved** by consent:

- waiver of six-year limitation on terms for one elder and one deacon of the Baldwin United Presbyterian Church beginning in 2019
- waiver of six-year limitation on terms for three elders of the Liberty Presbyterian Church beginning in 2019
- receive and file for audit the presbytery financial statements for the months of December 2018, and January and February 2019

Reported approving the following:

- a set of guidelines to govern mission fairs at presbytery meetings
- the request of The Presbyterian Church of Plum Creek for the forgiveness of per capita in the amount of \$27,021.74
- the request of the Whitehall United Presbyterian Church for the forgiveness of per capita in the amount of \$36,185.00

Announced the following:

- the Ecclesiastical Committee is seeking recommendations for persons to serve on the Committee on Representation of Pittsburgh Presbytery
- there are vacancies on the Ecclesiastical and Nominating Committees; interested individuals should contact the [Office of the Stated Clerk](#)

From the Stated Clerk:

Reported the following:

- deadline for docket time and waiver requests for the September Presbytery meeting is no later than noon on Wednesday, August 21
- the final session 2018 minutes and rolls reading date is Saturday, September 14, at the presbytery center
- the 2018 minutes of the presbytery were examined by the Synod of the Trinity and approved with two exceptions
- all of the amendments to the *Book of Order* as proposed by the 223rd General Assembly (2018) have received sufficient votes to be approved with the exception of Amendment 18-C
- as of December 31, 2018, Pittsburgh Presbytery had 129 chartered congregations and 315 minister members
- the moderator has appointed the following individuals to serve on an investigating committee: Elder Mary Jo Buffo, Elder Mark Roth, Rev. Jane Esterline, Rev. Dr. Trent Hancock, and Rev. Jeff Tindall
- the newly revised *Book of Order* will be published later this summer
- the 2018 presbytery statistical report was presented

Recommended the following for approval and dismissal; **approved**:

- the Administrative Commission to Install the Rev. Dr. Henry Knapp
- the Administrative Commission to Install the Rev. Elizabeth Michael Ross
- the Administrative Commission to Ordain Benjamin Rumbaugh

From Commission on Preparation for Ministry:

Reported the following:

- session visits conducted with the Hoboken Presbyterian Church and the Riverview United Presbyterian Church
- Pre-Care Consultations conducted with Caryn Doege (Sewickley Presbyterian Church) and Rebecca Young (Shadyside Presbyterian Church)
- Caryn Doege and Rebecca Young were Enrolled as Inquirers
- sermons heard from Marlaena Cochran and Jane Larson
- Annual Consultations conducted with Inquirers Brendan Ashley and Derail Holcomb, and with Candidates Marlaena Cochran and Cassandra Riker
- Cassandra Riker and Carol Sharp were Received as Candidates
- Ashley Ashley and Derail Holcomb were given permission to take the Senior Ordination Examinations
- Marlaena Cochran, Jane Larson and Kevin Vinay were Certified Ready to Receive a Call and given permission to circulate their PIFs

Recommended the following; **approved**

- the Oral Parts of Trial be sustained for Emily Cooper upon her presentation of her Statement of Faith

- appointment of the following Administrative Commission to ordain and install Emily Cooper to serve as Pastor for Covenant-Community Presbyterian Church: the Moderator Rev. Steven W. Werth or his designee, the Rev. Dr. Dirk Lesnett, the Rev. Deborah Warren, Elder Kelly Simile (Elfinwild Presbyterian Church), and Elder Susie Prescott (Covenant-Community Presbyterian Church); her service of Ordination & Installation is scheduled for 2:00 PM on Saturday, June 22, at Covenant-Community Presbyterian Church

Presentations focusing on “**Who We are Becoming as a Church Today**” included the following:

- **Freedom Rising Steering Team:** Elder Lenore Williams and Elder Alan Perry presented a video profiling the work of one of the grant recipient agencies and solicited new applications for Freedom Rising grants
- **New Worshiping Communities:** Rev. Brian Wallace presented new models for New Worshiping Communities
- **New Models for Vital Congregations:** Rev. Dr. Randy Bush presented a “top ten” list of new models for vital congregations
- **Foundation of Hope:** Rev. Caitlyn Werth presented a video report on the jail pre-release and post-release program

From the Commission on Ministry:

Reported the following:

- the completion of the contract between Rev. Darlene Figgs and the Bidwell Street United Presbyterian Church effective December 31, 2018
- the Rev. Dr. Charles S. Palmer, Jr. of Mission Presbytery to perform a wedding within the bounds of Pittsburgh Presbytery on June 8, 2019

Moved presbytery approve the following call; **approved:**

- the Covenant-Community Presbyterian Church for the services of Emily Cooper as pastor effective June 22, 2019

Moved presbytery approve the following appointments and commission; **approved** by consent:

- the Rev. Dr. Dirk Lesnett as Moderator of the Cheswick Presbyterian Church effective March 28, 2019
- the Rev. Ayana Teter as Moderator of the Friendship Community Presbyterian Church effective June 1, 2019
- commissioning and appointing Elder Frank Hancock to moderate the session of the Logan’s Ferry Presbyterian Church effective date May 23, 2019

Moved presbytery approve the letter of reception: **approved** by consent:

- the Rev. Dr. Angela Dienhart Hancock from Middle Tennessee Presbytery effective October 9, 2018

Moved presbytery approve the following temporary pastoral contracts; **approved** by consent:

- Kerr Presbyterian Church for the services of Rev. Kelly Jean Norris as Temporary Pastor for one year effective May 19, 2019
- East Liberty Presbyterian Church for the services of Rev. Mary Lynn Callahan as Temporary Pastor for one year effective January 1, 2019

Moved presbytery validate the following ministry position; **approved** by consent:

- the Rev. Maggie Smith as Chaplain Residency of the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System

Moved presbytery grant a letter of dismissal to the following; **approved** by consent:

- the Rev. Dr. Brian Wells to Presbytery of Eastern Virginia effective December 4, 2018

Moved presbytery grant a letter of dissolution to the following; **approved**:

- the Friendship Community Presbyterian Church to dissolve the call of Rev. Gary Willingham-McLain effective April 30, 2019
- the Sunset Hills Presbyterian Church to dissolve the call of Rev. Benjamin Libert effective May 19, 2019

Moved presbytery grant member-at-large status; **approved** by consent:

- the Rev. Dr. Angela Dienhart Hancock effective October 9, 2018
- the Rev. Darlene Figgs effective January 1, 2019
- the Rev. Gary Willingham-McLain effective May 1, 2019
- the Rev. Benjamin Libert effective May 19, 2019

Moved presbytery approve the following administrative commission to install; **approved** by consent:

- the Rev. Rebecca DePoe as Pastor of the Glenshaw Valley Presbyterian Church on January 27, 2019

Dinner was served by the Hampton Presbyterian Church to much acclaim. During the meal, conversations were directed around questions concerning new ministry strategies and actions in congregations.

Presbytery reconvened with **a report on the directed table conversations** and a brief time of **worship**, including a much-appreciated anthem offered by the Hampton United Presbyterian Church Choir.

From the General Minister:

- introduced Elder Ralph Lowe who has accepted the call to serve as Director of Justice Ministries for Pittsburgh Presbytery effective July 1, 2019

From the Committee on Nominations:

Presented the following nominees for service as committee/commission members; **elected**

Commission on Ministry

- Elder Jeff Mulkern, Elfinwild (2021A) – North

Commission on Preparation for Ministry

- Elder Tim Bailey, Carnegie (2021A) – West

Meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m. with a resolution of thanks to Hampton United Presbyterian Church, the host congregation, and a closing prayer led by Candidate Emily Cooper.