

## **Digest of the Meeting of Pittsburgh Presbytery – February 25, 2021**

The meeting of Pittsburgh Presbytery was called to order by the Moderator, Rev. Charissa Howe, at 1:00 PM on February 25, 2021, and opened with prayer. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the meeting was held via Zoom. In observance of Black History Month, worship music was led by the Rev. Nikki Porter, with the Rev. Paul E. Roberts preaching and asking the church when it will face up to the need for racial reconciliation. A video of that service is available [here](#). An offering was received for equal distribution to the [Lazarus Fund](#) and the [Hunger Fund](#). The amount received will be matched by the [Pittsburgh Presbyterian Foundation](#).

### **Installed to Office:**

Ruling Elder Mark Roth was installed as Moderator for 2021  
Rev. Rebecca DePoe was installed as Senior-Vice Moderator for 2021

### **Elected and Installed:**

Ruling Elder Jane Gieske as Vice Moderator for the South for 2021  
Rev. Gavin Walton as Vice Moderator for the East for 2021  
Ruling Elder Vera White as Vice Moderator for the North for 2021

### **From the Executive Committee**

#### **Recommended and Approved** by Presbytery action:

- The request of the Baldwin United Presbyterian Church to waive the Six-year limitation on terms of two elders and two deacons
- The request of the Beechview United Presbyterian Church to waive the Six-year limitation on terms of one elder and one deacon
- The request of the Presbyterian Church of Coraopolis to waive the Six-year limitation on terms of one elder
- The request of the Noblestown United Presbyterian Church to waive the Six-year limitation on terms of three elders
- The request of the Swissvale Presbyterian Church to waive the Six-year limitation on terms of two elders and one deacon
- The request of the Mt. Pisgah Presbytery Church to sell its building and property for \$246,900.00
- Receive and file for audit the Presbytery Financial Statements for the months of October and November 2020

#### **For Information:**

- Elected Ruling Elder Chris Martin (East Liberty) Treasurer of the Presbytery for a one-year term until the first Executive Committee Meeting of 2022
- Elected the following individuals as subcommittee chairs:
  - The Rev. Jodi Flack as chair of the Ecclesiastical Committee
  - Ruling Elder Chris Martin as chair of the Finance Committee
  - Ruling Elder Dan Beckstrom as chair of the Property Committee

- The Presbytery Minutes Reading Committee for 2021 will consist of Ministers Eric Dennis, Rebecca DePoe, and Sheldon Sorge, and Ruling Elders Carla Campbell, Cathy Nelson, and Mark Roth
- Approved the request of the New Life Community Church for the forgiveness of past due Per Capita in the amount of \$19,326.35
- Authorized all ministry teams, commissions, committees, task forces of Presbytery and related organizations, camps and conference centers affiliated with Presbytery, to celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's Supper at meetings and events during 2021
- Approved the celebration of the Lord's Supper by the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary within the bounds of Pittsburgh Presbytery
- Rev. Jeff Tindall and Rev. Judi Slater gave a report encouraging congregations to engage in the [Matthew 25 initiative](#)

### **From the Stated Clerk**

#### **For Information:**

- The Deadline for Docket Time and Waiver Requests for the May 20, 2021 Presbytery meeting is no later than noon on Wednesday April 14, 2021  
     For September 16, 2021 meeting -      Deadline August 18, 2021  
     For December 9, 2021 meeting -      Deadline November 3, 2021
- 2021 is a mandatory decennial filing year for Pennsylvania Corporations, including churches. Information may be secured on the Presbytery website
- The Stated Clerk's Office has received a written allegation in a disciplinary matter. The Moderator is assembling an investigating committee.
- 2020 Session Minutes Reading will be scheduled as soon as it is safe and appropriate, likely the fall of 2021
- The Stated Clerk's Office has received preliminary information regarding the 225<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2022). Information may be secured on the Presbytery website and on the PNews
- The Stated Clerk's Office welcomes invitations to host Presbytery meetings in calendar year 2022. Contact the Stated Clerk's Office
- The appointment of Rev. Eric Dennis as Associate Stated Clerk and Ms. Adrien Domske and Ms. Dorothy Winter as Assistant Stated Clerks
- Reported the Judicial Commission Expired Terms Roster
- Ruling Elder Parity Plan for 2021.

#### **Recommended for Action; approved:**

- The appointment of an Administrative Commission to consider the request that the Presbytery Assume Original Jurisdiction of a Judicial Process
- The Dismissal of an Investigating Committee
- The Dismissal of the Presbytery Meeting Pandemic Response Administrative Commission
- Ruling Elder Parity Plan for 2021

- Appointment of an Administrative commission to assume original jurisdiction for financial, property, and legal matters for the Community House Presbyterian Church, with the note that the current pastor has done nothing irregular
- A Resolution of Thanks to the outgoing Moderator, the Rev. Charissa Howe

### **From Commission on Preparation for Ministry:**

**Reported** the following:

- **Permission given to take the Senior Ordination Exams specified:**  
Quinn, William: Bible Exegesis; Doege, Caryn: Bible Exegesis and Theological Competence; Steinitz, Hunter: Church Polity; Singleton, Steven: Church Polity; Grubbs, Amanda: Church Polity.
- **Enrolled as a Candidate:**  
Young, Rebecca (Shadyside Presbyterian Church), who presented to Presbytery a report of her sense of call.

### **From the General Minister:**

Rev. Dr. Sheldon Sorge gave his State of the Presbytery report, especially focusing on how COVID-19 overshadowed everything in 2020. He included the following:

- The resignation of Mr. Gene Joiner, Executive Director of Crestfield Camp and Conference Center.
- Staff changes due to the death of the Rev. Dr. Beverly James and the retirement of Ms. Cindy Miller. No new staff were hired, but Ms. Adrien Domske and Mr. Ralph Lowe moved from halftime to fulltime.
- Presbytery Offices were closed in March 2020, but have reopened recently for staff. Small group meetings can be arranged upon request.
- Second floor offices have been secured by an additional doorway and locks on all access points.
- Presbyterian Media Mission has vacated their first-floor offices. Those offices have been rented to the Pittsburgh District of the United Methodist Church.
- At this point, 42% of congregation are worshiping remotely only; 36% worship in their sanctuaries; 17% use a hybrid model of worship in the sanctuary and broadcasting, and 5% other.
- Congregations are encouraged to upgrade their technology to present the best video broadcast. The use of technology has increased both local and distant outreach. Continue to explore the use of technology.
- Congregations report an increase in the use of an online giving option.
- Due to COVID-19, our planned 2020 International Partnership visit was cancelled.
- There is a deeper engagement by congregations in local missions, including 6 grants from PDA for those doing work in response to the pandemic.
- Questions for the future: What level of ongoing commitment to online worship are we prepared to make? How much do we need our buildings? Can we consolidate with other congregations, sharing buildings?

### **From the Commission on Ministry:**

**Reported** the completion of following contracts between:

- The Rev. Alina Kanaski and Chartiers Valley United Presbyterian Church effective December 31, 2020.
- The Rev. Dr. Bob Maravalli and Beechview United Presbyterian Church effective December 31, 2020.
- The Rev. Dr. John Dalles and the Shadyside Presbyterian Church effective February 14, 2021.
- The Rev. Dr. William Youmans and the Bethany Presbyterian Church effective January 15, 2021.

**Moved** presbytery approve the following appointments for Moderators; **approved:**

- The Rev. Stephen Hodges as Moderator of the Heritage Presbyterian Church effective January 1, 2021.
- The Rev. Kay Day as Moderator of the Castle Shannon United Presbyterian Church effective February 1, 2021.
- The Rev. Jason Rea as Moderator of the Hebron Presbyterian Church, Clinton, effective March 1, 2021.
- The Rev. Lynn Portz as Moderator of the Shadyside Presbyterian Church effective February 15, 2021.
- The Rev. Dr. James Evans as Moderator of the Oakdale Presbyterian Church effective February 1, 2021.
- The Rev. Dr. Bob Maravalli as Moderator of the Beechview United Presbyterian Church effective January 1, 2021.

**Moved** presbytery approve the following Temporary/Covenant/Interim Pastors Contracts; **approved:**

- Hillcrest United Presbyterian Church for the services of Rev. Dr. John Lolla as Temporary Pastor for one year, effective October 1, 2020.
- Hebron Presbyterian Church, Clinton, for the services of Rev. Jason Rea as Covenant Pastor for one year, effective March 1, 2021.
- Mosaic Community Church for the services of Rev. Joshua Fisher as Covenant Pastor for one year, effective February 1, 2021.
- United Presbyterian Church in Ingram to renew the contract of Rev. Wayne Meyer as Covenant Pastor for one year, effective January 1, 2021.
- First Presbyterian Church, Castle Shannon for the services of Rev. Kay Day as Temporary Pastor for one year effective February 1, 2021.
- Northmont United Presbyterian Church to renew the contract of Rev. Stephanie Martin as Covenant Associate Pastor for one year effective January 1, 2021.
- East Union Presbyterian Church to renew the contract of Rev. Mary Josephine Ramsey as Covenant Associate Pastor for one year effective January 1, 2021.

**Moved** the Presbytery grant a Letter of Dismissal to the following; **approved:**

- The Rev. Dr. William Youmans to Redstone Presbytery effective January 26, 2021.

- The Rev. Deborah Smith to Washington Presbytery effective January 16, 2021.

**Moved** the Presbytery receive the following via Letter of Reception; **approved:**

- The Rev. Dr. Louis Mitchell, HR from Monmouth Presbytery effective February 25, 2021.
- The Rev. Dr. Graham Standish from Beaver-Butler Presbytery effective February 25, 2021.
- The Rev. Carol Evans LeBlanc, HR from Western New York Presbytery effective February 25, 2021.

**Moved** Presbytery enroll the following as Members At-Large of Pittsburgh Presbytery; **approved:**

- Rev. Dr. John Dalles effective February 15, 2021.
- Rev. Tara Thompson effective March 14, 2021.
- Rev. Diane Flynn effective December 7, 2020.

**Moved** Presbytery approve the following Validated Ministry; **approved:**

- Rev. Dr. Graham Standish's position of Executive Director of Samaritan Counseling, Guidance, and Consulting.
- Rev. Alina Kanaski's position of Pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church.

**Moved** Presbytery grant the status of Honorably Retired; **approved:**

- Rev. Dr. Patricia Giles effective January 1, 2021.

**Moved** Presbytery approve Letters of Dissolution; **approved:**

- The request of the Elfinwild Presbyterian Church to dissolve the call of Rev. Jason Rea effective February 28, 2021.
- The request of the Southminster Presbyterian Church to dissolve the call of Rev. Tara Thompson effective March 14, 2021.

**Announced:** The members of the Presbytery who have joined the Church Triumphant.

- Ruling Elder David Green, former Moderator and a member of Bower Hill Community Presbyterian Church on February 14, 2021.
- The Rev. William Shirley on December 26, 2020.
- The Rev. Dr. Janice Holmes on January 7, 2021.

### **The Committee on Nominations:**

The Committee on Nominations presented the following candidates for service as follows:

- **Commission on Ministry:**  
The Rev. Jason Rea, (2023A) – West
- **Commission on Preparation for Ministry:**  
The Rev. Niki Atkinson, (2023A) – North
- **Synod Commissioner:**  
The Rev. Darlene Figgs, (2023A) – North