



The Rhythm of the Synod

Faith Notes from the Meeting of the Synod of the Trinity
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Gathering in the Presbytery of Kiskiminetas in Indiana, Pennsylvania
October 15-16, 2009

Neal Galley (Clergy, Redstone) was elected as Synod Moderator and Nan Best (Elder, Donegal) was elected as Vice Moderator during the third stated meeting in the 292nd year of the Synod of the Trinity. They were installed at the end of the business meeting and shall begin serving their terms on January 1, 2010.

The Rev. Dr. Bruce Stevens, Synod Executive, reported that a variety of overtures are being proposed to the 2010 General Assembly concerning the status and function of Synods. He was hopeful that if Synods do not continue to exist as currently described by our Book of Order, that Presbyterians will find creative responses to work with consortiums of presbyteries that will join together for mutual support and enhancement of their work.

Lawrence Davis (Elder, Philadelphia), Chairperson of Synod Finance and Budget Committee, gave a detailed report on the 2010 budget. This balanced budget was approved. Chantal Atnip, Synod Treasurer, reported that the second dividend from Brotherhood Insurance is \$37,658 (last year it was \$12,333) and will be distributed proportionately among the participating churches and church camps.

Commissioners approved a special grant of \$5,000 as requested from the Grants and Scholarship Committee for the House of Manna Faith Community in the Homewood section of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The vision is to be a missional faith community that will bring everyday people into the family of God, equip them for the ministry of Jesus Christ, and empower them to spread the love of Jesus Christ in family and community, and encourage them with the transformative power of the Gospel.

Gregg Hartung (Elder, Beaver-Butler) of Presbyterian Media Mission (PMM) shared a DVD about the Summer Youth Institute at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. This DVD won the 2009 Gold Remi award. It was presented at the Houston Film Festival for the Best Short Feature Video. About 2,000 judges came to watch the videos that won awards. They represented a wide variety of backgrounds presenting DVDs - including general industry and health care - as well as religious productions - and the judges were impressed with PMM's presentation. Gregg pointed out that the most important resource that the church has is the stories of our faith lives- like the ones presented in this video.

Commissioners shared information about important happenings in their presbyteries. Some celebrated new Executive Leadership (Lackawanna - Barbara Smith and Donegal - Erin Cox-Holmes); some related how the October missionary focus engaged churches in their presbyteries with good dialogue; Northumberland reported forming a Task Force to join with Chambers of Commerce to focus on hospitality as the Marcellus Shale gas project gets underway; evangelists have been hired, training for new pastors organized, funds raised for disaster assistance, missional church partnerships have been formed, and mission trips have been - and will be - organized for work in the United States and abroad. The Synod celebrates these many expressions of faith in God!

The next business meeting of the Synod will be held Tuesday, June 22, 2010, at 1:30 PM at the conclusion of the Synod Summer Conference. This will be held at the Penn Stater Conference Center in State College, Pennsylvania.

Submitted Joyfully in the Name of Christ by,
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Talking Points

Synod Meeting – October 15- 16, 2009

The Communications Work Group is working to come up with all kinds of ways to assist the Synod, presbyteries and churches communicate through a variety of means. One comes with helping prepare people present Synod reports at presbytery meetings.

This is just a tool to help you present information and impressions to your Presbytery/church/committee. You may have your own notes – which is great – this is just to get the memory juices flowing. This list will be available on the Synod web-site and can be given to you by another means if that works better for you.

- We experienced engaging Worship Services and Devotions.
- We talked about YAADs and Young Adult involvement in Synod – what it is and what it could be.
- We heard about a gathering of representatives from nearly all of the 13 camps within our Synod where over 4,000 children and youth had an opportunity to connect with God and God's world. We then talked briefly about the benefit of such gatherings in the future.
- Discussion from Bruce Stevens and others about the future of our current denominational structure, especially pertaining to the role of Synod, through the FOG report and the overture from the Synod of the Rocky Mountains – what has happened, what could happen and what new opportunities could come from all this.
- A balanced budget was presented and we examined the various funds regarding income and expenses. There was much discussion on this – you may wish to highlight a part that interested you regarding the budget, the personnel report, or what was discussed.
- We heard reports from committees, workgroups, organizations and the Mission Network Team regarding the various ways the Synod is connecting with each other and reaching out in missional and leadership opportunities. Perhaps one struck you that you could share.
- We heard what was going on in our various presbyteries, met in small groups and spend time discerning how we could share information and begin thinking about mission interpretation with our presbyteries, churches and groups. On November 18th, in Camp Hill, those interested from presbyteries around the Synod are invited to continue the discussion on mission interpretation.
- We heard about the 2010 Summer Conference to be held at the Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center with the keynote speaker being Diana Butler Bass. We encourage those interested to save June 20th through 22nd on your calendars.
- We elected a new moderator – Neal Galley, and vice moderator – Nan Best.

On your table last night was a blue sheet with stars and a candle. These are reminders for you to take the happens of the Synod back with you and to let your light so shine among all that they will give glory to God.

Submitted by
Steve Cureton, Communications Work Group