

The Presbytery of Elizabeth Minutes of Council May 8 mmvii

Attendance.

Ministers

John Illian (Central), Outreach and Social Concerns Unit, co-chair
Robert Beringer (HR), Personnel Committee
Victoria Ney (Westfield), Committee on Preparation for Ministry, chair
Michael Granzen (Elizabeth Second), Vice-Moderator of Presbytery

Elders

Robert Jacobs (Liberty Corner), Evangelism and Church Vitality Unit, chair
Alan Ford (Bethlehem), Moderator of Presbytery; General Assembly Council
Lee Anne Lowman (Central), Vice-chair of Council
Judy Wussler (Fanwood), Committee on Representation, chair; Synod of the Northeast
Joanne Noblitt (Rahway First), Financial Development Committee, chair
Gerald Nelson (Liberty Corner), Trustees of Presbytery, chair
Blanche Schaffer (Central), At-large
Mabel Hansen (United), Presbyterian Women, chair
Susan Gieser (Westminster), Committee on Ministry, chair

Ex officio

Elder David Bomgaars (Central), Treasurer of Presbytery
Rev. Paul F. Rack (Fanwood), Stated Clerk
Rev. Robert Foltz-Morrison (staff), Executive Presbyter
Elder Sara Burke (Westfield), Administrative Assistant

Not Present

Elder Helen Mosley (Siloam-Hope), Educational Ministries Unit, chair
Rev. John Howard (Siloam-Hope), At-large
Benjamin Martin (Crescent Avenue), Youth Advisory Delegate
Elder Barbara McLaughlin (Westfield), Synod of the Northeast
Elder Jack Paddon (Liberty Corner), Outreach and Social Concerns Unit, co-chair

Call to Order.

The Council of Elizabeth Presbytery met on Tuesday, April 10, 2007, at the United Presbyterian Church, in Plainfield, at 4:00 pm (EDT). Elder Sara Burke (staff), led the Council in a devotional on Romans 12. She then offered a prayer.

Elder Lowman (Central), the Vice-Chair of Council, called the meeting to order.

She reminded the Council of the agreed upon standards for unit leadership, listed on a handout.

Stated Clerk.

1. The Council **VOTED** to approve the distributed agenda for this meeting.
2. The Council **VOTED** to approve the Minutes of the Council meeting of March 13, 2007, with some corrections.
3. The Council previewed the Docket for the May Stated Meeting, in Carteret.

Four-on-Four.

Council members broke into groups to reflect on our favorite Bible stories.

Treasurer.

Elder Bomgaars presented his financial report. We are \$1K to the good, after paying out OSC money. Way under in mission pledge receipts, only 21% in now in May, with the slow summer coming. Per capita is up to date. Cash is available to cover expenses for the time being. Some churches are way behind in mission giving; some not remitting at all.

A concern was expressed that some money is not being spent because ECV has not authorized it. On the other hand, ECV has not received important information from the groups involved. ECV is not interested in “rubber stamping” for each year the amount they received the prior year.

Priority Items.

1. Retreat.

Pre-council agreed that bringing in an external speaker would be helpful. It was thought that the best approach would be to delay the retreat until we found the right person.

At the same time, something “more fun” may also be in the works. Possibly an “eco-tour” in the Meadowlands.

2. Expense Reimbursement Policy.

Elder Noblitt presented the proposed revision of our policy for reimbursement of travel expenses for commissioners and other individuals serving on presbytery units. The Council **VOTED** to bring this to the presbytery.

3. Budget Update.

Elder Noblitt noted that we are “doing okay” but still need to keep the lid on by retaining the recommendation that units only spend 90% of their budgets. The current situation is basically due to lower spending by the units; money is not coming in from churches at the level anticipated. It was suggested that a list of churches and their levels of pledge and per capita fulfillment. It was also suggested that a personal contact approach might be at least as effective. If we could get a forecast of what we can expect in terms of revenues for the remainder of the year, it would be helpful. Perhaps making an announcement at the presbytery meeting, reminding churches that they voted to do some things as a presbytery, and now churches need to step up and provide the resources we need to accomplish them.

4. Administrative Commission for New Church Development.

Elder Jacobs presented the warrant for an Administrative Commission for New Church Development. After some discussion and feedback, including some adjustments to the document, the Council **VOTED** to bring this proposal to presbytery for a first reading in May, to be voted on in June.

5. Executive Presbyter Goals.

The Council reviewed and affirmed the emerging goals of the Executive Presbyter.

Reminders.

1. The Youth Triennium has seven applications from young people, and some from chaperones.
2. Nothing was reported to be happening in the area of networking lunches. The members of Council were encouraged to get moving on this.
3. 2007 Calendar. Rev. Illian previewed the international peacemaker program, which our presbytery hopes to be hosting. Council **VOTED** to have OSC do this, anticipating bringing in a resource person in September. In October, we expect to have a missionary with us at presbytery.
4. The Nominating Committee needs assistance. Council members were urged to contact Elder Betty Prezzy Bryant with any suitable names of people who might be willing to serve on presbytery units.

Report of the Moderator.

Moderator Ford anticipated an important debate on the floor of presbytery over the Examinations Task Force report. He would like to limit individual speaking time to two minutes, so that as many people may speak as may be moved to do so within a reasonable time.

Report of the Vice-Moderator.

1. Rev. Granzen noted that Rev. Jim Thomas will be preaching at presbytery on the issue of churches in transition.
2. The Worship and Theology Team (WATT) has finally met for the first time. They are looking at expanding their membership to be more inclusive.

Report of the Executive Presbyter.

Rev. Foltz-Morrison brought the Council up to speed on the situation at Townley, which is being required to give their pastor a 6-month period of education, healing, and spiritual and professional growth. This leaves a hole in their budget as they have to provide pastoral services during that period as well. They have requested that the Council give them some assistance, financial and otherwise, to get them through this. Council asked to see some more details of the church's financial situation, and considered what level of support might be available. Council **VOTED** to ask the Treasurer of Presbytery to examine the books and operating budget of the Townley church and return with a recommendation as to how they can find \$9600 to pay for a Temporary Supply pastor for six months.

Report of the Administrator.

Elder Burke stated that everything is great and going well.

Reports.

ECV- Bernardsville is working on continuing to develop a Spanish speaking ministry.

OSC- Would like the second quarter payment to El Centro to be made as soon as possible. Council **VOTED** as such. Rev. Illian also announced a grant program to which churches in our presbytery may apply.

CPM- Nadia Ayoub. CPM wants to develop an alternative process to get her ordained as an evangelist. Council **VOTED** to encourage CPM to bring Ms. Ayoub to presbytery.

DRC- Rev. Beringer mentioned his intention to have FEMA information available at the presbytery meeting. Disaster assistance money has been distributed to several churches in our presbytery, and received a \$10K grant from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, for churches affected by the recent flooding.

Adjourn.

The Council **VOTED** to adjourn with a closing prayer by the Stated Clerk at 6:29 pm (EDT).

Attest:

Rev. Paul F. Rack
Stated Clerk