

The Presbytery of Elizabeth

Minutes of Council

February 10 mmix

Attendance.

Ministers

John Howard (Siloam-Hope), At-large, Worship and Theology Team
Lawrence Finn, III (MaL), Evangelism and Church Vitality Unit, chair
John Illian (Central), Outreach and Social Concerns Unit, co-chair
Jeffrey Wildrick (Dunellen), At-large
Robert Martin (Crescent Ave.), Committee on Ministry
Michael Granzen (Elizabeth Second), Former Moderator of Presbytery
Howard Bryant (MaL), Vice-Moderator of Presbytery
William Weaver (Linden), Personnel Committee

Elders

Barbara McLaughlan (Westfield), Moderator of Presbytery
Lee Anne Lowman (Central), Chair of Council
Judy Wussler (Fanwood), Committee on Representation, chair; Synod of the Northeast
Alan Ford (Bethlehem), General Assembly Council
Gerald Nelson (Liberty Corner), Trustees of Presbytery, chair
Joanne Noblitt (Rahway First), Financial Development Committee, chair
Jack Paddon (Liberty Corner), Outreach and Social Concerns Unit, co-chair
Virginia Miller (), Presbyterian Women, chair

Ex officio

Rev. Paul F. Rack (Bethlehem), Stated Clerk
Elder Sara Burke (Westfield), Administrative Assistant
Elder David Bomgaars (Central), Treasurer of Presbytery

Not present or Excused

Rev. Gregory Horn (Cranford), Committee on Preparation for Ministry, chair
Elder Betty Prezzy Bryant (Third-Westminster), Nominating Committee, chair
Elder Susan Gieser (Westminster), Vice-Chair of Council
Rev. Robert Foltz-Morrison, Executive Presbyter
Elder Helen Mosley (Siloam-Hope), Educational Ministries Unit, chair

Also present

Rev. Victor Alloyo (United/*Nuevas Fronteras*)
Anna Chavez (*Nuevas Fronteras*)
Sandra Estevez (*Nuevas Fronteras*)
Karen Castro (*Nuevas Fronteras*)
Fannie Sanchez_(*Nuevas Fronteras*)

The regular monthly meeting of the Council of the Presbytery of Elizabeth was called to order at 4:01 pm (EST) on Tuesday, February 10, 2009, at the United church in Plainfield.

Devotions.

The opening devotions were given by Gerry Nelson. He remembered a stewardship sermon in which a man discovered that his deceased father had a consistent habit of writing the first check each payday to the church. How much of what we have are we going to return to God? He also related a story about a

groom who toasted his dad for teaching him to be a Christian man who recognized that his life is a gift from God. Can our children say the same about us? Then he closed with a prayer.

Council Chair.

1. The Council **VOTED** to approve the agenda of today's meeting, with the change that we move the discussion of item 7 up to #1, since they are in the building and ready to go.
2. The Council **VOTED** to approve the Minutes of the January 13, 2009, Council meeting.
3. Howard Bryant has spoken to Bill Forbes about his concerns regarding the November presbytery meeting. The Stated Clerk has responded to Dick Sharrett's letter about the recent PJC decision.
4. The Council was reminded that Bill Weaver, Gerry Nelson, and Michael Granzen had volunteered to work with the Stated Clerk on reviewing the proposed new Form of Government.

Treasurer.

Dave Bomgaars reported that 18 pledges have been received for a total of \$197K, a decrease of \$7800 for those churches (3.5%). The greatest increase to date was from Linden.

Discussion Items.

1. *Nuevas Fronteras Grant Proposal.*

The Council reviewed the NCD grant proposal from the *Nuevas Fronteras* group. *Nuevas Fronteras* is a long-standing Presbyterian Hispanic mission in Plainfield. Victor Allojo has been working as pastor with them for a few years. He introduced Anna Chavez, Sandra Estevez, Karen Castro, and Fannie Sanchez, representing the *concilio* of the fellowship. About 5 years ago the fellowship started moving in a different direction, involving working more cooperatively with the host church, United. Since then a formerly difficult relationship has dramatically improved and the two churches are working together nicely. The growth of the Latino community in Plainfield has continued. Meanwhile, this fellowship has continued faithfully, even producing several candidates for ministry. Now they desire to reach for the next step and move towards becoming a chartered, self-sufficient, congregation of our presbytery.

They are submitting a grant application with a list of specific goals for the next few years. The main use of the grant money (in addition their own resources) will be to fund one full-time and two half-time ministers, working through the proposed "Plainfield Parish Ministry," which would include the Bethel and United churches. The three churches would share a "pastoral team."

Victor Allojo made it clear that there will be some kind of Pastor Nominating Committee process among the three churches; he is willing to step down and not have it assumed that he will be a candidate for any of the new positions.

The guests were excused. After further discussion, the Council **VOTED** to endorse this proposal and application, and send it on to the Synod of the Northeast with our blessing.

2. *By-Laws/Standing Rules.*

The Stated Clerk presented what he fervently hopes is the final edition of the revised By-Laws and Standing Rules. He reminded the Council that this remains a provision document, intended to get our rules in accord with current practice, and that it is only the beginning of the process of presbytery restructuring for mission.

- a. It was noted that idea and practice of "teams" still needs work. This is the amorphous

growing edge of the document. While Council is supposed to approve team members in the beginning, the idea is that teams need to be very flexible and unstructured. The original formatting of WATT has been shown not to be working... but WATT is doing some exceptionally good things.

- b. The question was raised about the size of Council: Is it too large?
- c. The question was raised about the role and function of the “administrator?” Is it identical with the EP? Are we in compliance with *Book of Order* G-9.0701a if we make a distinction between the Executive and an Administrator?
- d. The COR report section should say “March.”

3. Combining ECVU, EDU, & OSCU Efforts.

John Illian presented a proposal which would involve establishing a coordinating team between the several program units (Evangelism and Church Vitality, Education and Discipleship, and Outreach and Social Concerns), with money contributed into a common fund from each unit. This would be to build on the New Hope Initiative program, which gives funding to mission/service efforts on the part of local churches. Part of this idea is that OSCU direct funding of social service agencies would be reduced to \$1K each in 2009, then phased out altogether.

This idea will be taken for further study by the Council.

4. Bills and Overtures Recommendation for March Stated Meeting.

Lawrence Finn announced that he has been elected the chair of the Bills and Overtures Committee. The committee has met once and come up with the following plan for debating and voting on the Amendments.

- a. All the amendments will be addressed in order.
- b. One hour will be allotted for all of them.
- c. The debate procedure will be alternating speakers, a single microphone, and a 1 minute limit per speaker.
- d. The chair of the committee will move each amendment as it came from General Assembly.

Presbytery will have to approve this procedure.

The committee will be bringing recommendations for all amendments except 08-B.

Reports.

COR — Judy Wussler reminded the Council that the COR is committed to full inclusion of all people in our worship and mission. She has recently attended a conference on including individuals with autism. She asked the Council for permission to distribute brochures about this program in the distributed packet at presbytery. The Council **VOTED** to allow this distribution, assuming Judy checks on a few minor details.

Adjourn.

The Council **VOTED** to adjourn with prayer by at 6:06 pm (EST).

Attest:

Paul F. Rack
Stated Clerk