

**The Presbytery of Elizabeth
Special Meeting of Council
Draft Minutes
June 15 MMX**

ATTENDANCE:

Ministers present:

Rob Martin (Crescent Avenue), Committee on Ministry, outgoing chair
Howard Bryant (HR), Moderator of Presbytery
Jeffrey Wildrick (Dunellen), At-large
Lawrence Finn (MaL), Evangelism and Church Vitality Unit, outgoing chair

Elders present:

David Rogers (Westfield), Trustees, incoming chair
Jack Paddon (Liberty Corner), outgoing Outreach and Social Concerns Unit, Co-chair;
incoming At-large
Sue Gieser (Westminster), Council chair
Alan Ford (Bethlehem), General Assembly Council
Helen Mosley (Siloam-Hope), Education and Discipleship Unit, outgoing chair
Susie Krivenko (Rahway First), Vice-Moderator of Presbytery

Present *ex officio*:

Paul Rack (staff), Stated Clerk
Sara Burke (Westfield), Administrative Assistant
Greg Albert (staff), Interim Executive Presbyter

Also present:

James Thomas (Iselin), Committee on Ministry, incoming chair
Jill Kitsko (Oak Tree), Evangelism and Church Vitality Unit, incoming chair
Cynthia Cochran-Carney (Willow Grove), incoming at-large
Alicia Tamilio (Bethlehem), Education and Discipleship Unit, incoming chair
Skip Winter (Cranford), Outreach and Social Concerns Unit, incoming chair
Janet Bentley (Basking Ridge), Personnel Committee, incoming chair

Excused/absent.

Judy Wussler (Fanwood), Synod of the Northeast
Gerard Nelson (Liberty Corner), Trustees of Presbytery, chair
Peter Hofstra (Perth Amboy), Stewardship Committee, chair
Roberta Arrowsmith (Connecticut Farms), Cte on Preparation for Ministry, co-chair
John Howard (Siloam-Hope), Vice-chair of Council
Dave Bomgaars (Central), Treasurer of Presbytery
George Curtis (Basking Ridge), Personnel Committee, outgoing chair
Amy Aaroe (Cranford), Presbyterian Women, President
Brenda Johnson (Siloam-Hope), Committee on Representation, chair
Warren Braunwarth (Central), At-large

Barbara McLaughlan (Westfield), Former-Moderator
Betty Prezzy Bryant (Third-Westminster), Nominating Committee, chair

MINUTES:

A special meeting of the Council of Elizabeth Presbytery was held on Tuesday, June 15, 2010, at the United Presbyterian Church, in Plainfield.

The meeting was opened at 5:03 pm (EDT) with devotional time by Greg Albert. He began with a tune on the banjo with Howard Bryant on guitar, "This Is the Day That the Lord Has Made." Then he reflected on the story from Luke concerning Mary and Martha. This is kind of an anxious time in the life of our presbytery. Martha's response is to be a doer. Mary's reaction is to listen. When it comes to anxious times, are we doers or listeners? As a presbytery, some agreed that we react by doing, not listening. One wondered, that, if that is true, why are there so many vacancies on committees. Another suggested that in anxiety we just "freeze." Greg suggested that we are in a time when listening, Mary's approach, would be more beneficial.

The Council **VOTED** to approve the distributed agenda for today's meeting.

The Council **VOTED** to approve the distributed Minutes of the May 11, 2010, Council meeting.

Council Chair.

1. Sue thanked everyone for getting their monthly reports in, thus allowing us to move efficiently in this meeting.
2. She announced the May 26 electronic vote results: unanimous 18 positive responses. The Council therefore VOTED to disburse \$5,998.00 from Restricted Account #2074 to the 2010 Youth Triennium.
3. Next Council meeting will be September 14.

Stated Clerk

The Stated Clerk presented the Docket for the June Stated Meeting of presbytery and noted one change.

Treasurer's Report.

The Treasurer's report was presented in written form. A question was raised as to why we call it a "profit and loss" statement. No one knew why, though there were some guesses.

Discussion Item:

Transformation Team of the Council; Mission Study

Greg led the Council in a discussion of the book we were asked to read, *The Fly in the Ointment*, by J. Russell Crabtree. The Council broke into small groups to reflect on the questions: What did I like or learn from this book? What did I not like or disagree with? How is this book relevant to the presbytery of Elizabeth?

When we regathered, we noted that Crabtree mostly accurately diagnoses the situation. We are organizationally deficient, and Crabtree addresses organizational issues.

Greg previewed the Mission Study structure. There will be three components:

1. Demographic research: using Percept on a one year contract. Will tell us who is out there. Also using Presbytery Ten-Year Trends report, which comes out every fall. This component is basically done.
2. Anecdotal research: developing a set of brief questions to use with sessions, visiting about 12 as a representative sample. Council would go out in pairs. This will take place next fall, before Thanksgiving.
3. Empirical research: connected to Crabtree's work. He has developed a system of assessing governing bodies, which we will use with our "customers," *eg.* our sessions. It is a survey called "the Portal." The NJPPG has given a grant to any presbytery that wants to do this, including ours and Newark (and two more later). This should also be done in the fall.

The main purpose of doing all this work is to come up with a vision that most of the people in the presbytery can endorse. We don't currently have a common vision. Perhaps our former visions are not clear. Greg gave us the statement from the presbytery of Los Ranchos, which was very congregationally centered. Also one from Baltimore, which stresses the ability to do together what a single congregation cannot. Then San Diego, declaring itself a "relational community" "becoming a mission agency." Then he looked at our "Vision 2014." We need to affirm it, or come up with something better in the next few months.

Other Business.

The Council **VOTED** to approve the \$5K New Hope Initiative grant to the Watchung Avenue church from the 2010 budget for their after-school program.

The Council Chair announced that, as far as she knows, her term is over and her work is now done as Chair of Council.

Adjourn.

The Council **VOTED** to adjourn at 6:29 pm (EDT), with prayer by Greg.

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