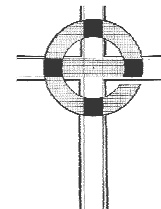


The Presbyterian

of The Presbytery of Elizabeth



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News from the 219th GA: The Middle Governing Body Commission

What did the Assembly do? What has changed?

The 219th General Assembly (2010) has created a Middle Governing Body Commission with the power to act as the General Assembly, upon request of presbyteries and synods. The commission has the power “to organize new synods and to divide, unite, or otherwise combine synods or portions of synods previously existing” (G - 13.0103m) and “to approve the organization, division, uniting or combining of presbyteries or portions of presbyteries by synods” (G - 13.0103n) — upon the request, by a majority vote, of the affected presbyteries and/or synod.

What does it mean?

Presbyteries and synods wishing to realign their structures or boundaries may request such actions from the commission and make those changes without having to wait until the 220th General Assembly (2012) for approval. The commission will also supervise the work of the Special Committee on Administrative Review of the Synod of Boriquen in Puerto Rico and its constituent presbyteries. That special committee has been seeking reconciliation among the governing bodies in Puerto Rico, which have experienced struggles that threaten the effectiveness of the PC(USA)’s mission and ministry in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The 219th General Assembly voted to continue the special committee for two more years.

What’s next?

The moderators of the 218th General Assembly (the Rev. Bruce Reyes - Chow) and the 219th General Assembly (Elder Cynthia Bolbach) will appoint the 21 - member commission. The commission will serve until at least the 220th General Assembly (2012). It must include at least one representative from each of the 16 synods.

Where can I learn more?

The Office of the General Assembly will provide information about the membership, meetings and activities of the commission at www.pcusa.org/oga.

New Moderator and Vice-Moderator

Bolbach, an elder from National Capital Presbytery, was elected moderator opening night (July 3) on the fourth ballot. She was the only elder in the field of six candidates. Bolbach employed brief answers and a winsome sense of humor to steadily gain ground, rising from 149 votes (30%) of the votes on the first ballot to 325 votes (53%) on the decisive fourth ballot. Bolbach’s running mate for vice-moderator, the Rev. Landon Whitsitt, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Liberty, MO (Heartland Presbytery) was installed later in the week



Newly elected Moderator
Cynthia (Cindy) Bolbach
Photo by Danny Bolin.



Newly elected Vice-Moderator
Rev. Landon Whitsitt
Photo by Danny Bolin

"Too Many Meetings"

Church leaders probably spend more time in meetings than any other activity. And yet if you ask what drags down their experience as leaders, the answer usually is, "Too many meetings."

Leaders meet for important reasons:

- to build trust
- to build consensus
- to share information
- to deal with conflict
- to satisfy personal needs, such as inclusion, being heard, knowing the score

I don't want to minimize those benefits. But meetings can be overdone. I've talked with clergy recently who spend all day, every day, in meetings. They aren't hiding from parishioners and other duties. But the effect is the same: *"Is pastor available?" "Not now, he's in a meeting."*

I've talked with lay leaders who have come to dread leadership council meetings. They run too long, people seem unprepared, and the game-playing gets tiresome.

Here are some basic strategies for resolving the problem of "too many meetings":

- The pastor and top lay leaders don't need to attend every church meeting. Learn to say No.
- Information can be shared more efficiently by other means, such as e-mail, brief telephone conferences, memos posted on web sites.
- Use meetings to make decisions and to strengthen relationships.
- Keep meetings short, and make sure they start and end on time.
- Mutually honor good group norms, such as honesty, directness and confidentiality.
- Take turns being "process observer," whose role is to observe group interactions, to identify snags and unhelpful behaviors, and to intervene in misunderstandings.
- Schedule meetings at a time that works for everyone, not just the few who want to stop by church on their way home from work. People need to feel fresh.
- Consider holding meetings less frequently. The monthly cycle could become every-other-month or even quarterly.

Much is at stake. People participate in a church for the personal benefits. When meetings are too frequent, too long, too burdensome and too wasteful of time, personal benefits get crowded out. That can breed resentment.

(The above article was written by the Rev. Tom Ehrich, founder of the Church Wellness Project.)

Handbell Director and Youth Choir Director Needed!

The Presbyterian Church, One East Oak Street, Basking Ridge, NJ 07920.

Handbell Director for two handbell choirs. 6 ½ octaves of Whitechapel handbells. Currently Tuesday evening rehearsals at 5:30 and 7:30. 10 month position (Sept. – June). Must have handbell experience, bachelor's degree in music, and experience working in a church as a volunteer or in a professional capacity.

Youth Choir Director for grades 6 – 12. Rehearsals currently on Sunday after worship at 11:30 am. 10 month position (Sept. – June). Must have experience working with youth, bachelor's degree in music, vocal and keyboard skills, and experience working in a church as a volunteer or in a professional capacity.



Email resume or contact Mary Lou Stevens, Minister of Music, at mstevens@brpc.org; 908-953-9809. Deadline for resumes is August 1.

THESE TWO POSITIONS CAN BE COMBINED INTO ONE POSITION.