

**THE 234<sup>th</sup> STATED MEETING OF  
THE SYNOD OF THE MID-ATLANTIC  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)**

September 15-16 2014  
Ginter Park Presbyterian Church  
Richmond, Virginia

**MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25**

Commissioners to the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic gathered at 9:00 am in the Fellowship Hall of Ginter Park Presbyterian Church in Richmond, Virginia for registration and coffee.

**CONVENING PRAYER/WELCOME**

Moderator Bill Parish convened the 234<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic at 9:30 am with prayer. He welcomed commissioners, corresponding members and guests. Commissioners and guests each provided brief introductory information about themselves.

**DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

Moderator Parish declared that a quorum was present with 23 commissioners in attendance (including the moderator and vice-moderator) which represented 13 presbyteries composed of 12 Teaching Elders and 11 Ruling Elders.

**COMMISSIONERS**

Peta Patton  
Bradford Simpson, IV  
Bumsoo Kim  
James Pak  
Louisa Leslie  
Brett Morgan  
Ed Boyce  
Floyd Gilbert  
Addie Peterson  
Kenna Payne  
H. Carson Rhyne, Jr.  
Miriam Dewhurst  
Kevin Powell  
Nancy Rowland  
Tolokun Omokunde  
Janice Smith  
Janet Rakes  
Carolyn Sprinkle  
Ellen Blose  
John Cushwa  
Eddie Deas, III  
Bill Parish (Moderator)  
Laura Lupton (Vice Moderator)

**CHURCH OFFICE**

Ruling Elder  
Teaching Elder  
Teaching Elder  
Ruling Elder  
Ruling Elder  
Teaching Elder  
Teaching Elder  
Ruling Elder  
Teaching Elder  
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Teaching Elder  
Teaching Elder  
Ruling Elder  
Teaching Elder

**PRESBYTERY**

Abingdon  
Abingdon  
Atlantic Korean American  
Atlantic Korean American  
Baltimore  
Baltimore  
Coastal Carolina  
Eastern Virginia  
Eastern Virginia  
James  
James  
National Capital  
National Capital  
New Castle  
New Hope  
New Hope  
Peaks  
Salem  
Shenandoah  
Shenandoah  
Western North Carolina  
Abingdon  
Coastal Carolina

**Commissioners Excused**

Lynn Burris  
George Wilson  
Neeshard Ahamad  
G. Michael Hickman

**Church Office**

Ruling Elder  
Ruling Elder  
Ruling Elder  
Teaching Elder

**Presbytery**

Charlotte  
Coastal Carolina  
New Castle  
Peak

**Corresponding Members**

Sue Krummel  
Byron Wade  
Bill Reinhold  
Jim Moseley  
Fred Holbrook  
Liza Hendricks  
James Aydelotte  
John Goodman

**Church Office**

Teaching Elder  
Teaching Elder  
General Presbyter  
Executive Presbyter  
Executive Director  
General Presbyter  
SPJC Moderator  
SPJC Clerk

**Position**

Mid Council Relations  
Mid-Council Commission 2  
Coastal Carolina Presbytery  
New Castle Presbytery  
Massanetta Springs Conf.  
Eastern Virginia  
Western North Carolina  
Coastal Carolina

**Staff**

Warren Lesane, Jr - Executive and Stated Clerk, Cindy Hollingshead - Finance Manager and Sarah Cash - Synod Administrator.

**Guests**

Edwin Lacy - Wild Goose Christian Community (Abingdon) and Willie Woodson – (James-HR)

**TEMPORARY CLERK ELECTION**

The Moderator appointed Sarah Cash, Synod Administrator as the recorder for the meeting.

**ADOPTION OF DOCKET**

The adoption of the proposed docket for the 234<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting was approved.

**STANDING RULES AND PROCEDURES**

The adoption of the Standing Rules and Procedures was approved.

**233RD SYNOD ASSEMBLY MINUTES**

The minutes of the 233<sup>rd</sup> Stated Meeting of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic that met March 17-18, 2014, were approved without exceptions.

**MODERTOR'S REPORT**

Ruling Elder Bill Parish acknowledged that the 234<sup>rd</sup> Assembly Meeting is one of change. That change is illustrated by the earlier starting time. It is his desire and hope that everyone will commit to work, fully participating, sharing ideas and remaining for the entire assembly. Commissioners were reminded that the evening worship is a part of the Synod's agenda and that Commissioner are expected to be present for the worship experience.

**STATED CLERK/EXECUTIVE REPORT**

Teaching Elder Warren Lesane, Jr. welcomed assembly attendees, thanked the Moderator for his mentoring in the new role, and acknowledged Jim Moseley-New Castle Presbytery for being supportive and providing great resources. Warren thanked the Synod Executive Search Committee for remaining in place for the first 6-months of his tenure and shared his gratitude

towards the Synod Staff and for Presbyterians across the region that have welcomed him and been supportive to Christ Mission expressed in synods work. He reported on the following:

Synod Permanent Judicial Commission held a trial in Richmond in which the Decision and Order was ruled in favor of the Complainants; Remedial Case # 13-02, Bennett and Smith v. Presbytery of Peaks.

Synod Minutes Review for 2012 and 2013 were read and approved by the 221<sup>st</sup> General Assembly with exceptions and comments. The comments and exceptions are included.

Authoritative Interpretation (AI) was issued by the GA Advisory Committee on the Constitution which impacts the Atlantic Korean American Presbytery. The Synod Stated Clerk met with the Stated Clerk of the Atlantic Korean American Presbytery to share this concern regarding non-geographic presbyteries in reference to BOO G-3.0403c.

The 221<sup>st</sup> General Assembly Action - "Directing that a new configuration of synod boundaries be established [based on an emerging sense of purpose, partnership, context and call] through a collaborative process between the synods and presbyteries resulting in no more than 10-12 synods. The synods shall report to the 222<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly (2016)."

Shepherd Leader – The Synod Stated Clerk is working with Abingdon Presbytery to fill the call for a part-time presbytery shepherd.

Call to Prayer - Attendees were asked to be in prayer for congregations making decisions about their future with the PCUSA, for those who struggle for peace, justice and self-determination in the Middle East and throughout the world, and to pray for those impacted in Ferguson, MO, especially the Brown family.

See exhibit A for the entire report of the Synod Stated Clerk

### **MASSANETTA SPRINGS REPORT**

Executive Director, Fred Holbrook, shared that Massanetta Springs, a Presbyterian camp and conference center provides a place for discovery and renewal through worship, nurture, and fellowship, inviting all to share in the grace and hospitality of Christ. This mission enabled them to host all in the same week; the Bible Conference; A Retreat of Preaching; Teaching, and Praise; and the widely renowned Church Music Conference. Four Middle School Conferences were held using 84 leaders, 44 high school youth and 40 volunteer adults which attracted 1009 registrants from 114 churches in 24 presbyteries and across 13 states. The synod awarded a \$5,000 Leadership development grant to assist this ministry. Fred commented with these closing words, "Thank you for what you do to support Massanetta Springs with your prayer and gifts. See exhibit B for his report in its entirety.

## **PLENARY SESSION ONE**

### **MID COUNCIL COMMISSION 2**

Teaching Elder Byron Wade, having been invited to return by the 223rd Synod Assembly, provided an overview and update of actions taken by the 221<sup>st</sup> General Assembly (PCUSA) and addressed the assembly. In summation, the General Assembly voted to "Direct a new

configuration of synod boundaries to be established [based on an emerging sense of purpose, partnership, context, and call] through a collaborative process between the synods and presbyteries resulting in no more than 10-12 synods." Byron discussed the dialogue and debate that occurred in committee meeting and on the plenary floor. In short, the General Assembly approved most of MCC2 recommendations, but changed the reduction number of synods. Four years are allotted for synods to work out the process together.

### **SYNOD EXECUTIVE FORUM RESPONSE**

The Synod Stated Clerk reported that 15 of the 16 Synod Executives meet three times yearly and reported the following concerning its work. August forum centered on the GA's mandate of directing new boundary configurations. The forum takes seriously the mandate and will seek to fulfill it faithfully. The forum offers its assistance and availability in helping to facilitate the conversation among and between synods and presbyteries at the Fall Polity Conference. While there are many venues for this conversation to take place, the most important is between synods and their respective presbyteries, who understand their emerging context and purpose best. The forum will engage MCC2 in their appointed role as resources to our conversations as needed. Each synod is responsible for its own recommendations based on its conversations with its own presbyteries. This is to be coordinated by the synods, if possible, through a process yet to be determined and put into a single report to GA by January 2016. While there are already some innovative ideas being discussed, these ideas are at this point merely conversation points for synod consultations with presbyteries. The Synod Executive Forum looks forward to exciting and generative possibilities for mission to emerge from collaborations and conversations that will ultimately serve God's people and our beloved church.

### **DISCERNING SYNOD'S IDENTITY**

Teaching Elder Susan Krummel, Associate for Mid-Council Relations, facilitated a process to engage commissioners to begin discerning who and what is God calling the Synod to become and do at this particular time in its journey. Every Commissioner was challenged to respond to questions such as: 'Who is our neighbor and what does the Synod do that is most meaningful to churches and presbyteries?' Luke 10:19-25 was assigned for reading to stimulate conversations around "What would you do if you were the lawyer in the text? What is Jesus teaching us through the story?"

### **RECESS**

The Assembly recessed at 12:25 pm for lunch a blessing was provided by the Teaching Elder. Eddie Deas, III. Commissioner and guests gathered in small groups for lunch in the fellowship hall and encouraged to use some of the time to catch up and to share personal concerns.

## **PLENARY SESSION TWO**

### **DISCERNING SYNOD'S IDENTITY CONTINUED**

The meeting reconvened at 1:35 pm. Sue assigned the commissioners a Bible story to read: Luke 10:19-25. "Ask yourself what you would do if you were the lawyer. What is Jesus teaching us through this story?" Responses from the smaller groups were shared collectively. Commissioners met in small self-forming groups to contemplate such questions as: "If we combined with other synod (s) what would be our mission? To whom do we need to talk who is not in this room? What do congregations need beyond their sessions to be vital outposts for the mission of God? What are centers of energy in the Synod for new ventures? Three clear

themes or purposes emerged from this time, namely, (a) synod is a place where financial resources can be tapped to help; (b) synod is a place where connectionism is maintained across our differences, this church is the body of Christ; (c) synod is the place for preservation of the voice(s) of justice and a voice for racial ethnic persons. Moderator Parish requested that one member from each small group meet with him and Vice-Moderator Laura Lupton to share their ideas.

### **SYNOD EXECUTIVE/STATED CLERK SEARCH COMMITTEE**

Teaching Elder Eddie Deas, III, who chaired the Synod Executive/Stated Clerk Search Committee, provided a final report. He recognized committee members Brenda Brown, Bill Parish, Sarah Eller, Jim Moseley, James Pak and Lawrence Willis for their contributions. The committee gathered in August for a final meeting with the Synod Executive/Stated Clerk. It appears Warren's duties require more than 20 hours a week. The committee urged the Administration Committee to look at what time is necessary in order to do this work. Rev. Deas requested that Search Committee to be dismissed. Motion to dismiss approved with thanks.

### **DESIGNATED COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The Assembly reconfigured itself into four designated committees, namely, Administration, Finance, Grants & Awards and Presbytery Initiatives. Each committee had a docket for the work assigned to it to be completed by 5:30 dinner time.

### **DINNER RECESS**

The assembly recessed at 5:30 pm for dinner in the church fellowship hall. A blessing was provided by Bill Parish.

### **WORSHIP AND HOLY COMMUNION**

Commissioners and guests gathered at 6:30 PM in the sanctuary of Ginter Park Presbyterian Church for worship, Communion and the reading of the Necrology report. Teaching Elder Jim Moseley provided the sermon. The message challenged the body of believers with a reading and sermon based on Ezra 3:7-13. He entitled the message, "***Do You Hear What I Hear?***" Is it possible to distinguish between the sounds of those who cry out with joy in light of change and those who cry out in sorrow because of the loss associated with change? Commissioner participants were Ruling Elder Kenna Payne, Teaching Elder Addie Peterson, Teaching Elder Ed Boyce and Ruling Elder Miriam Dewhurst. The benediction dismissed commissioners to reconvene Tuesday Morning.

## **TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16**

Teaching Elder John Cushwa provided a blessing as breakfast was served at 8:30 am in Ginter Park's Fellowship Hall.

### **SONGFEST**

Teaching Elder Edwin Lacy facilitated Tuesday Morning Worship. Edward is pastor of the Wild Goose Christian Community located in Abingdon Presbytery. Wild Goose Christian Community is part of the 1001 New Worshipping Community. With banjo in tow, Ed demonstrated through song and speech what a Tuesday worship experience is like where rocking chairs are the pews and mason jars are used for communion. His energy, testimony and very presence enabled

commissioners to hear from God in an inspiring and unexpected sort of way. Edward provided the convening prayer.

### **PLENARY SESSION THREE**

#### **RECONVENING**

Moderator Parish called the Assembly to order at 9:05 am and thanked Edwin Lacey for his presence and presentation.

#### **WHAT IS GOD SAYING**

Teaching Elder Jim Moseley was introduced by the Stated Clerk. Jim's task was to help Commissioners discern what we have heard God say to us as a result of activities, gatherings and worship held on Monday. As Moseley began his reflections, he shared some personal experiences related to the Michael Brown shooting in Ferguson. He talked about his service at First Presbyterian Church in Ferguson, MO. Before and while he was pastor, developers from St Louis purchased property around Lambert Field, located in the African American Community, for airport expansion. This was the beginning of eliminating and marginalizing the black community.

Jim summarized the activities and speakers. He talked about commissioners' visioning for the future and the work of committees also being done. He spoke about the angst with some presbytery executives and the perception that synod and General Assembly create work that will then dictate the time and energy for the next few years, while they have no voice on the floor of GA. Even the YADS and TSAD have voice and advisory votes.

Jim introduced a recommendation from the Synod's Administration Committee that proposed the appointment of a 9-member committee with the explicit purpose of gathering information about our Synod in light of the mandate from General Assembly for the Synod Assembly. Commissioners were given ample time to review the document, to ask questions and to suggest changes prior to the business session where the vote would be taken.

#### **BOARD OF PENSIONS PRESENTATION**

Teaching Elder Helen Locklear, Board of Pension Regional Representative for the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic, announced the election of the Frank C. Spencer as President of the Board of Pensions. She gave other updates to include: approval of a 4.6% experience apportionment for the pension plan effective July 1, 2014, a balanced investment portfolio with a market value of \$8.7 billion and the forecast that loss of churches will not threaten the payment of benefits to members. She provided an update on the housing allowance case in Wisconsin; which went through the Seventh circuit of Appeals in Chicago and is awaiting the court's final opinion.

#### **PRESBYTERIAN FOUNDATION PRESENTATION**

Ruling Elder Olanda Carr, Jr. Ministry Relations Officer of the Presbyterian Foundation discussed how the foundation can assist churches with property challenges, stewardship and getting together small congregations. He can help churches to set up on-line giving. Churches

can partner with the foundation if they don't have a web site and/or use the foundation's website as a second location if they want more exposure. There is an opportunity for Planned Giving to go into the future with estate planning for individuals and congregations. Foundation services are free for those just for being a part of the denomination. The Foundation has been in existence since 1799.

## **PLENARY SESSION FOUR**

### **PERMANENT COMMITTEES**

An Omnibus Motion was made to approve the reports and minutes of the following Synod Committees: Executive Committee, Jubilee Trust Fund, Kate B. Reynolds Trust Fund, Speer Trust Fund, and the Committee on Representation. Motion was approved. See appendix C.

### **DESIGNATED COMMITTEES/COMMISSION**

Synod Permanent Judicial Commission – Teaching Elder James Aydelotte - SPJC Moderator and Teaching Elder John Goodman - SPJC Clerk reported the following. They explained that the work of the commission is centered on the Book of Order, that there is much to admire about those rules which are logical, transparent, orderly and fair. They also said that according to the Rules of Discipline, disputes should be worked out with peace, love and understanding, if possible. There were five complaints to the SPJC, all regarding the same presbytery. According to Chapter 6 of the Rules of Discipline the SPJC moderator and clerk are required to see if the complaint meets the four threshold questions. All four questions must be answered then the two officers make their determination which is shared with the SPJC members. These determinations can be challenged. In 2013 the findings were challenged and with the results ending in trial in April. Steps for reconciliation appear not to have been taken by the church. Currently, there is a hearing scheduled and two other complaints regarding this presbytery. They thanked the Warren for his support in the key role of stated clerk.

Nominating Committee – Teaching Elder Nancy Rowland, Chair, presented a list of nominees for synod committees. She stated that there is a need for a black, male, ruling elder from the Presbytery of Charlotte to fill the vice-moderator opening for 2015. Individuals were nominated for the following committees, commission and boards: Committee on Representation, Synod Permanent Judicial Commission, Jubilee Fund, Speer Fund, Nominating Committee, and the Trustees of Westminster Presbyterian Homes, Lynchburg.

The motion was approved. See appendix D for the complete list of candidates.

Administration Committee - Teaching Elder Brett Morgan, newly elected committee chair, reported on behalf of the committee. He asked commissioners to remember the former chair, Lynn Burris, who is facing health and other challenges.

Brett offered on behalf of the committee two recommendations, namely, (1) that the 234<sup>th</sup> Synod of the Mid-Atlantic Assembly enter into 12 months of prayer and discernment about its identity and future, and that church members, sessions, congregations, and presbyteries throughout the region be encouraged to pray for the Synod regularly. (2) That the 234<sup>th</sup> Synod of the Mid-Atlantic Assembly appoint a committee of 9-persons with the mandate to *“Review in total and to recommend to the full Synod Assembly a clarification and or redirection of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic’s core mission and ministries in light of actions taken by the 2014 General Assembly to direct a new configuration of synod boundaries to be established based on an emerging sense of purpose, partnership, context and call through a collaborative process between the synods*

*and presbyteries resulting in no more than 10-12 synods.”* The Synod Stated Clerk and the Synod Moderator will appoint the committee after receiving names and supporting information from Synod Commissioners. The committee should be named no later than October 14, 2014.

Commissioner amended the recommendation by changing the name commission to committee. The recommendation was approved. Future Stated Synod Assembly meeting dates are: 235<sup>th</sup> Assembly March 16-17, 2015, 236<sup>th</sup> Assembly September 14-15, 2015 and the 237<sup>th</sup> Assembly March 14-15, 2016 all in in Richmond, VA.

See appendix E for the recommendations in its entirety.

The Administration Committee will continue to address business items before them which include but not limited to the following: (1) Conduct the annual personnel review of the Synod Executive/Stated Clerk and; (2) Review, edit and update the Synod policies and procedures which are comprise of the following:

- Conflict of Interest
- Operational manual (A supplement to the Standing Rules and Procedures)
- Personnel Policies and Practices
- Stated Meetings Procedural Guide
- Response to Allegations of Sexual Misconduct
- Standing Rules and Procedures

See appendix F to review the Synod's Policies and Procedures

### **ADJOURNMENT EXTENTION**

The Assembly agreed to extend the adjournment time by 30 minutes to accommodate adequate time for concluding its business. Motion passed.

Finance Committee – Ruling Elder Carolyn Sprinkle, Committee Chair, reported on the recent audit and financial history. The committee presented the following business items for approval of the Assembly.

The Finance Committee made the motion to invest \$300,000 held with RBC Wealth Management in First Light Management in small health care industries. Motion carried.

Committee proposed the approval of the 2015 budget. Motion carried. See appendix G for the budget in its entirety.

The Committee recommends approval of the 2013 Audit conducted by Cherry Bekaret CPA and Advisors. See appendix H for the audit report in its entirety.

The report of the Finance Committee was approved in its entirety. See appendix I for the report in its entirety.

Grants and Awards - Teaching Elder Nancy Rowland, presented the following New and Small Church Grant Request. Grants were awarded to (1) Baird's Creek Presbyterian Church, Salem Presbytery for Handicapped Accessibility; (2) Cameron Presbyterian Church, Salem Presbytery for Heating and Air Conditioning; (3) Covenant Presbyterian Church, Eastern Virginia

Presbytery, for Air Conditioning; and (4) Mt. Vernon Presbyterian Church, Salem Presbytery, for cemetery restoration.

Provisional New and Small Grant Awards were made to (1) St. James Presbyterian Church, Salem Presbytery, for Handicapped Accessibility; and (2) Cotton Memorial Presbyterian Church, New Hope Presbytery, for Air Conditioning. One Visionary Grant was provided to Covenant Presbyterian Church, Eastern Virginia Presbytery, for Audio Visual Communication in the Sanctuary.

The committee set firm guidelines for the receipt of all materials in grant applications: February 15 and August 22 by email or postmark. Grants up to \$5000 will be considered. Teaching Elder Tolokun Omokunde, commissioner from New Hope Presbytery, was elected the new chair of Grants and Awards Committee.

The Grants and Awards Committee report was approved in its entirety. See appendix J for the complete report.

Presbytery Initiatives - Teaching Elder Eddie Deas presented a proposal from Shenandoah and New Castle Presbyteries to fund Spirituality Retreat for Women in the amount of \$2,000. The proposal was approved.

The motion passed to accept the committee report in its entirety. See appendix K for the complete report.

### **MODERATOR'S INSTALLATION**

With humility and sincere gratitude, CRE Bill Parish – Abingdon Presbytery thanked the Assembly for its confidence and support over the last 12 months. The Assembly responded with applause and Amen.

Teaching Elder Laura Lupton – Coastal Carolina Presbytery presented a certificate of appreciation to Bill for his service, following her installation. All commissioners whose terms will end in 2014 were presented pens to mark their service.

The Assembly moved to install the new moderator. Members of Coastal Carolina Presbytery were invited to stand with and participate in the installation services for Moderator Laura Lupton which was conducted by the Synod Stated Clerk, Coastal Carolina Presbytery Executive and the outgoing Synod Moderator. Other persons standing with Laura included Ed Boyce, John Goodman, and Helen Locklear. The Assembly welcomed with a rousing applause and a standing ovation Moderator Lupton.

### **AJDOURNMENT**

Moderator Laura Lupton adjourned the assembly with prayer at 1:30 pm.