

SYNOD OF THE MID-ATLANTIC
Report of the Stated Clerk and Executive
244th Synod Assembly
September 13-14, 2019

Welcome to the 244th Assembly of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic. Gracious hospitality is extended to commissioners, presenters, guests and visitors during your stay. We remind you that we are a reduced paper environment. Most meeting documents are accessible via table, smart phones and laptops at www.synatlantic.org and WI-FI connection is available. Final committee reports on Saturday morning will be projected using power point.

Correspondence – The office is in conversation with Thomas Riggs who works for Synod of the Sun as the Communication and Administrative Coordinator. Our synod is in grave need with updating the web-site to make it more user-friendly. Further, it needs help with developing e-mail communication such as newsletters, etc., and social media development and management to include, but not be limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. These tools are necessary if the synod is to market effectively its mission, vision, and ministry which include grants.

Excuses: Jim Kirkpatrick EVA

Omnibus Motion: The following minutes and reports are included under the Omnibus Motion: Speer Trust Fund and Kate B. Reynolds. Commissioners can request the removal of items from this motion prior to the vote on Saturday by contacting the Stated Clerk.

Assembly Follow-up: In response to the 243rd Assembly, letters were sent to presbytery Stated Clerks/General Presbyters/Commissioners requesting, where appropriated, to allow commissioner's presbytery docketed time to report on the work of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic and to make awards to grant recipients. The letter highlighted 8-significant Assembly actions. One ASKS was to allow the Synod Clerk/Executive to attend a stated presbytery meeting and have 5 minutes to bring synod greetings. Each presbytery said YES! To-date, Peaks, Baltimore, Salem, James, New Hope, Western NC and Shenandoah have been visited:

- ✓ Highlights for the 243rd Assembly were published and distributed to presbytery leaders, commissioners, committee members, and related groups across the region. Special thanks to Cindy Privette, Mawuna Gardesey, Susanne Taylor and Tami Scott for eagle eyes and tenacious spirits. The feedback has been positive and the question seems to be, "what happens now?"
- ✓ Cindy Privette reported on an article published on Sunday in The Washington Post about the lynching of Raymond Byrd. "The reporter stayed in our town for a week and a day. I am quoted near the end of the article". Just thought you might like to know more about it. https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/the-keeper-of-the-secret/2019/03/30/bc1294aa-4fe4-11e9-88a1-ed346f0ec94f_story.html?utm_term=.70a505a92b9e&sfns=mo

Ecumenical Ministries:

- ✓ The Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA) in America Synod Assembly was held at Roanoke College in Salem, VA June 7-8th where 150 congregations of the Virginia Synod gathered as a reminder of what it means to be a part of the wider church. The theme during the gathering was "**Faithful + Bold + Serving**". Synod Stated Clerk attended.
- ✓ The National Council of Churches addressed the (a) The slaughter in Sri Lanka of Christians worshipping on Easter Sunday, (b) The millions of dollars raised to rebuild Notre Dame while

three black Baptist churches in Louisiana were burned without any fanfare, (c) Urging the Trump Administration not to go forward with the widely publicized raids scheduled to deport thousands of families and individuals.

- ✓ **Virginia Interfaith Center** - Thank you for signing our **Paid Sick Days Petition** and adding your name to the growing list of Virginians who support paid sick days for all employees! We still need your help to make paid sick days a reality in Virginia. Since Labor Day is coming up, we've created a **Paid Sick Days bulletin insert** for you to include in your congregation's bulletin on Labor Day weekend. You can also **print our petition form** to gather signatures for paid sick days from your congregation or other community group. **Email** or mail it back to us when you've filled the sheet. Finally, we want to stay connected with your congregation so that you will know about important events and actions. Is there someone in your congregation who would like to be a **VICPP Congregational Liaison**? **Sign up here**. Thanks again for signing our petition.

General Assembly Per Capita Policy – The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly passed the following recommendation during a recent meeting. “That the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly approve the following policy related to the consideration of requests from presbyteries for relief from per capita apportionment and that the Stated Clerk will consider requests that meet the following criteria:

- ✓ The request must come from the Stated Clerk of the presbytery representing an action by the appropriate body in that presbytery;
- ✓ Only those requests for relief representing at least a 10% membership loss from the year upon which the assessment is based, and the current billing year will be granted and;
- ✓ In addition, presbyteries should provide a copy of the request to their synod, and OGA will copy the synod in its response, and include a disclaimer that any OGA action taken does not bind the action of any other council.”

General Assembly Per Capita and Financial Sustainability – The Office of the General Assembly has a committee to collaborate with mid councils and other groups to discern the future of per capita and financial sustainability of the Presbyterian Church. The synod exec coordinated a conversation with presbytery leaders and the per capita listening team on July 16, 2019. Participants from the synod included Jessica McMillian, Bobbi White, Bronwen Boswell, Fred Holbrook, Steve Scott and Warren Lesane. The listening questions below were addressed:

- ✓ What is your understanding of per capita? What part of per capita do you value and what part do you find challenging?
- ✓ What do you believe are the strengths and the challenges are of per capita?
- ✓ How is the presbytery's portion of per capita funding? Is per capita used only for administration or is it one part of income stream?
- ✓ Tell us about the decision to remit 100% of per capita. Tell us about your decision not to remit 100% of your per capita. What percentage do you collect from your congregations or tell us about your decision not to collect per capita?
- ✓ In general, how do you talk about per capita in your presbytery?
- ✓ How do you communicate your budget, unified mission giving and per capita?
- ✓ How do you communicate underpayment or full payment of per capita to your congregations?
- ✓ What are stories both positive and negative that you tell about per capita?
- ✓ What is one adaptive challenge facing your presbytery?
- ✓ How does the work of our seven agencies promote or inhibit the collection and understanding of per capita?

Judicial Matters – The synod does not have any complaints before it at this time. The Remedial Compliant filed by Johnston Memorial PC Session v. Charlotte Presbytery was dismissed and its final Decision and Order Issued April 15, 2019. While the synod is not involved, the General Assembly PJC is addressing a complaint ruled on by the synod. The SPJC Moderator and Clerk will complete their six-year term in December. We are currently recruiting a new moderator and new clerk.

Meetings, Committees and Retreats

- Executive Committee held a retreat to address a talking paper developed by the synod executive. Focus of the retreat was on ways to help the synod move away from maintenance to mission. It provided an opportunity to explore with presbyteries ways to become greater partners and ways to hold presbyteries accountable for grants they approve for synod funding. The committee will share with the Assembly at a later time what's next.
- Finance Committee - The annual Audit Report for 2018 has been completed and the financial statements are in the office for review by the Finance Committee and to be presented to the 244th synod assembly.
- Administration Committee - Presbytery Minute Reviews have been conducted by presbytery Stated Clerks under the auspice of the Administration Committee. Administration will bring a report to synod assembly.
- Kate B Reynolds Certification Fund Committee members are composed of the five stated clerks in North Carolina Presbyteries. Synod staff provides support. The committee met to finalize revisions to its guidelines. WNC Stated Clerk will apply the guideline changes to the brochure and application. Synod staff will wordsmith the guideline revisions, send back to committee members for final view. The guidelines will then be sent to Wells Fargo Trustees for review. Finally, the guidelines will be submitted to synod assembly for final approval.
- Speer Trust Fund held its final in-office-meeting June 24th. Five applications were reviewed and \$30,000.00 was available for distribution. The synod exec made a presentation about the work and direction of the synod. Committee members were thanked for their work and asked to be on the lookout for other opportunities to serve the synod.
- Staff Meetings continue to be held regularly. A part of the ritual is to check in with one another about personal matters, address their work load for information and for assistance and a time for prayer in which prayer is offered for synod leadership, commissioners, presbyteries and the church at large. The workload continues to grow and needs to be address as ministries have come alive or at least much more active in the life of the synod

Minutes Review: The 2019 "Annual Review of Presbytery Minutes I commenced April 10, 2019 asking all stated clerks to adhere to the following timeline. All except one presbytery adhered to the request of the Administration Committee. Atlantic Korean American Presbytery has failed to provide its minutes for review and evaluation.

- May 15th Completion for previous year minutes to submit for review
- June 10th Stated Clerks are to exchange minutes according to the rotation schedule
- July 8th Target date for completion of reviews
- July 30th Completed forms and letters are submitted to synod office
- September 13th Reports presented to Administration Committee who return will make recommendation to the 244th Synod Assembly

Pastoral Concerns:

- ✓ Campus Pastor Steve Cheyney wrote in the aftermath of the recent campus shooting, “I think the relentless presence of mainline protestant campus ministry at UNC Charlotte since its opening days, constituted by the Episcopal, ELCA, PCUSA and United Methodist Churches, has prepared us to persevered in the hope that God is our refuge and strength, and every present help in trouble. Back in the 1960’s Miss Bonnie Cone, who founded the university, invited the young pastor and biblical scholar Loy Witherspoon to teach religion and philosophy and to care for the campus community in pastoral ways. He established what we know today as Niner United. A landmark study by ULCA’s Higher Education Research Institute argues that spiritual growth enhances other college outcomes, such as academic performance, psychological well-being, leadership development and satisfaction with college. Campus ministry, in particular, cultivates a student’s assimilation into the campus community and heightens their complete development.” The Synod Clerk reached out to Steve in writing and by phone with prayers and support.

Presbytery Leaders and Presbytery Updates:

- Leaders Formation met in Malibu, California May 5-10, 2019. Following this Orientation, the program will consist of an annual one-week residency for the three years following the new leader’s call. The 2019 Year One Residency was scheduled for May 5-10, beginning at 5 PM on Sunday and concluded at 10 AM on Friday. Faculty for the residency included: Tricia Dykers-Koenig (Associate for Mid-Council Relations), Wilson Gunn (Program Coordinator), Craig Howard (Giddings-Lovejoy), Corey Schlosser-Hall (Northwest Coast), Sheldon Sorge (Pittsburgh), Sheryl Kinder-Pyle (Inland Northwest), and Sara Dingman (Synod of Lincoln Trails and Gavin Meeks (New Harmony). The location was the Serra Retreat Center, 3401 Serra Rd., Malibu, CA about 40 minutes west of LAX. Future residencies will be at Roslyn Center outside Richmond VA May 3-8, 2020 and Solomon’s Center outside New Orleans, LA May 2-7, 2021, and Archbishop Brunette Center at the Palisades between Seattle and Tacoma Washington May 1-6, 2022. Pictured are from left to right are: Tracy Keenan, Fred Holbrook, Jackie Taylor, Carl Utley, Jan Edmiston, Jerrod Lowry, Jessica MacMillan, David Kang and Steven Scott. Cost to the synod is \$4,050.00 per participant over three years.
- Leaders Letter - A letter has been written to all GP/EP/SC encouraging wide publication of the 243rd Synod Assembly. It updated them on particular items and asked for commissioners to present synod award churches during presbytery meetings. The letter is attached.
- Baltimore did a marvelous job in hosting Big Tent in Baltimore August 1-4, 2019. It provided volunteers, recommended restaurants, and shared the best of Baltimore shortly after disparaging comments made by the President of the United States. The Synod Stated Clerk brought greetings at Big Tent on behalf of the region. A powerful workshop was held around the work of the author of “The End of White Christian America,” Robert P. Jones spoke for breakfast at the Presbyterian Foundation August 2, 2019 in Baltimore. The synod stated clerk consulted with the BAL SC concerning Glen Burnie Korean Presbyterian Church in which the presbytery has established an Administrative Commission.



- Coastal Carolina received a Synod grant to assist with expenses for a presbytery staff retreat. It was a great opportunity for building relationships and especially in receiving some resiliency training/spiritual and emotional care from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance as they continue to deal with extensive damage from Hurricane Florence. They expressed their gratitude to the Synod for helping to make the event possible.
- Eastern Virginia – Liza Hendricks has returned from a three month sabbatical.
- James met at First PC, Charlottesville, VA June 18th. It provided an opportunity for the synod stated clerk to speak on behalf of the synod. Words included addressing the August 12, 2017 March of the KKK, White Supremacist and the Alt-Right.
- National Capital – The Rev. John Molina-Moore was elected as the new General Presbyter. A GA Mission Development Seed Grant Application for the Germantown Community which resides within the bounds of National Capital Presbytery was approved.
- New Castle – Jessica MacMillan, the Connectional Presbyter, resigned and has returned to Cleveland effective August 31 to pastor and be with family. An appreciation open house was held August 19th and the synod acknowledged her departure with a token.
- New Hope – Received a synod report during its stated meeting July 23, 2019 in Durham, NC by Ben Cahoon. Ben introduced the synod stated clerk who thanked the presbytery for its support and Tolokun Omokunde provided synod information. John Etheredge was commissioned to his call to serve in Ghana for the next two year.
- Salem – The synod stated clerk provided a day of training for Salem’s Executive Search Committee and its Associate Executive Search Committee. The clerk also made a presentation to Salem’s May 14th Stated Meeting. The synod continues to work with Salem in fulfilling its 2018 per capital commitment.
- Western NC – The synod stated clerk presented at the Stated Meeting in Brevard Presbyterian Church in Brevard NC. It’s General Presbyter Search Committee has been elected. Synod staff has offered to provide orientation. The current General Presbyter will retire October 2019.
- Associate Presbyters Collaborate – Andy James (NHO) shared feedback on a retreat funded by the synod. “A Presbytery Initiatives Grant from the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic supported a three-day retreat led by Tricia Dykers-Koenig from the Office of the General Assembly. Discussed at the retreat were particular areas of interest and engagement in the different presbyteries and they looked at potential spaces for collaboration. They even invited their executive presbyter colleagues to join them—and they did! From these initial conversations, work is beginning across the state to collaborate on interim ministry training and support and to highlight the common interest in ending human trafficking.”



Synod Executive:

- Men’s Retreat – The executive lead a Presbyterian Men’s Retreat for First United Presbyterian Church in Richmond 15 June 2019.
- Chaplain Experience – The executive represented the GA Stated Clerk at Fort Benning, GA for an Army Chaplain’s Experience. I was one of about forty representatives from denominations, seminaries and universities. The aim of the event was to share the insides of what military

chaplains' is, the impact chaplains have, and to encourage recruitment chaplains by denominations because of the great need. The link below provides some pics of the two-day event. <https://photos.app.goo.gl/y56zdV5LqAFGRfpi7>

- Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB)/Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA) – The executive serves as the chair-elect of the PMAB, but is currently chairing a work group to facilitate a Mid-Council Consultation in August in Baltimore, MD. The consultation brought together 16-synod leaders, 2-largest, 2-mid-size, 2-smallest and 2-non-geographical presbyteries to meet with the PMAB. The purpose of the consultation was to help PMAB develop a set of priorities what will guide the development of the next budget cycle. Moderator Susanne Taylor represented the synod since I am a member of PMAB. Her costs were covered by PMAB.
- Synod Invitations: Both Stated Clerk J. Herbert Nelson II and the Presbyterian Mission Agency President, Diane Moffett, have agreed to attend the 244th Synod of the Mid-Atlantic Assembly September 13-14, 2019. The specifics will be worked out with the assembly planning team.
- Bill Reinhold represented the synod, at its stated clerk's request, at the General Assembly World Mission Consultation in Atlanta Ga in March. Bill was asked to provide the Synod Executive Committee a written report of the Consultation of no more than one page and to attend the Executive Committee zoom call at 1:30pm May 14. The synod paid the cost for his attendance.
- Executive Forums for Synod Leaders provide three opportunities annually for gatherings. OGA and PMA leaders met with Synod Execs during the April 7-10, 2019 Forum in Ft Lauderdale. Dianne Moffett, J. Herbert Nelson and Kerry Rice made presentations. Executives met August 4-7, 2019 in Baltimore during the Presbyterian Mission Agency Mid-Council Consultation along with eight presbyteries, PMA Board and PMA Staff. Leaders will travel to Puerto Rico on January 4-8, 2020 to work with the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance in clearing, cleaning, rebuilding, teaching and preaching.