

Presbytery in Brief

April 30, 2019

The Presbytery of Western North Carolina gathered in Anderson Auditorium in Montreat, North Carolina to do the work of the church, worship and discernment, on Tuesday, April 30th. The President of Montreat Conference Center, the President of Warren Wilson College, and the Pastor of Montreat Presbyterian Church each welcomed us on behalf of their communities and institutions.

This meeting was unusually eventful, with several important proposals before the body. We moved quickly through the Consent Agenda and the Stated Clerk's Report so that we could get to the most important item on the docket: Worshipping God together.

It is always a joy to pray alongside the music of the Anderson Auditorium's organ. The music in worship was a mix of familiar hymns, beloved spirituals, and newer favorites. Ray Jones, Director of Evangelism at the Presbyterian Mission Agency, delivered a Sermon entitled "Beautiful Feet" based on Romans 10:12-15. We then celebrated the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, our eyes were opened to the real presence of Christ in our midst.

The bulk of the meeting consisted of the report from the General Council. At our January meeting, we deferred voting on some proposed amendments to the Book of Order due to time concerns. We quickly approved sub-committee recommendations on amendments 18-F and 18-G, exercising our responsibility as a Presbytery to participate in governing our denomination.

We then heard a report from the Discernment Team outlining their proposal for a new staffing model for our Presbytery. After extensive and respectful discussion, the Presbytery discerned that it was not the will of the Holy Spirit for us to adopt this staffing model at this time, defeating a motion from General Council to adopt this new staffing model in a narrow enough vote that the tellers had to be called in to count. The Presbytery then considered a General Presbyter Nominating Committee to find whomever God has called to lead us after Bobbi White's retirement. After discussion, Rev. Katherine Blankenship was added to the General Presbyter Nominating Committee to represent those serving in validated ministries. The General Presbyter Nominating Committee was then approved. Special thanks are due to our Moderator, Stated Clerk, and Parliamentarian for improvising as needed so that the will of the Presbytery could be accomplished as decently and as orderly as possible.

After breaking for lunch at Assembly Inn, we recognized God's call on Katheryn McGinnis and Will Upchurch, approving both of them for candidacy with love and celebration. We also welcomed a new member into our extended family of faith, Rev. Dr. Cynthia M. Benz, who is the transitional pastor at First Gastonia.

Our meeting concluded with updates on the faithful work of congregations who are seeking to be good stewards of God's creation, and with a Report from the General Presbyter.

The Teaching Elders and congregations who make up our extended family of faith, the Presbytery of Western North Carolina, will next gather at the home of Brevard-Davidson River Presbyterian Church on Tuesday, July 30, 2019.

Your Brother in Christ,
Rev. Joseph W. Taber IV
Pastor, Presbyterian Church of Lowell