

PRESBYTERY IN BRIEF
October 27, 2018

136 Presbyterians met on October 27th at the First Presbyterian Church in Hickory. They began and ended this meeting by reciting our Presbytery's purpose:

SEE - We are the Body of Christ!
We covenant to
Strengthen Congregations
Equip Disciples
Engage in Mission

There were two major highlights. First and foremost, they worshiped God! Following the liturgy crafted by Calvin in Strasbourg around 1540, they heartily sang hymns, old and new, and devoutly prayed, corporately and individually - culminating in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. **Whit Malone**, the host pastor, preached a stirring biblical sermon, reminding all that, while their mission from God remains the same, the means they must use to fulfill it need to change to fit new challenges. Their worship was greatly enhanced by a splendid choir in a lovely sanctuary, and the leadership of pastors **John Bates, Joanne Glaser** and **Jill Isola**, and musicians **Steven Mowery, Martha Hill, Spence Robertson** and many others.

Second, they discussed around tables and individually drafted answers to three important questions: *(1) What might we, as the Presbytery, do to help your church share the love of Jesus Christ given our changing landscape? (2) What are we, as the Presbytery, currently doing that must continue, and what is it you value about what the Presbytery currently does? (3) What are we, as the Presbytery, currently not doing well that you believe is important?* All were assisted by **Mark Tidsworth** from Pinnacle Leadership Associates and the Presbytery's Discernment Team, chaired by **Luke Harkey**. These individual answers will be collated and studied, with a report at the Presbytery's meetings in January and April. The purpose of this exercise is to discern how to staff the Presbytery in a way that is consistent with its mission and responsive to the needs and challenges before the congregations.

There were, of course, many other actions at this meeting.

- A draft "Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy" was submitted for possible adoption at the January meeting.
- **Pat Reid** (from Charlotte Presbytery) and **Betsy Ray** (from this Presbytery) were examined and approved for ordination as Stated Pastors at the Third Street and Old Fort congregations, respectively.
- **John Hall, Beth Hall, John Pea,** and **John Stanley** were recommissioned as Lay Pastors, and Lay Pastor **Ken Humphreys** was given an additional commission.
- **Mark Achtemeir, Kat Achtemeir** and **Christina Tutterow** were welcomed as new pastors.
- The Committee on Ministry launched a new venture: Advocates for the congregations (volunteers desired).
- Amendments to the Constitution from the General Assembly were distributed for votes at the January or April meetings.
- 72 persons were elected for 23 committees.
- Many reports were received or approved, including relief work in response to recent hurricanes.
- Information was shared on Presbytery's work in Guatemala and Malawi.
- Many good Youth Events were announced.
- **David Nash** led the Presbytery in prayers of intercession.

This meeting was ably led by Moderator **Melvin Meares**, completing his year of leadership, and **Bob Forsythe**, subbing for the unavoidably absent Stated Clerk, as well as by General Presbyter **Bobbi White** and her fine staff.

The next meeting of Presbytery will be at the First Presbyterian Church in Gastonia on Saturday January 26, 2019.

James Aydelotte, retiring Scribe

Resolution of Thanks
118th Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina

- Give Thanks to the LORD for he is good. We have seen God's goodness in our midst, and we witness to God's action in the life of our Presbytery, made known to us through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- God called this particular group of Commissioners to this place, so that the Holy Spirit might speak to, and through, each of us. We give thanks, therefore, for a quorum of the faithful who mind the business of the church.
- We experienced the real presence of Christ in our midst during worship, especially the beauty of the music. God gave us a glimpse of God's own greatness through the grandness of the instrumental and choral music. We give thanks to God for working through the talents and efforts of all the worship leaders.
- God spoke to our Presbytery as the Word was proclaimed in the music of the Anthem and through the words and voice of Dr. Whit Malone's sermon. We give thanks to God for open ears and hearts, so that we are able to hear and understand how our story of exploration is a part of God's ongoing story.
- The Holy Spirit spoke through the myriad of voices around our tables as we sought to instruct the staffing discernment team on the needs of the Presbytery. We give thanks to God for a variety of experiences of the Church in our many congregations.
- God spoke again to our Presbytery through the words and voice of Patricia Reid - Candidate for Ordination and future pastor of Third Street Presbyterian Church. We give thanks to God for all of those who have formed the future Rev. Reid along her journey, and for God's continuing guidance of her and of her congregation.
- Christ was present with us as we approved the ordination and recognized the ongoing ministry of Patricia Reid and Betsy Ray, and for the welcoming of new members to our Presbytery. The Presbytery is our extended family of faith, and we are always grateful for our family to expand. We give thanks to God for the ways God connects us to one another into one body.
- The fellowship of the Holy Spirit was most apparent in the hospitality of the people who are First Presbyterian Church of Hickory, NC. They arrived early to set up, they stayed late to clean up. They gathered far in advance to plan, they gathered on the day to serve and facilitate. They welcomed us into their church home, such love testifies to the action of the Holy Spirit among them. We give thanks to God for them.