

Presbytery Coordinating Commission Minutes 19 February 2015

Presbytery of East Iowa ■ ■ ■ ■ Presbytery Office ■ ■ ■ ■ 19 February 2015

Present: Mary Atwood (Immediate Past Moderator), Karen Bartel (Treasurer), Rebecca Blair (Stated Clerk), Jim Claypool (Personnel), Kevin Cullum (Camp Wyoming), Harry Hoyt (COM Associate), Ann Luedtka (COM), Sam Massey (COM), Karen Minnis (Trustees), Melody Oltmann (CPM), Kyle Otterbein (Moderator), Al Polito (Nominating), Pam Saturnia (Vice-Moderator and Trustees)

Moderator Kyle Otterbein called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. with the lighting of the Christ Candle followed by the Daily Office from the Scottish Anglican Church and the Daily Collect as the opening prayer. The Office focused upon Ezekial 36 in the context of Lent, speaking of a new heart and new spirit to give direction and power to us. Hearts of flesh can experience pain, but there is a readiness to bear suffering because we are alive.

Moderator Otterbein called upon Stated Clerk Rebecca Blair, who affirmed that a quorum was present. **A motion to approve the minutes of the 29 January 2015 meeting minutes was seconded and APPROVED uannimously.**

Moderator's Report

The Moderator opened discussion of the reports from the two Special Task Forces—one on Presbytery meeting organization and content, and the other on healing and reconciliation. The discussion culminated in the following motion:

A motion to recommend to the Presbytery at the 7 March stated meeting that a PEIA Presbytery Gathering Team be established annually for the purposes of planning the quarterly Stated Meetings for the year with recommendations for organization and content to be brought to the PCC, and that the Gathering Team be composed of six members as follows: the Presbytery Moderator or the Vice-Moderator, the Stated Clerk, the Networking Associate, and three at-large members to be appointed by the Moderator, was seconded and APPROVED.

Vice-Moderator's Report

Vice-Moderator Saturnia reported that the Trustees have discussed the situation at Echo Hill, and have recommended that two representatives from Trustees, two representatives from COM, and two representatives from Echo Hill meet to begin regular conversation about the financial issues. The church is currently paying \$9500 per month on the mortgage, a payment that covers interest only, and in February 2016, this monthly payment will rise to approximately \$17,000.

The Trustees have approved a grant request from COM to fund a team of persons to attend intensive conflict management and resolution training in August 2015 at Lombard Monnonite Peace Center in Glen Ellyn, IL. This item will be included in the Trustees Report as a recommendation to the Presbytery. A second recommendation will concern the funding of a \$2,000 Emergency Medical Assistance Grant for a minister member of the Presbytery.

The Trustees have received a number of offers to buy the Middletown building, but the clerk/treasurer of the former church will not hand over the deed, minutes, and records. James Claypool, who has represented the Presbytery in this matter, spoke to share the history and legal advice with the PCC. He observed that the administrative commission engaged him to write letters and e-mail communications to get cooperation from Angela Smith and de facto control of the records and assets of the church per our polity. Since November 2014, Ms. Smith has resisted PEIA communication, but has shared communications with the local press and the Presbyterian Layman.

Mr. Claypool reported that he has written several letters to Ms. Smith, sent by different means. Because she controls the information stream to the congregation at present, there has been a lack of full communication from her to the congregation concerning the issues at hand. The legal options available to the Presbytery include having a judge declare that the Middletown corporation must turn over the documents and real estate to the Presbytery. This outcome is effected through a Declaratory Judgment Action to affirm civil possession of the property title. The public record reveals several judgments against Angela and Gary Smith for debt collection. On Monday, February 16, Mr. Claypool ordered a title report from Des Moines County and also requested a search to locate the Articles of Incorporation.

A motion that the PCC recommend to the Presbytery that the Trustees be authorized to contract with James Claypool, Esq. to take any necessary legal action concerning the closing of First Presbyterian Church in Middletown, IA to recover all rolls, minutes, historical and financial records and other documents pertaining to the operation of First Presbyterian Church and to protect the Presbytery's trust obligations in accordance with the *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, was seconded and APPROVED.

A motion that the PCC recommend to the Presbytery that the anticipated cost of legal action concerning the closing of First Presbyterian, Middletown, ranging from \$2,000 to \$10,000, be disbursed from the Special Projects Fund of the Presbytery, was seconded and APPROVED.

Lastly, Vice-Moderator Saturnia reported that the Davenport land sale is complete, and the Presbytery office needs to receive a copy of the amortization schedule.

Personnel Committee Report

Committee member Jim Claypool provided a summarized report from the committee. The Personnel Committee is in the latter stages of revising the Personnel Policy and Handbook document. It will be sent via e-mail to the members of staff and to the Trustees. On February 17, the committee conducted initial interviews for the Pastor to Pastors position with two further interviews upcoming. With regard to this position, the committee is also pursuing a recommendation concerning the institution of the Abbot program of peer pastoral care with honorably retired and at-large teaching elder abbots trained to do this. If this program is adopted, the Pastor to Pastors position might morph into coordination, training, and support for the abbots.

Commission on Ministry Report

Ruling Elder Ann Luedtka, committee moderator, reviewed a number of COM policy recommendations concerning pastor definitions, succession and review to come forward at the March stated meeting. The last of these policy proposals will require all pastors to engage in a collaborative performance review with the session as a church leadership team. In addition, COM is reviewing the validated ministry policy in order to update it. Pending funding approval via the recommendation from Trustees, COM will be recommending a proposal that a team receive conflict management training at Lombard Mennonite Peace Center in August.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Karen Bartel reviewed the current account balances. She noted that categories such as monthly expense versus income, year to date expenditures, and percentage of budget expended for each line item may be added to the report format. **A motion to receive the report was seconded and APPROVED. A motion that the PCC adopt the practice of mailing the financial report to the commission members no later than three days prior to each PCC meeting was seconded and APPROVED.**

Stated Clerk's Report

Stated Clerk Blair called attention to the draft docket. The PCC reviewed this document and made some changes including moving worship to the opening of the meeting and placing the officer installation in the context of worship. The PCC affirmed that the Stated Clerk send the revised docket and accompanying reports to the Presbytery in the meeting packet.

Camp Wyoming Report

Executive Director Kevin Cullum explicated the Camp Wyoming balance sheet, current to February 13, 2015. The line of credit balance is \$22,553.68. He anticipates that this balance will be at its highest amount in mid to late March, and he noted that he is in continuing conversation with the Presbytery Trustees that includes detailed updates on

the Camp's financial disposition. Further, the Camp is working with the accounting firm of Honkamp, Krueger and Company in Dubuque to seek an estimate for their services.

On January 30, the Camp hosted a Trivia Night in Davenport. There were 25 tables and over 175 people in attendance. Mr. Cullum expressed thanks to everyone in the PEIA community who attended. This event yielded \$3,839 for the Camp. The Camp has also received a notification that it will be the beneficiary of the estate of a former neighbor to the Camp. The attorney handling this bequest believes that the Camp will receive a gift of \$45,000 to \$50,000 late this summer. Also, the Camp has received a gift of \$100,000 from First Presbyterian Church in Monticello.

Mr. Cullum noted that the last piece of exciting news concerning the Camp is the hiring of two-thirds of the summer staff positions as of this date. He asked for continuing prayers for the Camp during this most important and active time of the year.

Nominating Committee Report

Al Polito, committee moderator, noted that the recommendation form and self-nomination form will be included on the new Presbytery website and will be included in *Out and About*.

At the March stated meeting, Ruling Elder Nancy Macomber will be placed in nomination as the Synod Commissioner and two Camp Wyoming board nominees will be placed in nomination.

Long-Range Strategic Planning

Moderator Otterbein opened a broad discussion concerning strategic planning. The PCC observed the need for further multiple, frequent conversations between teaching elders and ruling elders concerning perspectives on the Presbytery's identity and role. The aim of such conversation is to practice honest, transparent relational communication. There is also a need to bring small congregations into a more central role in these conversations so that they feel equal and important; there is an attendant issue here to enable ruling elder equity of voice as a means of empowerment.

The end point of these efforts should be to know and feel good about the ministries in which we are involved as a means of engaging the entire Presbytery with a forward focus. The discussion highlighted the use of speakers and connectional development as the means to further delineate our identity as a Presbytery and to model practices for individual congregations.

A number of speakers noted that we could draw upon the World Café discussion data to articulate a process by which to move forward. Pam Saturnia, Karen Minnis, Melody Oltmann, Ann Luedtka and Kevin Cullum volunteered to be part of a group to begin to

articulate such a process. The PCC also noted that this process could perhaps be undertaken as a part of the Bergey/Ferguson cohort-based learning adventure if the expected proposal correlates with our needs and is affordable.

A motion to adjourn at 12:07 pm was seconded and APPROVED. The meeting closed with collective prayer.

The next meeting of the PCC is scheduled for Thursday, March 26 at 10:00 am in the Presbytery Office conference room.

Devotions will be supplied by the following persons:

March—Karen Bartel

April—Kevin Cullum

May—Al Polito

June—Karen Minnis

July—Mary Atwood

August—Ann Luedtka

Respectfully submitted,

Ruling Elder Dr. Rebecca Blair
Stated Clerk