

Report to Presbytery Executives – 3-29-08

Highlights of 221st Synod Assembly:

- New Mission Statement – there was a provisional one passed in July, 2007, but a request was made to revise it. It passed the assembly and is now part of the CIF prepared by Synod Executive Nominating Committee and approved by the Synod Assembly. The new mission statement now reads:

The mission of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic is to engage in the ministry of Jesus Christ and the mission of the Presbyterian Church (USA) as described in the Great Ends of the Church (Book of Order G-1.0200) by providing information, encouragement and support in caring for its member presbyteries, congregations and members.

- Reserve for Operations – a motion was passed to reduce the governance reserve of the synod by \$100,000 (from \$350,000 to \$250,000).
- Emergency Fund for Presbyteries – a motion was passed to take the \$100,000 and make it available to Presbyteries for emergency needs. Half will be available as grants and the other half as temporary loans. Guidelines will be set, and any time any disbursement is made, whether grant or loan, all other presbyteries will be informed as to the amounts, the reasons, and the remaining balance in order to insure transparency.
- Heiserman Distribution – each synod will receive approximately \$62,000 for use for new missions. This is a one-time distribution and the work is done with other synods. At present, one candidate for this work is Latino Mission along the I-95 corridor from Princeton to Baltimore. Baltimore and New Castle would participate in this. Another candidate is for a program certification in Elder Competency done in conjunction with Union Seminary.
- New Emergent Ministries – The grants/awards committee will disburse these awards. There will be two per year, beginning at the end of 2008. Two awards will be made based on the interest earned, one for 2/3 of the amount, the other 1/3. These will vary depending on the interest, but it is expected to be about \$20,000 - \$30,000 per year total. Guidelines are in the works and you will be informed.
- The 2009 budget was reviewed and revised downward, resulting in a per capita reduction of 15 cents. It is now \$1.45, down from \$1.60, beginning with the 2009 budget.
- A commissioners' motion was offered to request a study be done to determine if the Board of Trustees could be dissolved and their functions be incorporated into the work of the Synod Assembly. A task force appointed by the executive committee will make a recommendation to the 222nd stated meeting in October, 2008.
- A \$5,000 grant to the North Carolina Council of Churches was made and approved. Funding will come from the peacemaking account.
- The Westminster Foundation (Virginia Campus Ministries) requested and received authority to use the interest from its fund for a short term, part-time coordinator position.

Remaining tasks:

- It is expected that my tenure as Interim Executive will be complete by October, 2008 when a permanent exec is called. If there are any remaining major issues or tasks that the presbyteries would recommend that the synod deal with, please let me know, so I can try to get them accomplished prior to my departure.

John V. Winings, Interim Synod Executive/Stated Clerk/Treasurer

Synod of Mid-Atlantic
March 13-14, 2008
Report by Rev. Sue Burton

I attended the Synod Meeting in Richmond, Virginia for the first time. I met our Interim Synod Executive, John Winings, and the staff.

We received reports and recommendations from numerous committees, including the Synod Executive Nominating Committee which is conducting a search for a new Synod Executive, a draft budget for 2009, an Emergency Ministries Fund and Guidelines for new ministries and projects in the Synod, a Mission Statement, and established a new Emergency Fund of \$100,000 for presbyteries to use when a financial emergency situation occurs.

The details of these reports and decisions are available on the Synod Web page <http://www.synatlantic.org/>.

Our Synod meets twice a year, with conference calls in between. The next meeting will be October 13 and 14, 2008.

Submitted by Rev. Sue Burton

**Synod of Mid-Atlantic
March 13-14, 2008
Report by Larry Poe**

The Assembly of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic met in Richmond, VA on March 13-14, 2008 for its 221st Stated Meeting. The interim Synod Executive, John Winings, reported that the organization was functioning exceedingly well, after downsizing and restructuring, with many of the essential functions being performed by volunteer committees instead of paid staff. Missions are being carried out, finances well managed, Presbytery needs are met, and working relationships with other church bodies are very cooperative.

The Assembly adopted the following Statement : “The mission of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic is to engage in the ministry of Jesus Christ and the mission of the Presbyterian Church (USA) as described in the Great Ends of the Church (Book Of Order G 1.0200) by providing information, encouragement and support in caring for its Presbyteries, congregations and members.” Further background statements emphasize that the Synod will focus primarily on the Ecclesiastical Functions (Permanent Judicial Commission, Nominating, Representation and Trustees).

The Executive Search Committee won Assembly approval of its proforma plan for finding a candidate for the permanent position of Synod Executive and Stated Clerk. The Committee’s time line goal is to receive applications by May and to have a qualified candidate identified for Assembly approval in time for the October meeting. My additional assignments continue to be as a member of that Executive Search Committee and a member of the Synod Finance Committee.

A new \$100,000 Emergency Fund was established and funded, to assist Presbyteries in coping with immediate and unplanned cash requirements. One half of the total funds would be available as grants and one half as loans. To access this Emergency Fund, Presbyteries must apply to the Synod Executive Committee for its evaluation of their need. The availability of this close resource should be especially helpful to our own Presbytery of Western North Carolina, as it pursues the extraordinary legal actions becoming necessary in the Montreat property dispute.

The 2009 operating Budget was developed with significant expense reductions from prior years. The result is that the annual per capita will again be reduced - this time down another 11 %. In 2007 the per capita was \$2.09, in 2008 it was reduced to \$1.60, and now for 2009 it will only be \$1.45.

I can report, with honest enthusiasm, that this body of 28 elected commissioners is functioning effectively and, with divine guidance, is fulfilling its required tasks in a timely manner. Commissioners are demonstrating a Christian dedication and are acting with a broader perspective that makes this a personally satisfying effort. With 315,000 members, in 1,454 churches, spread over 4 states and the national capital, our Synod is by far the largest of the 16 Synods of our denomination. If this church governing model can be shown to work here, it may light a path into the future for the other bodies of the PC(USA).

Larry Poe
Elder Commissioner
Synod of the Mid-Atlantic
Representing the Presbytery of Western North Carolina