

PRESBYTERY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

A synopsis of the Statewide Convocation and Spring Stated Meeting of CAP held on May 29-30, 2009

The 5 Presbyteries of South Carolina gathered at Presbyterian College and Thornwell Home for Children in Clinton, SC. Many commissioners from across the state attended a presentation on the *Revised Form of Government (FOG)* which was led by 2 of the Form of Government Task Force members Paige M. McRight, executive presbyter of Central Florida Presbytery; and Paul K. Hooker, executive presbyter of St. Augustine Presbytery. This Task Force was elected by the 217th General Assembly in 2006 to draft a revised Form of Government (current Book of Order) for the church. The commissioners to the 219th General Assembly (2008) requested that the new Revised Form of Government be sent to pastors, sessions and presbyteries across the denomination for study, comment, and suggested changes. For more information, please go to www.pcusa.org/formofgovernment.

Following tours of the PC and Thornwell campuses, and a fun-filled picnic (lots of food, fellowship and live music) on the West Plaza, commissioners from across the state gathered in Belk Auditorium for worship and celebration of the Lord's Supper. The Reverend Bruce Reyes-Chow, moderator of the 218th General Assembly of the PC (U.S.A.) was well received and preached on the subject, "*Do We Have Faith To Dream?*" (*Genesis 18: 1-15, Matt. 14: 22-36*). The moderators of each presbytery participated in worship, with other commissioners who carried presbytery banners and assisted in serving Communion. The evening ended with a Reception and Celebration of Presbyterian Community in the Thornwell Home Dining Hall.

The Spring Stated Meeting of CAP was called to order by the moderator, Tammy G. Brown at 9:00 am on Saturday morning in the Gillam Center on Thornwell campus. The moderator served as liturgist for worship and Mike Fitze preached on "*Paralyzed By Fear*" from the text *Matt 14: 22-33*. After approving the docket and welcoming commissioners and visitors attending for the first time, commissioners conducted the following business presented by the Stated Clerk/Units/Committees of CAP:

- *Communications*: Approved celebration of the Lord's Supper and collection of an offering (designated for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance) during the *Presbytery-wide Wade in the Water Event at Presbyterian Church on Edisto Island, July 26, 2009*.
- *Congregational Development*: Granted approval to Zion Olivet PC to market/sell their current Cannon Street property for \$2.4 million, and the lot across the street from the church site for \$395,000; in addition to permission to enter into a contract to purchase a new church site.
- *Church and Society*: Currently surveying churches to determine their ministry in the area of Global Missions, with the hope of creating partnerships between smaller churches and congregations with larger capacities for program; re-allocated local mission funds to agencies/churches in support of local ministries and compassionate partnerships. Eddie Soto reported on the exciting progress of Latino ministries, which includes a training program in Bible/Theology; advocacy for Latino families who have been detained or need emergency help; 5 fellowships currently meeting for worship within CAP; and 3 ESL classes.
- *Leadership Development*: Reported and provided information on the upcoming STEPS at Mt. Pleasant Church on August 29, 2009. Through a video, commissioners were asked to "step up to the plate" and encourage our congregations to take advantage of this learning opportunity. Register online at www.chas-atlpresbytery.org. Check out the new Regional Resource Center website at www.regionalresource.org; and the revised *We Believe* curriculum at www.pcusa.org/webelieve.
- *Committee on Ministry*: Reported on triennial visits with pastors/sessions and churches seeking pastors. Commissioners approved the dissolution of the relationship with Deck

Guess as Associate for Congregational Life of Charleston Atlantic Presbytery, effective June 30, 2009 and granted him permission to continue his ministry with "The Porch" as a tentmaker.

For information on Board of Pensions resources, please go to www.pensions.org and follow the links.

- *Campus Ministry*: Reported that ministries in Orangeburg and Charleston are going strong and that students are involved in various mission projects. Because of budget cuts, both ministries lost their ministry assistants.
- *Nurture Unit*: Reported on the programs, retreats and camps for all ages- children through senior high. All of our churches are reminded to participate in these opportunities at Bethelwoods.
- *Preparation for Ministry*: Reported that there are 11 inquirers and 8 candidates under care on presbytery.
- *Presbyterian Women*: Reported on the various projects supported by PW in Haiti and Kenya, and the Elderly Transportable Cottages (ETs) which are being refurbished through a \$35,000 grant from the PW Birthday Offering to the United Methodist Relief Center (UMRC). A PowerPoint presentation highlighted the work of UMRC and the need for refurbishment of the ETs. Our churches have been asked to participate in this effort. Churches represented at the meeting were given a form to complete to indicate interest in refurbishing an ET; forms were mailed to churches that had no one in attendance.
- *Council*: Reported on the presbytery wide gathering, *Wade in the Water*, at PC on Edisto to be held on July 26, 2009; churches in attendance received packets on the event – packets were mailed to those churches not present at the meeting. Updated commissioners on the progress of presbytery in implementing the new Pressing Onward vision; and the state of presbytery finances through the first quarter of 2009. Also informed commissioner of the drastic budget cuts of over \$300,000 that resulted in significant staff changes and salary cuts, program and partnership cuts in all areas of the budget, and reduced support for Synod, GA, and Institutions.
- *Governing Body (Budget) Unit*: The commissioners approved a new 2009 adjusted spending budget in the amount of \$997,755 based on commitments from the churches, which represents a shortfall of over \$300,000. All staff received a 5.5% cut in salary; associate for congregational life position is not funded after 9/30/09; the office manager is reduced to part-time (3 days per week); funding for campus ministry assistants ended April 30; drastic cuts in all other areas of the budget. Commissioners also approved a first reading of the 2010 Proposed Budget in the amount of \$1,118,731.
- *Attendance*: Called special attention to the fact that this meeting was poorly attended and that a significant number of commissioners and ministers were absent from this meeting without excuse. **A motion was approved asking that all churches be notified of the poor attendance.**

Many commissioners shared stories of excitement and great joy in their congregations for new programs, partnerships, baptisms and new members, mission work, new pastors and other staff. The meeting adjourned at 12:10 and commissioners enjoyed lunch together in the dining hall of PC before heading back home across the presbytery. The next stated meeting will be held at First PC, Moncks Corner on October 3, 2009.

Your Servant to the Churches,
Donnie R. Woods
Stated Clerk