

Dear Presbytery Members,

It is a pleasure to serve you as a member of your General Assembly Council of our denomination. The position affords me unique view of the convergence of the national offices with our local churches and our presbytery. For that reason Donnie Woods, our Executive Presbyter, has asked me to highlight what I feel are significant events in the Church. As our Church prepares for its biennial General Assembly, here is what is happening:

- It was announced at General Assembly Council by Hunter Farrell, Director of World Missions, that at the beginning of 2009 our world wide mission personal will have shrunk to 190 men and women, a loss of 30 positions from 2008.
- The General Assembly Permanent Judicial Committee (our Supreme Court) has ruled regarding the Peace, Unity and Purity Report, adopted the last General Assembly, that scruples on theological issues could be claimed by those seeking ordination. However, scruples regarding matters of personal conduct would not be allowed. This ruling upholds amendment 6.01.06-b and bars the door to practicing homosexuals seeking to be ordained. Already overtures are being sent to the upcoming GA to seek redress to this ruling.
- The new Mission Work Plan of GAC will soon be available for your perusal. It is gratifying that one of the major initiatives is in the area of Evangelism, the committee I now chair. As our numbers drop by approximately 40,000 per year, it is imperative that we think about how to reverse that trend.
- Perhaps the most important business before the General Assembly this summer will be the election of a new Stated Clerk to replace Cliff Kirkpatrick. The person in this office is the main spokesperson to interpret the actions of our denomination to our members and to the world. Our Executive Presbyter, Donnie Woods, is on the Nominating Committee that will recommend the final candidate.
- Linda Valentine is the Executive Director of our GAC. She has been in office now for almost two years. I have been pleased with the new leadership she has assembled. Linda has consciously tried to build a balanced theological perspective into her core leadership team
- Finally, there is a trend toward decentralization that I believe bodes well for the denomination. There is an ongoing effort on the part of our staff in Louisville to move the locus of mission and ministry back to the presbyteries. This is the only place that ministry can be done effectively. If this trend continues, I believe you will see presbyteries supporting our mission personnel and that is just one good thing that promises to come.

If you have any questions for me, please call the James Island Church Office (795-3111) or call me directly (437-3153). Mike Castronis

PRESBYTERY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

A synopsis of the Winter Stated Meeting of Charleston Atlantic Presbytery held on February 16, 2008

The Winter Stated Meeting held at Providence Presbyterian Church convened with worship led by Carmen Fowler, Martin Lifer, Carmen McFadden (PW Moderator), and the Providence Chancel Choir. Mike Armistead served as celebrant for Lord's Supper. Worship also included installation of the incoming moderator, E.M. "Mickey" Seabrook, recognition of retiring moderator, Audrey Deas and a service of Honorable Retirement for Howard Edington who served as senior pastor of Providence 2003 – 2007.

The moderator called the meeting to order and the commissioners conducted the following docketed business during the meeting:

- Welcomed *commissioners attending presbytery for the first time* and seated as corresponding members Penny Arnold, Director of Foundation Services for Presbyterian Communities of SC and T. Clarke Simmons, Regional Representative for the Board of Pensions of the PC (U.S.A.) who gave brief presentations on behalf of both institutions. Commissioner Jonathan Van Deventer also gave a brief presentation on behalf of Presbyterian College.
- Elected the following commissioners to attend the 218th Meeting of the General Assembly of the PC (U.S.A.) which will be held in San Jose, CA on June 21-28, 2008: Ministers- Tammy G. Brown, Mark Hunt and Vance Polley; Elders- Henry Meeuwse (James Island), Josephine Pompey (Zion Olivet), and Leslie Williams (Aimwell). Please pray for our commissioners as they prepare to serve the church in this significant way. Donnie Woods was elected to a third three-year term as stated clerk, Richard "Dick" Giffen (HR) was elected associate stated clerk of CAP, and Tammy G. Brown was elected vice moderator.
- The *presbytery received reports from the executive presbyter*, Donnie Woods and staff regarding their work and plans for 2008. Your staff is excited and working to implement the new vision "Pressing Onward" in partnership with the executive committee and council. The commissioners recognized Marion Wrenn who retired at the end of February after serving CAP for 16 years as office secretary and manager. Barbara Burger, our new office manager, was introduced and welcomed by commissioners. Barbara left her position as office administrator at Johns Island PC to join the staff of CAP, effective February 18, 2008.
- Items reported by *Presbytery Council*: 2007 undesignated income was \$1,030,246.72 (97.89%) and designated income was \$738,744.06 (204%) – total income from all sources was \$1,977,758.30; endorsed the "Safe Place for Children Covenant," which was presented by the Nurture Unit, and approved by the commissioners; authorized the

Nurture Unit to celebrate the Lord's Supper at the mid high and senior high retreats in February and March; approved a resolution that was adopted by council recognizing *Arnold Haas* who has served as presbytery treasurer for 40 years; and presented the four priorities of the 5 year action plan "*Pressing Onward*" which was discussed by the commissioners in small groups, after which commissioners were asked to receive, adopt, and commit presbytery to implement the plan.

- Commissioners examined, *approved terms of call and received into membership of CAP the following ministers:* Martin Lifer – Senior pastor, Providence; Kristen Beckstrom – Associate pastor, First, Moncks Corner; and M. David Schaefer – Associate pastor, Westminster. Installation Commissions were approved to install each pastor, including David Lindsay at PC on Edisto. The terms of call and covenant for Carol Guilbert were approved to serve as interim associate of First Church, HHI. COM reported approved sabbatical leave for the following ministers during 2008: Audrey Deas, Alonza Washington and George "Spike" Coleman; extended Al Eads commission as Lay Pastor to Hampton Pres for 3 years; dismissed Joe Brooks, Matt Trask, and Scarlette Bostick to other PCUSA presbyteries; sustained the examination of Lena M. Gilliard (St. James) for the Lay School CLP Track and Harry Daniels to serve as interim pastor of First Pres, HHI; approved 2008 changes in terms of call for ministers serving churches or presbytery staff; and received the annual reports on ministers and church educators. The Vocations Unit announced a Preaching Seminar to be led by Dr. Fred B. Craddock at Summerville Church on April 21, 2008.
- On behalf of the *Governing Body Operations Unit*, commissioners approved the 2008 Spending Budget, concurred with the Ordination Standard Overture (009) from Cherokee Presbytery, and commended the six special offerings to the churches of CAP.
- The *Committee on Preparation for Ministry* reported to commissioners that CAP has under its care 7 inquirers and 5 candidates, and that candidates Karen Fleming, Alex Lever, Debbie Johnson, and Sandi Libhart are seeking calls to serve churches. Candidate Scarlette Bostick received a call and was dismissed by COM to North East Georgia Presbytery to be ordained and installed.
- The *Congregational Development Ministry Unit* reported that the Palmetto New Church Development is going extremely well under the leadership of Mike Fitze and the presbytery commission. A request to officially charter as Palmetto Presbyterian Church and plans for building their first unit will be presented at the May 2008 Spring Stated Meeting. The Unit also report that the presbytery-wide cluster meetings held by council and staff were very helpful in reminding churches of the need to focus on effective evangelism.

- The *Campus Ministry Committee* reported that both campus ministries in the Charleston area and Orangeburg area are going strong. Each is engaged in Bible studies, retreats, fellowship, weekly meetings, service projects and mission trips.
- The *Church and Society Ministry Unit* reported that it is working on plans to reallocate responsibilities in the areas of Peacemaking, Justice Issues, Hunger Action, Local and Global Missions. The unit has invited *Ervin Bullock*, Associate for Network Support in the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program of PCUSA to speak to commissioners for 10 minutes at the May meeting. On behalf of the unit, *commissioners approved a motion to designate Hands of Christ as our presbytery-wide local mission project and to encourage each church in CAP to have a Hands of Christ Sunday to raise awareness of this mission and to collect donations.* Commissioners and churches are asked to pray for the Africans who are being persecuted by the Arab militias of the Sudan, and to help bring about more awareness of the genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan.
- Reports from the *Leadership Development Ministry Unit* included information on a series being provided through the weekly CHAT Line about the work of the presbytery ministry units. *The STEPS Committee* theme for the August 23-24, 2008 event centers on celebrating the many types of music and worship in our congregations. Church educators and youth ministers gather for Bible study each month at the presbytery office, in addition to youth leaders who get together for lunch and conversation. The *Nurture Ministry Unit* reported on camps and conferences, and other events from children through adult ministry.
- For the first time, the docket included "*a time for celebration of joys*" where commissioners shared exciting stories about good things that are happening in their churches. The next stated meeting will be held on May 17, 2008 at Summerville Church.

These *Highlights* are provided by your stated clerk to keep you informed about the work we do together and to be shared with our congregations. Donnie R. Woods



A celebration luncheon is being planned for the Spring Stated Meeting to express gratitude for Marion Wrenn's service to our presbytery. Please join us at the Summerville Church on May 17, 2008 for this special time to honor her.