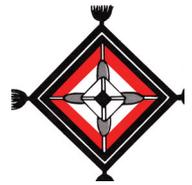


Synod Report



Highlights from the March 2008 Meeting

NEW WAYS OF DOING THINGS

As a result of actions taken by commissioners from the four presbyteries to the 37th Annual Meeting of the Synod, the new structure for the Synod that has been in the making for the past several years is up and running.

Meeting at Christ Presbyterian Church in Tucson in mid-March, commissioners approved the comprehensive plan that re-organizes committees and sets in place a funding plan that will spend down financial reserves some \$1.4 million in the next three years to provide for new programs and services within the Synod.

Under the new structure, Synod with its 26 commissioners from the presbyteries will meet three times each year – spring,

summer, and fall. There will be no Synod Council any longer, but there will be a small Executive Committee that can handle certain urgent matters that may come up between meetings of the Synod.

Two new program units have been created: a Communications Team and a Border Ministry Team. Committees continuing (but in some cases with revised responsibilities) are Finance and Stewardship Development, Personnel Committee, Hispanic Ministries, and a Native American Ministries Committee that will not be organized until after the Native American Consultation in October, 2008.

Constitutionally mandated committee
Continued on back page



Elder Conrad Rocha, Santa Fe Presbytery, was installed as moderator of the Synod of the Southwest at its March meeting. Vice Moderator is the Rev. Carrol Blevins, Presbytery of Sierra Blanca. They were installed by out-going Moderator, the Rev. Al Gephart, Grand Canyon Presbytery.

Synod elects elder Conrad Rocha as its new Moderator

Commissioners elected elder Conrad Rocha, Santa Fe Presbytery, as moderator for the next two years and the Rev. Carrol Blevins, Sierra Blanca, as moderator-elect.

An attorney licensed to practice law in New Mexico, Rocha is a member of Albuquerque Second Church and has served in many leadership positions in the church, including: Synod, (chair of Budget and Finance and chair of the Implementation Team); Presbytery (past moderator and member of Council), and General Assembly (General Assembly Council). A long-time church administrator of Albuquerque First Church and vice president of Menaul School, he currently is executive director of Law Access New Mexico.

Blevins was ordained to the ministry of word and sacrament in 1995 and is currently chaplain at the University Terrace Good Samaritan Village in Las Cruces, NM.

Rocha succeeds the Rev. Al Gephart, Grand Canyon Presbytery, who has served as moderator the past two years.



Commissioners to the meeting of the Synod held in Tucson in mid-March approved a mission covenant between the Iglesia Presbiteriana Nacional de Mexico, Synod of the Sun, and Synod of the Southwest. Present as guests were representatives of the Mexican church who participated in a panel discussion of their church. From the left they were the Rev. Juan Pablo Fuente, Stated Clerk; the Rev. Rodolfo Navarette, Treasurer; the Rev. Arnulfo Gonzales, Moderator, and the Rev. Ramon Garcia, Vice Moderator.



Young Adult Volunteers in Mission led small group discussions with commissioners, interpreting their work in ministry on the Border. They are pictured with the Rev. Jan DeVries, Synod Executive, and the Rev. Brandon Wert, coordinator. Left to right they are Christine Allen, Sean Kerr, Leisha Reynolds, Sarah Robinson, Rachal Pacheco, DeVries, Wert, and Steve Gillard.

New Ways of Doing Things

Continued from front page
tees and commissions will also continue: Committee on Representation, Nominating Committee, and the Permanent Judicial Commission.

Perhaps more important than the actual structure are the programs and events planned for the next three years. Among these are hosting the Kalaidoscope Biblical Preaching seminars for pastors of the Synod (funded through a grant from the General Assembly Council), sponsoring or hosting Congregational Transformation workshops, exploring future needs for Native American Ministry across the Synod through a Synod-Wide gathering of representatives from Native American churches and congregations, holding a similar gathering of Hispanic churches and congregations, and initiating a “training of trainers” program to develop a cadre of 3-7 persons as stewardship/funds development resource persons in each presbytery.

The new Communications Team will be responsible for such efforts as maintaining a webmaster for the Synod’s website, preparing an “action summary” newsletter to communicate actions of the Synod (this *Synod Report* is the first effort in this direction), and development of a web-based general news newsletter.

The new Border and Immigrant Ministries Team will be responsible for such efforts

as facilitating partnerships and networks in order to further cooperative border ministries among the four presbyteries and sponsorship of a bi-national (PCUSA) and Iglesia Nacional Presbiteriana de Mexico border ministries event in 2010.

Synod receives anonymous gift of \$278,500 to be used for leadership development

Synod Executive Jan DeVries announced the anonymous gift of \$278,500 from a friend of the Synod “to be used for leadership development events planned, implemented and hosted by the Synod of the Southwest.”

The money has been received and has been deposited in a Synod restricted account.

In making the announcement DeVries said, “This gift represents a significant moment for us as members of the synod to reflect on the importance of giving – to our congregations as well as to our presbyteries, the synod and the various agencies of the General Assembly.”

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Ray Kersting, editor, design

Commissioners approve Covenant with Mexican Presbyterian Church

With four members of the Iglesia Presbiteriana Nacional de Mexico in attendance as special guests, the Synod approved a Mission Partnership Covenant between Synods Noroeste and Israel of the Mexican church, the Synod of the Sun, and the Synod of the Southwest, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Among the mission activities and actions planned are exchanges of delegations of church leaders, sharing communications, and a “commitment to alleviate and help resolve the difficult situation of our migrant brothers and sisters. The issues of migration and just and humane immigration reform require our urgent attention and intervention. So we commit ourselves to offer orientation in advocacy for the rights of migrants, doing the same on both sides of the border.”

The covenant is the result of conversations that began early in the century. These led to the decision to explore the possibility of entering into a relationship of mutual mission and ministry.

In the covenant, the church bodies “affirm our mutual call to give faithful expression to the unity of the Church that is beyond any human borders.”

The covenant further states, “We state our conviction that by engaging in mission together we will share with one another God’s love and grace...”



As a symbol of the new relationship between the Synod and Iglesia Presbiteriana Nacional de Mexico, Synod Executive Jan DeVries presents Moderator Arnulfo Gonzales a plaque, saying “God is Love.”