


Synod Report



Highlights from June 19, 2010 Meeting

Commissioners make plans for transitional period in Synod's life

Meeting in Albuquerque on June 19, commissioners from the four presbyteries of the Synod of the Southwest made and confirmed plans for the months ahead as the Synod enters a time of transition.

After serving faithfully for the past ten years as Synod Executive/Stated Clerk of the Synod, the Rev. Jan DeVries resigned as of the last of May to accept a call to be the Executive Presbyter of Grace Presbytery (Dallas area), one of the largest presbyteries in the denomination.

Upon recommendation of the Executive Committee of the Synod, commissioners voted to empower the Committee to coordinate the Synod's mission and program during the transition period – essentially serving as Synod Executive. At the same time, added to the Executive Committee were Art Campbell, Personnel Committee; Conrad Rocha, immediate past moderator; Ray Kersting, Acting Stated Clerk, and Robin Thomas, staff. As specified in the by-laws, the original committee is composed of Carrol Blevins, Moderator, and members John Dunham, Moderator Elect; Rochelle Mackey, Finance and Stewardship chair, and Mary Lynn Walters, Treasurer.

Elected to be Acting Stated Clerk until the interim executive/stated clerk is contracted, was Ray Kersting. Because of an extended recovery period from emergency surgery in Seattle early in May and his resulting unavailability, Conrad Rocha was elected Acting Stated Clerk until July 10 when Kersting will assume the responsibility.

Elected by commissioners to be the Interim Executive/Stated Clerk Search Committee were John Dunham, Presbytery de Cristo, Chair; Carrol Blevins, Sierra Blanca Presbytery; Art Campbell, Grand Canyon Presbytery; Marty Bruner and Solema Newton, Santa Fe Presbytery. Jill Hudson of the Stated Clerk's office of the General Assembly will work with the Committee. Synod also empowered the Executive Committee to contract with the person recommended by the Interim Synod Executive/Stated Clerk Search Committee to serve in that capacity.

With the role of middle governing bodies (synods and presbyteries) being evaluated and possibly modified, it is expected that this interim position could be for as long as three years. Term of service, however, will be for one year, renewable for additional one-year terms.

In addition, the Synod directed the Personnel Committee to bring a slate of nominees (2 from each presbytery) to serve on the Synod Executive/Stated Clerk Search Committee to the October stated meeting of the Synod and named Modera-

tor-Elect, John Dunham, to serve as that search committee's chair as well.

At a special meeting of the Synod on May 5 in Albuquerque, commissioners accepted with regret the resignation of DeVries. They also hosted a reception in her honor to thank her for her service to the Synod. Later in the month another reception was held in Phoenix to thank her for her service.

Because the work load is lighter during the summer, Synod voted to close the Synod office on Fridays.

The Synod will next meet in October in Albuquerque.

Larry Norris leaves Cook Ministries

The Rev. Larry Norris, president of Cook Native American Ministries, Tempe, is leaving the school to serve as pastor of Central United Methodist Church in Phoenix.

He has been at Cook since 1984. He began his new position July 1.

In a letter he said, "I am forever grateful to have had the opportunity to be a part of God's work at Cook. It has broadened and deepened my understanding of Native people, the Kingdom of God, and has opened the doors to meet and develop relationships with some of the most wonderful people on the planet!"

Today, Cook Native American Ministries continues to expand the vision and passion of Charles H. Cook, founder of the school, beyond the walls of a traditional school building - to bring newer and greater opportunities for education to Native Americans than ever before.

Watson is Regional Presbyter in New Mexico

The Rev. Sallie Watson was installed June 11 in Albuquerque as Regional Presbyter/Stated Clerk for Santa Fe and Sierra Blanca Presbyteries. She comes from Arkansas where she was Interim Executive Presbyter of Arkansas Presbytery.

Rather than merging the two presbyteries, commissioners voted two years ago to maintain their own identities but to share staff. Yet to be hired is an Associate Stated Clerk/Office Manager and an Administrative Assistant. Deadline for applying for these positions is July 15.

Watson succeeds Jim Collie in Santa Fe Presbytery and Jeff Finch in Sierra Blanca.

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