

Minutes in Seconds
Digest of Actions Taken at Stated Meeting of
The Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley
First Presbyterian Church Unadilla NY, Sept. 15, 2009

The meeting theme was “**Luke 4:18-19.**” We were welcomed by Host Pastor **Patty Wolff**. First time commissioners and guests were introduced, including **Brooke Newell**, Advocacy Director for the Fab Five Presbytery Partnership Group, United Methodist Pastor **Sue Wenner** (serving the Worcester Presbyterian Church), and **Dr. Steve Swanson** (new Pastor at Andes Presbyterian Church upon transferring from San Jose Presbytery). The Rev. **Joe Sellepack** (Director of Broome County Council of Churches) was seated as a corresponding member.

Consent Agenda approval included the Financial Reports through July 31, 2009, first reading of a “Financial Reality Checklist” for churches seeking pastors from COM, and a Resolution from the Lay Preaching Committee honoring Don Law and requesting exemption from a Continuing Education requirement so that he could be re-commissioned with other Lay Preachers.

Minutes of March 28, 2009 Presbytery Assembly meeting in Walton and the **June 16, 2009** Presbytery Assembly meeting in Endwell were approved with spelling corrections.

Joe Sellepack preached for evening **Worship**, basing his sermon “One Crowded Doorway” on Mark 1:29-39. He noted that CHOW gives away food to 6,000 every month and the meals served at First Presbyterian Church, Binghamton feed a couple hundred people. Communion was celebrated, using liturgical readings from “Becoming Bread: Meditations on Loving and Transformation by Gunita Norris, The Bell Tower, NY, 1993.

Brooke Newell led a **Workshop on Hunger** using Bread for the World (BFW) materials, and playing a “Jeopardy” like game on hunger facts. BFW Offering of Letters were available to sign. The video on Hunger from BFW (which had no sound at the meeting) can be ordered through Brooke or BFW.

After Dinner and 30-second Announcements, the **Stated Clerk’s** report noted locations for Fall Reading of Session Minutes. The Stated Clerk then read into the record of the meeting the **Synod Permanent Judicial Commission Decisions of Sept. 1 and Sept. 2, 2009**, the **Sept. 10, 2009 Settlement Agreement** reached between Complainant in the Remedial Case before the Synod, and the Committee of Counsel for the Presbytery, and the **Sept. 15, 2009 Synod PJC acceptance of the Settlement and dismissal of the case**. Motion to **Appoint an Administrative Commission** in accordance with Presbytery By-Laws and the Settlement Agreement was approved. The Rev. Dr. Barbara Schwartz read a personal statement and requested it be entered into the record of the presbytery, which was later voted on.

In conjunction with an article of the Settlement Agreement, **motion was approved for Council to define “relevant” papers kept in ministers’ files** before the Stated Clerk removes irrelevant papers and clergy may view their own files.

Council Moderator **Deb Fleming** brought the **Council Report**. Information included grants for Healthy Congregations training, approval of property sales for Oneonta First and John Hus (former South Hills Vestal manse), and continued conversations with Cayuga-Syracuse & Utica Presbyteries about sharing financial services staffing.

Finance sub-committee chair Lisa Heckman spoke to the Council’s action item on the **proposed 2010 Budget**. After discussion on raising per capita, the reluctance to cut mission, whether the Ethiopian Partnership had savings in reserve (those are actually underwriting the 2009 EPMT budget), and whether cost-of-living staff salary increase of 2.8% was wise in this economic hard time, the **Presbytery referred the 2010 Budget back to Council**.

Council Moderator **Deb Fleming** asked for comments back on the other two actions items, rather than take up time on the assembly floor. **Comments on proposed re-wording of the Mission Statement** are to

be directed to the Council by e-mail; **comments about geographic location of presbytery assembly meetings** are to be directed to the Stated Clerk (statedclerk@susvalpresby.org)

IEPTT Cheryl Ann Elfond elected to forego her planned communications exercise to merely say “Praise God” in light of the lateness of the hour.

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry brought Candidate **Doug Hatch to read his Statement of Faith, and to be examined for ordination.** Hatch had completed all the requirements to become a minister of word and sacrament, and had received a call to the Marathon Church. After the examination and vote to approve, Hatch was welcomed back with applause. Cortland-United Pastor John Gay and elder Tom Bonne were invited to stand with Doug Hatch while Presbytery Moderator Pat Raube offered a prayer and he was presented with a new Book of Order from CPM.

CPM Moderator Barbara Schwartz then thanked churches for supporting the **Theological Education Fund**, with Conklin, Cincinnatus, Ithaca and Nineveh churches having most consistently contributed.

CPM’s **motion to approve “Confidentiality Protocols”** for their committee was then presented, followed by **substitute motion from Council for “Confidentiality Policy”** for the larger presbytery. While the motions were being “perfected” and before discussion on the substance, motion to refer back to Council and to CPM was made and approved.

Committee on Ministry Moderator Doug Horne brought the recommendation for 2010 Pastor Compensation (“Minimum Terms of Call”), which amounted to a 2.8% cost –of-living increase – which, after discussion, was NOT approved. Horne then asked for results of the Congregational Meeting Sept. 13th to call Doug Hatch to Marathon; Elder Joanne Rienhardt affirmed “We unanimously want him.” **Doris White was recommended to be appointed Commissioned Lay Pastor for Windsor Church.** White’s Statement of Faith was in presbytery papers. After questioning and vote to approve, she was also welcomed back to applause. Vice-Moderator Chris Burger led the commissioning service and prayer for the new CLP.

The **Committee on Lay Preaching** report was given by Marilyn Myers, who thanked the assembly for their affirmation of Don Law under the Consent Agenda. The motion to Re-commission Lay Preachers was then approved and a commissioning service (for 3 years except as noted) followed: Class I - Enid Carter, Fred Downs, Deb Fleming, Don Law, Judi Gage, Tom Rossi, Doris White, Class III - Viktor Lipko (2 years); Class IV - George Budine, Shirley Davis, Laura Lawson & Janet Schwengber, Karen Sickman Marshfield (1 year) & Bonnie Wheeler (1 year)

Brad McFall, Stewardship of Creation Enabler spoke for the **Justice in Mission** ministry team, noting upcoming presbytery visits for World Mission Challenge (please sign up to host our visiting mission workers), advocacy training for Fab Five PPG on Oct. 17th led by Brooke Newell, and requested advocacy action on Climate Change (upcoming Copenhagen Conference).

Terry Fitz-Henry of the Ethiopian Partnership read an African story written by Jane and Christopher Kurtz, who grew up in a missionary family in Ethiopia.

For the **Transformation Team**, **Judi Gage** reported that 9 churches made commitments to the **Acts 16:5 Initiative** (2 year program) with six receiving funding help. There will be all day training with dinner Oct. 20 at Conklin Presbyterian Church. **Rev. Lisa Mays** led a prayer for the churches and renewal.

The **Committee on Representation** had a written report - churches and members should have completed the confidential demographic survey posted on the presbytery website under Forms. The **Christian Nurture** team had a publicity flyer on the Nov. Senior High Retreat at the Registration Table.

There were 39 elders, 32 ministers and 20 visitors registered as present at this meeting. The next Presbytery Assembly will be **Saturday morning December 5, 2009 at East Guilford Presbyterian Church.**