



Heartland Presbytery

3210 Michigan Avenue, Suite 200, Kansas City, Missouri 64109-2055
Telephone (816) 924-1730 • FAX (816) 861-2923 • 1-800-332-4849.

www.heartlandpby.org



WHAT HAPPENED AT PRESBYTERY

September 13, 2011

(For Report to Sessions)

TO A SANCTUARY-FILLING & OVEFLOW-ROOM-USING PRESBYTERY, the Rev. Rachel Lancey (Tarkio, Tarkio MO) preached on the theme “Sow to the Spirit.” The Rev. Lancey charged presbyters to pray, to listen to the Holy Spirit and, especially, to each other, and to speak out. God keeps us on our toes, the Rev. Lancey asserted, by constantly challenging us to step out of our comfort zone and try something new. The combined choirs of the King City and First, Albany, congregations sang “On Eagle’s Wings” as the anthem. The Lord’s Supper was co-celebrated by the Rev. Lancey and the Rev. Robert Dahlgren, pastor of the King City, and First, Albany, congregations. The offering of \$1021.63 will be divided between Living Waters for the World (the mission project of the hosting congregations) and the Heartland Center (the Presbytery mission project.)

CULMINATING MANY YEARS OF ACADEMIC PREPARATION AND WORK EXPERIENCE, Presbytery conducted the Service of Recognition for JAN ZIMMERMAN (Stanley, Overland Park KS) as a CERTIFIED CHRISTIAN EDUCATOR. Elder Judy Cooper (Village, Prairie Village KS), mentor and colleague, described the process of becoming a CCE, and Elder Zimmerman’s work with the national Certification Council. The Rev. Eric Laverentz (Stanley, Overland Park), read from II Corinthians 3, spoke briefly on the “fruits of the spirit”, and praised Educator Zimmerman for embodying the religious goals of the Stanley congregation. Moderator Beverly Barr asked the constitutional questions, to which Educator Zimmerman responded affirmatively. Elder Zimmerman thanked the Presbytery, indicating that she accepted her recognition as on behalf of all Certified Christian Educators, whether employed or not. Presbytery greeted Elder Zimmerman’s words with applause, and the singing of the hymn “It Only Takes a Spark.”

THE MOST PLAYFUL MOMENT OF THE MEETING resulted from the Church Order and Listening Division’s annual report on session minutes read. Division Moderator the Rev. Heidi Peterson (Central, Kansas City MO) indicated that the Division felt some way should be found to recognize those sessions whose minutes had been presented for review, and of encouraging other sessions to get their minutes in on time. Therefore she and the Rev. Pat Jackson (Blue Ridge, Raytown MO), a member of the Division, conducted a prize drawing for the participating sessions. First prize (a pan of home-made brownies) went to Heritage, Olathe KS (there were many offers to help “escort” the brownies home!). Second prize (a gift-wrapped copy of the new Book of Order) went to Westminster, Ottawa KS, while third prize (a “free” sermon from Executive Presbyter the Rev. Charles Spencer) was secured by Leawood Presbyterian Church, Leawood KS.

ONLY 7 CHURCHES IN HEARTLAND PRESBYTERY SUPPORTED THE THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FUND IN 2010, stated the Rev. Maryann Farnsworth, Heartland Presbytery’s representative for the Fund, the only church-wide support for the denomination’s seminaries. The Rev. Farnsworth contrasted this slim support with the 70% of the congregations in Northern Kansas Presbytery which provide financial resources to the Fund, and challenged the churches to step

up to the responsibility of ongoing support for denominational theological education. The challenge goals which the Rev. Farnsworth presented, using the 1% TEF formula, would require some churches to provide only one dollar to meet their individual goal; if all the presbytery's congregations would accept the goals for 2012, \$11,334 would be raised in support of seminary education.

ONLY 28 OF HEARTLAND PRESBYTERY CONGREGATIONS MAKE AN ANNUAL PLEDGE TO SUPPORT THE SHARED MISSION BUDGET OF PRESBYTERY reported Elder Bond Faulwell, outgoing chairperson of the Council's Business Affairs committee, in reviewing the Presbytery's current financial situation and presenting the proposed 2012 Presbytery budget for action. With the additional 20 congregations who annually make Shared Mission payments, but do not pledge, and with 30-35 % of received Shared Mission income coming in during the months of November and December, it is very difficult to project accurately the funds available for Presbytery's mission projects. In the past, Elder Faulwell noted, the Presbytery has prepared a "challenge" mission budget to encourage sessions to pledge. Unfortunately, no churches accepted the challenge, but the entities spent as though the funds had been received, resulting in unsustainable deficits. The 2012 budget reduced Shared Mission proposed expenses to the amount actually received in past years, which resulted in some significant reductions: Church Development & Redevelopment was reduced by 37% from 2011, as was the Heartland Presbyterian Center and the Presbyterian Urban & Immigrant Ministry Network by 32%. Reductions in these three areas of \$87,400 accounted for 82% of the overall reductions from the 2011 levels. On the positive side, Elder Faulwell reported, congregations do for the most part pay their per capita, so that is an easier part of the 2012 budget to project. Reductions in per capita expenses from the first draft of the budget were achieved by eliminating proposed salary increases for Presbytery staff, which will mean the third consecutive year in which the staff have received no increases. PRESBYTERY UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE PROPOSED 2012 BUDGET.

CARRYING ON THE THEME OF CHALLENGING THE CONGREGATIONS TO SUPPORT EXCITING MISSION TAKING PLACE IN THE PRESBYTERY AND BEYOND, Executive Presbyter the Rev. Charles Spencer indicated that if every congregation would give a tithe of their annual living donor income to Presbytery's shared mission, the Presbytery could start a new church every year, or redevelop 10 existing congregations annually.

Rev. Seth Wheeler (Northminster, Kansas City MO) , noted that the CHURCH DEVELOPMENT & REDEVELOPMENT DIVISION discussed whether "Revitalization" was a more appropriate Division name , in light of THE "ACTS 16:5 INITIATIVE" and the positive response the program has elicited. Asking presbyters where they wanted their congregations to be in 3 years, the Rev. Wheeler noted that the Initiative is designed to help congregations to move from "decline" to "incline". The Rev. Jim Gordon (Pine Ridge, Kansas City MO) testified to the value for, and excitement in, his congregation about the "blessing and adding to" components of the program, and of the importance to him personally of meeting regularly with pastors in the program with similar hopes and dreams for their congregations.

AMONG MANY ANNOUNCEMENTS OF UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO HEARTLAND PRESBYTERY CONGREGATIONS, the "TV pitchman" presentation by the Rev. Jonathan Mitchell brought laughter to presbyters as he "touted" the "Embracing Hope" event occurring in January 2012, where the Rev. Bruce Reyes-Chow, moderator of the 218th General Assembly will be the keynote speaker.