



## Heartland Presbytery

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### WHAT HAPPENED AT PRESBYTERY

November 12, 2011

(For report to sessions)

THREE TEACHING ELDERS were examined for membership in Heartland Presbytery, enlarging the Heartland Presbytery “family” THE REV DR. KEVIN JONES (spouse of the Rev. Mari Lyn Jones, recently installed at Designated Pastor at Paola, KS) was examined for his call to be pastor at First, Clinton MO. The Rev. Dr. Jones responded to questions concerning the importance of his prior chaplaincy service in his faith formation, the opportunities and challenges of moving from chaplaincy to a pastoral position in the Clinton area, and to the role of God in the matter of human repentance. THE REV. DR. CYNTHIA HOLDER RICH was examined for the (evolving) position of Executive Associate Pastor for Mission and Ministry at Village Presbyterian, Prairie Village KS. Citing John Calvin’s “Tulip” and referencing the “I” as “irresistible grace”, the Rev. Dr. Holder indicated that had guided her ministry, and her need to share that good news with the world, not hide it under a bushel. Responding to a question about the “counter-cultural” nature of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Rev. Dr. Holder described her experiences in Madagascar, where the population (in spite of famine, military coup, and international sanctions) fill the churches, because Jesus Christ as healer is the one certainty in the people’s otherwise totally uncertain lives. THE REV. MARY E. WRIGHT, currently a member of Cimarron Presbytery, was examined for membership, in order to serve as Interim Pastor at First, Lee’s Summit. Asked about the challenges of interim service there, the Rev. Wright stated that it was difficult to follow someone who walked on water for 25 years, but the pool has now been drained, which brought laughter from the presbytery, led by her predecessor the Rev. Dr. Ron Galvin. The Rev. Wright also noted that First, Lee’s Summit was such a busy church, with so much going on, that she wondered if there was time to do all of the tasks of interim ministry. The chair of the Interim Search Committee, Ruling Elder Adam Fauss, assured presbyters that the church was “ready to go” do the interim tasks.

CONTINUING THE THEME OF CELEBRATORY MINISTRY, the PRESBYTERY RECOGNIZED THE ORDINATION ANNIVERSARIES of 32 Teaching elders who in 2010 celebrated their 5th-year to 65th-year of ordination; of this number 20 were presented certificates of appreciation for 25 or more years of service. Presbytery also recognized the ordination anniversaries of 31 Teaching Elders who in 2011 passed the same 5-year milestones. Of these, 23 were presented with certificates of appreciation for 25 or more years of service. TAKEN ALTOGETHER, THESE 61 TEACHING ELDERS HAVE PROVIDED 1,830 YEARS OF SERVICE TO OUR DENOMINATION! Presbytery ALSO COMMISSIONED 3 Teaching Elders and 9 laity from three different congregations (First, Independence, MO; Rolling Hills, Overland Park, KS; and First, St. Joseph, MO) to serve as a TEAM OF VISITORS TO OUR PARTNER PRESBYTERY, MAYA QUICHE, IN GUATEMALA. The team will spend a week there in January. The Rev. Ky Weekley brought Presbytery news of an additional visit by members of Heartland Presbytery to Maya Quiche to provide assistance to that Presbytery to establish needed financial policies and procedures. Presbytery also granted the status of HONORABLY RETIRED TO the Rev. Tom Thomas (Higginsville & Corder, churches) and

Charles W. Spencer, M.Div.  
Executive Presbyter

Leigh B. Gillis, M.Div.  
Associate Executive Presbyter

David E. Meerse, Ph.D  
Stated Clerk

expressed special appreciation for his work with the Worship and Fellowship Division in preparing the Presbytery Covenant.

PRESBYTERY OFFICERS for 2012, who were elected at this meeting and will be installed at the February meeting, are Teaching Elder Donna Chavez (Argentine United, Kansas City MO, and Southridge, Roeland Park KS) as Moderator; Ruling Elder Bob Stikeleather (First, Independence MO) as Moderator-elect; and Ruling Elder Terry Miller (Linwood United, Kansas City MO) for a 3-year term as Treasurer. GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMISSIONERS elected to attend the 220<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (Pittsburgh, PA; June 30-July 7, 2012) are: (Teaching Elders) Chad Herring (Southminster, Prairie Village, KS); Glenda Watts (Honorably Retired); Paul A. Gaug (Brookdale, St. Joseph MO); (Ruling Elders) Cheryl Keimig (Parkville, Parkville, MO); Bob Stikeleather (First, Independence, MO); Avis Odenbaugh (Blue Ridge, Raytown, MO); and (Young Adult Advisory Delegate) (Ruling Elder) Connor Clark (Parkville, Parkville MO). Nominating Committee Moderator Ann Rich explained Presbytery's additional stipulations in terms of service and attendance which guide the Committee in making its Commissioner nominations. Presbytery also elected 43 persons to service on the commissions, divisions, committees and councils of the Presbytery, and elected 11 individuals to moderate these entities.

Likening their work to the ravens who brought manna in the desert to the prophet Elijah when he hid at the brook named Cherith, Teaching Elder ERIC GARBISON described THE WORK OF THE CHERITH BROOK COMMUNITY where he ministers as falling under the categories of hospitality to those who need hot breakfasts, hot coffee, showers, and clean clothing, of peacemaking with emphasis on opposition to the nuclear weapons industry, and of community with emphasis on doing together much more than can be done by individuals. The Cherith Brook community is supported by the Mission and Social Justice Division. REACHING MORE THAN 200 CHILDREN in 20 years is a major mission of the Bethel Presbyterian Church, a 60-member congregation in Kansas City, KS, according to Ruling Elder Greg Wooton, who gave a "Minute for Mission" during the STEWARDSHIP & MISSION DIVISION'S REPORT. Crediting Presbytery's Immigrant & Urban Ministry Network's support and the leadership of Interim Pastor Dennis Haynes for this successful program of evangelizing children who want to learn about Jesus, Elder Wooton thanked Presbytery for the support which made their success possible. Division Moderator Teaching Elder Carla Gentry also noted the Division's willingness to meet with sessions regarding making or increasing a pledge to Presbytery's Shared Mission budget for support of all the exciting mission going on in the Presbytery.

EXCITING MISSION WITH CHILDREN was also the focus of Ruling Elder Dan Scheneman's report on the past year at the Heartland Presbyterian Center, and plans for expanded ministry in the years ahead as the result of the dining hall expansion at the Center. Remodeling of the old dining hall into conference space will allow the Center to meet the increased demand for weekend retreats at the Center, which helps offset the financial cost of the highly successful youth summer programs. MINISTRY WITH OLDER ADULTS AT Aberdeen Village was the focus of Susan Willey's report from Aberdeen Village. She encouraged Presbyters who are "not ready yet" to explore the various opportunities for getting acquainted with retirement-style living at the Village.

On the virtually-only divided vote of the day, PRESBYTERS voted 114 for, 14 against, the request of the Administrative Commission on Churches Seeking Dismissal from the Denomination to concur with their action to formally declare that Colonial Presbyterian Church has abandoned its work and mission as a PC (USA) congregation. Commission Member (Teaching Elder) Joe Carle explained that this was not a vote to dissolve the congregation, but that this declaration left in place an entity with which the Commission might be able to work; to dissolve the congregation would leave nothing officially in place to work with the Commission.

