

MINUTES
Heartland Presbytery
First Called Meeting
 July 29, 2008

Heartland Presbytery met on Tuesday, July 29, 2008, with the Kaw Prairie Community Church hosting the meeting in the place where they worship at the St. James Academy, a Catholic High School in Lenexa, Kansas.

Moderator Tamara Miller opened the meeting with prayer at 9:39 a.m. using a prayer from the opening worship of the 218th General Assembly.

Rev. Joe Pallikkathayil moved the approval of the docket. It was seconded and approved.

Announcements included a warm welcome by host pastor Dan McKnight, Kaw Prairie Community Church; a request from Malinda Spencer, Church Resource Center Director to utilize the newly place Paper Retriever bin in the parking lot of the Harold Thomas Center and a reminder from Earthkeepers to carpool to presbytery committee meetings and stated meetings to practice good stewardship.

The Stated Clerk introduced corresponding members Rev. Molly Jones (Presbytery of Miami) and Rev. John Welch (UMC). **Rev. Craig Holstedt moved that both be seated as corresponding members with voice not vote.** It was seconded and approved.

Report of the Committee on Ministry

Elder Bev Barr led the examination of the Reverend Molly Jones on behalf of the presbytery in the areas of the authority of scripture and its relevance for today's world; a reformed understanding of ecumenism and the place of Christianity in world religion; the use of her secular and pastoral skills in her new ministry of discipleship at Presbyterian Church of Stanley and she positively affirmed all the constitutional questions including agreeing to be governed by its polity and abiding by its discipline. The presbytery was then invited to actively participate in the examination of Rev. Jones. The presbytery's examination included how she would help those who have no history in the denomination to develop a sense of what it means to be Presbyterian and to describe one of her joys that is happening in the PC (USA).

Shelley Etzenberger, Moderator of the APNC for Stanley spoke to her joy of serving on the committee, the process and the presence of the Holy Spirit in their work.

Rev. Jones was excused from the meeting and there were no questions for the Committee on Ministry.

Bev Barr moved that the examination be arrested and her call be approved as follows:

The Reverend Molly Jones, Presbytery of Miami (Ohio) to be the Associate Pastor for Discipleship at the Presbyterian Church of Stanley, with the following terms of call:

Salary & Housing:	\$ 54,000
Medical Reimbursement:	\$ 1,000

Continuing Education and Mileage:	\$ 5,000
Board of Pensions Benefits	\$ 17,010
TOTAL	\$ 77,010

One month Vacation Leave
Two weeks Study Leave
Moving Expenses up to \$10,000
AA/EEP guidelines were followed

The motion was approved.

Rev. Jones was invited back into the meeting with a rousing round of applause.

On behalf of the Committee on Ministry, Elder Bev Barr moved the approval of the dissolution of the pastoral relationship of the Reverend Gordon S. McClellan, associate pastor for ministries at Village Presbyterian Church, Prairie Village, KS, effective August 29, 2008, pending the congregational meeting on August 10th and at the calling presbytery's request, transfer his membership to the Presbytery of the Cascades.

Rationale:

Rev. McClellan has received a call to be Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Corvallis, Oregon.

The motion was approved.

Elder Sunok Pai presented the **Report of the Presbytery Council**. Rev. Chad Herring was asked to present the first item of business from the council. Rev. Herring gave the following history of the situation at New Horizons.

“The motion before Presbytery this morning is part of an ongoing attempt by the Presbytery to help address the financial situation at New Horizons Presbyterian Church of Odessa, to support their witness, evangelism, and ministry in that portion of our Presbytery, to faithfully respond to the current situation for the good of the whole church.

A short history might be helpful to explain where we are today. In 2001, through the request of the local congregation and the work of the Church Development and Redevelopment division, Presbytery approved the request of New Horizons to borrow \$750,000 from CDC. Since its inception, New Horizon has made payments of approximately \$306,000 towards this debt. However, in recent years the church has struggled to make its payments, and because of missed payments, periods of interest only and even partial payment of the interest, the loan balance has not been significantly reduced even after seven years and hundreds of thousands of dollars in payments. The loan balance is currently around the original \$750,000 borrowed.

In October, 2006, Heartland Presbytery established an Administrative Commission to, among other things, advise and assist New Horizons with evangelism and financial concerns. This Administrative Commission has been working diligently to help consider many different avenues for church growth and financial health. In addition, the presbytery directed that a modest portion of the interest from certain assets held in CDs at CDC be gifted as direct payments to the principle for this loan.

We were notified earlier this year that New Horizons has missed payments on their loan since the beginning of 2008. The Moderators of the AC and Business Affairs, members of presbytery staff, and the pastor of New Horizons have met to discuss the matter, and in May, CDC president David Hintz sent notice to the presbytery and requested that we make these payments as guarantor on the loan.

A working group consisting of representatives of the board of trustees, the administrative commission, CDNR, Business Affairs, and presbytery staff met to discuss options that were in the best interest of the Presbytery as well as for the New Horizons congregation. This discussion included the current staffing model at New Horizons and various opportunities for additional rental of the building and partnering with other congregations in the area. In the short term, this working group is very concerned about CDC foreclosing on the property and the financial exposure to the presbytery of making up the difference, plus expenses, between the sale value of the building and the amount of the loan. To date, alternate arrangements that would help New Horizons get out from under the weight of some 60-odd people carrying a \$750,000 have been hard to come by.

Presbytery remains liable as a guarantor for this loan. New Horizons has a small but faithful congregation struggling mightily against this debt, seeking to do good ministry in their community. This working group, through the AC and the trustees, began an inquiry with CDC about paying off the loan at a reduced cost to the presbytery. The presbytery would then issue a mortgage to New Horizons at a rate they could afford (likely around 3.5%), enabling them to focus on growth and the presbytery to focus on what is best for our common ministry in this corner of our church. This short-term solution would buy us some time as we decide how best to proceed with these long-term problems.

The CDC board has authorized David Hintz to negotiate with the Presbytery on an acceptable pay off figure or other resolution. The motion brought by Business Affairs appoints a working group to act on our behalf in this negotiation, to bring terms first to Council and then to presbytery, hopefully by the end of calendar year 2008.”

On behalf of the Presbytery Council, Rev. Herring moved that presbytery authorize a New Horizons Negotiations Task Group to negotiate a financial resolution with Church Development Corporation on behalf of the New Horizons Presbyterian Church and its administrative commission.

Members of the New Horizons Negotiations Task Group will be:

**Elder Mardy Cottrell, Trustee
Elder Paul Gault, Trustee
Rev. Ron Patton, Trustee
Rev. Chad Herring, Moderator, Business Affairs
Rev. Dan McKnight, Moderator, CDR
Rev. Duane Stephens, Moderator, Administrative Commission
Brian Hathorn, Financial Administrator (ex-officio)
Charles Spencer, Executive Presbyter (ex-officio)**

The Presbytery Council will receive this task group’s negotiated agreement and then make a recommendation to the presbytery. It is hoped that the negotiations will be concluded during the 2008 calendar year.

Discussion included the church's current membership and the lack of other Presbyterian churches in Odessa.

The motion was approved.

Elder Sunok Pai introduced the next item of business as the following motion:

The Board of Trustees recommends the Presbytery approve the loan to Kaw Prairie Community Church from the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA for up to \$3,000,000 for construction of their first building at an interest rate of 3%, amortized over 7 years, payable over 15 years and that the Presbytery authorize the Board of Trustees to negotiate any particular language issues in the loan documents that are due to the challenges of two denominations' polities.

Rationale: The trustees will monitor and negotiate language and wording with the ELCA MIF within the loan documents ensuring that the PC (USA) Chapter 8 trust clauses are included and the adopted constitution by the congregation and as approved both governing bodies is respected.

Ron Patton, a trustee, moved an amendment to the motion on behalf of the Board of Trustees to clarify the powers of the trustees in legal matters on behalf of Kaw Prairie Community Church as follows:

The Board of Trustees recommends the Presbytery approve the loan to Kaw Prairie Community Church from the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA for up to \$3,000,000 for construction of their first building at an interest rate of 3%, amortized over 7 years, payable over 15 years and that the Presbytery authorize the Board of Trustees to negotiate any particular language issues in the loan documents or other ancillary documents that are due to the challenges of two denominations' polities including, but not limited to, the authorization for construction of the church building on property owned by Presbytery and the encumbering of such property in connection therewith. ~~that are due to the challenges of two denominations' polities.~~

It was seconded and discussion ensued. Questions included the history of the land, the relationship with the ELCA; the implementation of the PC (USA) trust clause and the lack of a formal guarantee by the presbytery because it is a loan from the ELCA Mission Investment Fund to a "half" ELCA congregation and that denomination does not require loan guaranty from a higher governing body; the MIF approved the loan amount on the basis of the Kaw Prairie Community Church's matrix of giving alone; and the building's design includes a future sale feature making it easily converted to other use in the event the church outgrows its current site.

The amended motion was approved.

The presbytery heard the first part of the Commissioners' **Report about the General Assembly**. The second part will be shared during the September 9, 2008 stated meeting of Heartland Presbytery.

Martha Malsbary reported there were over 400 decisions made by the Assembly. The 752 commissioners, the staff, the vendors and the observers worked together usually in harmony. The computer network PC-BIZ had its troubles on site but apparently worked well online. Commissioner Malsbary served on the Form of Government Committee. The FOG was referred to a new committee that will distribute it throughout the church for discussion in the presbyteries and receipt of their comments.

Carla Gentry reported that her experience was personal and moving at General Assembly. She is willing to visit with congregations at session meetings or congregational gatherings. She served on the Bills and Overtures Committee. Their work begins prior to the assembly assigning the overtures received from commissioners to the assembly committees. In the past, there have been over 100 commissioner resolutions but this GA had only 18 commissioner resolutions of which two were ruled out of order by the Bills and Overture Committee. The remaining sixteen were assigned to committees. With only 28 members, they observed the work of the committees for process, leadership issues and full committee participation for feedback to the committee leadership teams in order to improve at their next business session. The Bills and Overture Committee handled the daily approval of the minutes of the General Assembly as well as the protests and dissents received by the Stated Clerk. The committee also approved what was placed on the tables for each commissioner for its appropriateness to the theme of the assembly.

Bond Faulwell shared that the theme of the Assembly was Micah 6:8. Committee assignments were randomly assigned and he was assigned to Ecumenism and Inter-Faith Relations Committee. For the first time since 1983, this committee successfully wrote a statement of ecumenism that was adopted by the General Assembly. Full covenant relationships were entered into with the Moravian Church and the Korean Presbyterian Church. Work will continue with the Episcopal Church toward full communion. Commissioner Faulwell appreciated the people who came to work as commissioners and focused on the subjects, stayed late and worked hard. The Assembly had partners present from other reformed traditions and other world religions represented, all of whom interacted freely with the commissioners.

Don Spencer reported the General Assembly Moderator Rev. Bruce Reyes-Chow, age 38 and a pastor of an emergent church in San Francisco appeared to have a good understanding of the denomination which is perhaps not as liberal as he is. Commissioner Spencer served on the 66 member Worship and Spirituality Committee which dealt with the reaffirmation of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the spiritual renewal of the church including utilizing solemn assemblies. This committee met using a process called "communal discernment" which leads to a parliamentary process as a whole once discernment in smaller groups happens. Every voice was heard in the smaller groups then every small group's concerns were heard in the more formal work of the whole committee. This process is used by the Presbyterian Church of Australia in their General Assemblies. The GA Moderator used the phrase, "Brothers and Sisters, sharing our common faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and walking humbly with our God, let us proceed to vote on the question before us" prior to every important or difficult vote of the Assembly. This saying was designed by this committee.

Jeff Mercer reported about the diversity of the commissioners theologically and personally. He told a story about a commissioner who stated that he boarded the plane in Biloxi, Mississippi as a flaming liberal and landed in San Jose as a _____ conservative. Commissioner Mercer was excited about the participation of the military chaplains in the assembly in the exhibit hall and in committee hearings. He served on the Polity Committee which has generated some of the more volatile issues that emerged through the Assembly. Interaction at the Assembly took many forms including trying to persuade other commissioners to their way of thinking using a "win lose" approach. Many recognized that if anyone lost, we all lost. Some would reduce their position to being right about an issue was all that mattered. Many

experienced respect for their viewpoints, the willingness of others to listen and a genuine search for the Spirit's leading in all the exchanges.

Matthew Reeves shared that he was on the younger end of the ages of the commissioners present in San Jose. He and his generation are the ones who will move the church into the future that was discussed at General Assembly. He noted that press coverage tended to telegraph the volatile issues as negative but commissioner Reeves found that the PC (USA) is called to be a "sent church", a missional church. Overtures that moved us farther into mission were everywhere but not overly reported by the media. He served on General Assembly Procedures and their work included the learning about the history and defining and redefining the purpose of per capita.

Tamara Miller displayed her John Calvin mask which was used to remind commissioners of his 500th birthday anniversary in 2009. She served on the Youth Committee which utilized communal discernment. The process involved getting to know each other and the background on the issues. Once you know each other and the history then the more formal work goes quickly because trust has been developed and relationships established. The Youth Committee arrived without any overtures but received the assignment of giving direction to the PC (USA) in relationship to youth. The committee did send forther two items of business: (1) That information be sent to all the churches about the volume of resources available for all different types and sizes of churches and (2) a DVD will be produced for each resource center about youth, what they believe, how they talk about what they believe and what you discover they do not believe or know about faith. The paperless assembly generated about ten pounds in each commissioner's returning luggage for each commissioner between the printed papers and the freebies from the vendors and exhibitors. Commissioner Miller invited everyone to apply to be a commissioner for the 219th General Assembly.

All the commissioners are available and willing to visit churches and provide programs on the General Assembly. Each commissioner expressed their appreciation to the presbytery.

Dennis Haines moved that the presbytery adjourn. It was seconded and approved.

At 11:06 a.m., Moderator Tamara Miller **adjourned the meeting with a prayer from the 218th GA.**

Submitted by,



Rev. Maryann S. Farnsworth
Stated Clerk

Approved by Council: August 25, 2008
Approved by Presbytery: September 9, 2008