

May 2017

PRESBYTERY MEETING REFLECTION

By Sheppards & Lapsley Moderator, J. Shannon Webster

The Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley gathered in regular meeting on Thursday, May 11th at First Presbyterian Church of Auburn. Local hospitality was gracious, as numerous Auburn members directed our path to a large and delicious array of eats, and then to the sanctuary for meeting. We were welcomed by host pastor Kathy Reed and, as always, began with prayer.



Worship was an inspiring time, lifted by the FPC Auburn choir and a challenging sermon by outgoing campus pastor (as she moves to Birmingham) Rachel Winter on the text.

The Presbytery received the amendments sent to us from the last General Assembly, and Stated Clerk Tom Winter led us in a review of those. By the time of our meeting, all the amendments had received enough “yes” votes to pass the combined presbyteries’ ratification. Even so, presbytery became briefly involved in a procedural debate on our vote, for which your Moderator apologizes and promises to handle more firmly and clearly in the future. At issue was not so much whether we voted aye or nay on a proposed amendment, but that if we did not record any “nay” votes, it would be reported to GA as a unanimous vote. We were not unanimous in every case – even though we concurred with the majority of presbyteries in each, and the issue was resolved by counting the vote.

Topics included: broadening access to the Lord’s Table, approval of a new Directory for Worship, and returning to *Minister of Word and Sacrament* as a title in place of *Teaching Elder* in our nomenclature.

Much of our work dealt with congregations and with ministerial vocations.

- Leanne Pearce Reed was approved as Pastor of Shades Valley Presbyterian in Birmingham; she will be moving there from the Montevallo church. (Lindsay Wade will be interim in Montevallo.)
- Christopher Scott was examined and approved as member at large. Both he and his wife are military, and he got here following her active duty assignment.
- Rebecca Mann was examined for ordination to a tent-making ministry with older adults, under the oversight of First Presbyterian, Wetumpka.



Presbytery approved the installation commission for Patrick Harley campus pastor and organizer for UKirk Birmingham.

- Bennett Alldredge, from First Tuscaloosa and a student at Princeton, was moved to candidacy status.
- Candidate Leigh Ann Minn was approved to finish her ord exams using an approved alternative process.
- First Presbyterian Church in Tuskegee was dissolved. (We have another one there.)
- Bryan Memorial was dissolved due to disaffiliation with the Presbyterian Church.
- Various Administrative Commissions were formed, augmented, or dissolved.

Two other important areas involving policy and process were:

- Receive and approve an amended Response and Review Policy for Presbytery to follow in dealing with congregations wishing to leave the Presbyterian Church
- Approve (with amended timeline) a Child Protection Policy for Presbytery, and asking congregations to form their own. This policy will hold for Presbytery sponsored events; local church policies will be primary when an event is held in a congregation.

In his report, Transitional Presbyter Jay Wilkins continues to both comfort us and challenge us to greater things. The Benediction at close was given by Elizabeth O’Neill.



The Moderator commends the commissioners and ministers for their care and attention, and for doing the work of God for this presbytery and the whole church of Jesus Christ. Thank you!

J. Shannon Webster, Moderator

