

PRESBYTERY REFLECTION

By Sheppards and Lapsley Moderator, Susan Clayton

MAY 2019

HOST: LIVING RIVER, A REATREAT ON THE CAHABA

Highlights of the May Presbytery meeting



The Lord's Supper



Guest Musician,
Byron Thomas



PSL Musicians Revs
Yarboro and McLeod



Eva Carter celebrating
the ministry of Rev.
Terry Newland

God Calls Us Together



The Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley held its regular stated meeting on Thursday, May 16, 2019 at Living River: A Retreat on the Cahaba in Montevallo, Alabama.

Moderator Susan Clayton opened the meeting with prayer. Stated Clerk Tom Winter declared that a quorum was present and presbytery adopted the docket for the day. The presbytery welcomed first time commissioners, visitors and corresponding members to the meeting. At this point, the Moderator turned the meeting over to the Anti-Racism Team of the presbytery to lead us through worship and morning discussion around tables.

We Listen for God's Word



Members of the Anti-Racism team led us in a wonderful worship of God, with The Rev. Dr. Joseph Scrivner preaching a sermon entitled "Don't Miss It!" based on a Scripture reading from Mark 2:23-28. Musician Byron

Thomas shared his considerable talents in leading the music during worship. We shared the sacrament of The Lord's Supper and took up an offering to assist the Commission on Preparation for Ministry and our presbytery's Candidates and Inquirers as well as the presbytery's pastoral discretionary fund.

Table Conversations



Following worship, members of presbytery gathered in small groups around tables throughout the room to share conversation with one another. Our conversations were guided by questions provided by the Anti-Racism Team of the presbytery. Conversation centered on our own experiences with issues of race in our own lives, in the church and community. Each table reported on lessons learned and everyone remarked on the honest, open sharing they experienced around the tables.

Following these table conversations, everyone enjoyed a delicious lunch prepared by Living River staff. During the lunch hour, many members of presbytery took advantage of the good weather and the physical beauty of Living River to spend some time exploring the area of the Cahaba River around the dining hall, giving thanks to God for the beauty of God's creation. After lunch, presbytery reconvened to consider business items on the docket.

Some highlights of the presbytery meeting include:

1. Presbytery voted on the Amendments to the PC (USA) Constitution from the General Assembly. Presbytery voted in the affirmative on all amendments, with the exception of 18-C which received a negative vote.
2. The Nominating Committee nominated The Rev. Sam Hamilton-Poore to the Commission on Ministry, Class of 2021 and presbytery approved his nomination, as well as several nominations to serve on Presbytery Youth Council.
3. The Commission on Ministry celebrated the ministry of The Rev. Terry Newland, as he prepared to retire from his current position as Synod Executive for the Synod of Living Waters. Eva Carter led us through many wonderful stories and memories of Terry's time with us in the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley, from his time as an Associate Pastor at Shades Valley Presbyterian Church in Birmingham; as Pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Anniston; as Executive Presbyter for the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley and then as Synod Executive. We gave thanks to God for Terry's faithful service and for his friendship among us over many years of ministry in our midst.
4. The Stated Clerk's report included a report from Jonathan Yarboro celebrating the successful work of the Administrative Commission to merge the Memorial and Westminster Presbyterian Churches in Montgomery. We celebrated the formation of the newly named Providence Presbyterian Church in Montgomery. We also marked the closing of the Center Point Presbyterian Church effective April 28, 2019 and the Good Shepherd Church in Anniston effective May 26, 2019, and gave thanks for both of these churches' faithful witness over many years.
5. We heard a thorough report from Nick Reed, President of the Living River Board of Directors, informing the presbytery of the financial difficulties of Living River, largely due to a substantial load of debt Living River is currently servicing. Nick talked about the hopes and dreams for a new business plan and increased partnerships that the board hopes will have Living River on sound footing by 2020. In order to achieve that goal, the debt must be eliminated.
6. Jane Clayton reported on behalf of the Executive Council of presbytery. On motions made by Executive Council, presbytery approved the cosigning of a \$10,000 loan from the Synod of Living Waters to Westminster Presbyterian Church in Birmingham for renovation of their building; approved the Volunteer Nurture Coordinator position and asked Pat Goodman to serve through the end of 2019; approved a change to the standing rules related to the process of disciplinary charges; and approved authorizing the Living River Board to use funds previously allocated for the pool or adult lodge to be used as needed at the Living River board's discretion, with the understanding these funds will most likely be used to service the debt of Living River.
7. Following a report from our General Presbyter Jay Wilkins, the meeting was adjourned with prayer by Chuck Kukal.

*Respectfully submitted,
Susan Clayton, Moderator*