

PRESBYTERY REFLECTION

By Sheppards and Lapsley Moderator, Susan Clayton

AUGUST 2019

HOST: GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Highlights of the August Presbytery meeting



The Lord's Supper
Rev. Cathy Hoop and
CRE Olympia McCrackin



Anti-racism Team



PSL Musicians Revs
Yarboro and McLeod



Rev. Patrick Harley
UKirk Birmingham
Campus Minister

God Calls Us Together



The Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley held its regular stated meeting on Thursday, August 15, 2019 at Grace Presbyterian Church in Tuscaloosa, AL. We enjoyed wonderful hospitality all day from the staff and members of Grace and we are deeply grateful!

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 visitors, corresponding members and first time commissioners to the meeting.

The gathered community then joined together in worship which included wonderful musical offerings by the Choir of Grace Presbyterian Church, as well as a sermon by Grace Pastor, Rev. Cathy Hoop. Her sermon was entitled "When the South Wind Blows" and was based on the Scripture passage Luke 12:49-56. The Offering was taken and the proceeds were given 50% to the Commission on Preparation for Ministry for candidates, and the other 50% to the Presbytery's discretionary fund for pastoral care. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was celebrated by Olympia McCrackin and Cathy Hoop, and the congregation received the elements by intinction.

UA Crossroads Workshop

After worship, the presbytery broke up into two groups to participate in a workshop led by UA Crossroads and hosted by the presbytery's Anti-Racism Team. This workshop of an hour-and-a-half helped us examine our stereotypes and biases around many issues that divide us as human beings: race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, political affiliation, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, ability/disability, immigration status and other areas of human difference. Both groups found this workshop illuminating and challenging as we continue the work of facing racism in our presbytery this year.

A delicious lunch prepared by members of Grace Presbyterian Church followed the workshop and nourished us for the remainder of our afternoon's business. The business meeting of presbytery reconvened at 1:30PM with Good News shared by the Presbyterian Home for Children and several of our member churches. There is much wonderful ministry happening in our presbytery!

Presbytery Business



The Executive Council report by Jane Clayton contained only one item of action. Council recommended that Dr. Jay Wilkins, General Presbyter, be honorably retired as of December 31, 2019. Jay made some comments about this next phase in his life and expressed his deep love for the presbytery, his gratitude for the years of service together, and his hope for the faithful future of our presbytery. Jay will remain in the area and have more time to enjoy his family, particularly his grandchildren—there is a new

grandchild on the way! **Reluctantly**, presbytery approved Jay's retirement and thanked him with a standing ovation.

Ministry Within our Presbytery

Some highlights of the presbytery meeting include:

Jonathan Yarboro and Jenny Thagard gave a report for Living River. The summer camping season was a great success at Living River with leaders and participants in all camping experiences reporting a wonderful experience of faith-building on the banks of the Cahaba. The Board of Directors of Living River continues to work on paying off the debt, but has also taken action to meet the reduced income of the camp by laying off all Cahaba Education Center staff, the Food Service Manager, and Jenny Thagard, the Director, has moved to part-time. Much work lies ahead for the presbytery and the Living River Board in trying to get the camp on solid financial footing in 2020. We ask for prayers for the staff, board members and our presbytery as we seek to discern God's will for the future of Living River.



Mark McCormick gave a good report from Stillman College, which greeted its highest number of incoming first year students in many years. Many good things are happening at Stillman. The school continues to need the presbytery's prayers and support.



The Commission on Ministry four ministers for examination to be received into the presbytery. It was a very international group of clergy as we welcomed Rev. Jungkyun Son as Associate Pastor at Korean, Auburn-Opelika; Rev. Daekeun Park as Associate at Korean, Auburn-Opelika; Rev. Young Kim to Anniston-Korean and Rev. Sunelle Stander from the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa to serve as a Chaplain at UAB Hospital. All four examinations were sustained and all four candidates were warmly welcomed into membership in the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley. We pray their ministries will be fruitful and joyful and look forward to their gifts adding to our life together as a presbytery.

Ralls Coston made a report as our Mission Coordinator about the good mission work happening around our presbytery. Of particular interest at the moment is the Habitat for Humanity House that the Birmingham churches will join together to build beginning on September 19.

Patti Winter made the report from the Nominating Committee. Presbytery voted to approve Emily Burt, Young Adult from First Presbyterian Church, Birmingham to the Youth Council, Class of 2020; and George Fritsma to serve an unexpired term on the Presbyterian Home for Children Board of Directors.



Keenan Rogers from the Presbyterian Board of Pensions made a report about some changes and invited us to download an app that would help track our health as part of the BOP.

Belinda Dickinson reported for the Congo Team that there would be a Congo Network meeting in Knoxville in October. She also reported on funds donated so far in memory of Jerry Vandegrift.



Rush Watson reported on behalf of the Presbytery Trustees. Presbytery approved a motion recommending the sale of the former Trinity Presbyterian Church property to The Vine Church of Birmingham. Sale price is \$630,000 with a cash down payment at closing of \$126,000. Closing to be no later than August 26, 2019.

Neil McCarter reported for Equip, Nurture, Connect about upcoming events: the Youth Council retreat on October 12-13 at Living River, the Children's Retreat on January 3-4 at Living River, and the Main Event in February 2020.

The meeting adjourned with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Clayton, Moderator

Yvonne Wells, a member of Brown Memorial, is known as the "quilt lady of Alabama," but her works are known around the world. A self-taught quilter, her works frequently depict Biblical texts or scenes from the civil rights era, particularly highlighting events in Alabama.

The quilt displayed for our Presbytery meeting featured Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and included Rosa Parks' bus ride, the Edmund Pettis bridge crossing in Selma, the stand in the schoolhouse door at UA, the bombing deaths of the four young girls at 16th St. Baptist Church in Birmingham, and many other critical moments. The quilt is a powerful snapshot of the struggle for racial equality in Alabama.

