

Presbytery in Brief — July 28, 2020

The Presbytery of Western North Carolina (PWNC) hosted an unprecedented assembly as the 124th Stated Meeting gathered online via Zoom to do the work of the church together on Tuesday, July 28, 2020. **It was made clear that while the actions of the presbytery are valid and operative, the actions of PWNC will need to be ratified because no rule currently exists for a virtual meeting of the presbytery.*

Moderator, Dick Larson, called the meeting to order and prayed over our gathering. Our time together began with orientation and practice of new methodologies for muting, speaking, voting, etc. via computer and phone. If nothing else, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to adapt—and while often difficult and not without challenges, adaptation is a good thing!

Worship was led by Rev. Dr. Diane Moffett, President and Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA). Rev. Dr. Moffett delivered a resounding sermon entitled, *Seeing Jesus*, from **Matthew 25:31-46**. The oft-repeated question was raised: “*When did we see you, Jesus?*,” and answered time and again with “*just as you did for the least of these you did for me.*” Dr. Moffett reminded us of our assured salvation through Jesus Christ, but also of God’s clarion call for us to serve. These scriptures form the biblical and theological foundations of **The Matthew 25 Initiative**, which seeks to build congregational vitality, eradicate systematic poverty, and dismantle structural racism.

Rev. Lauren Vanacore presented the work of the General Council, including the conclusion of the 205-year ministry of Lincolnton, First. In addition, the PWNC galvanized our corporate witness and overwhelmingly approved becoming a **Matthew 25** presbytery, pledging to focus on one or more of three areas: building congregational vitality, eradicating systemic poverty, and dismantling structural racism. Existing PWNC committees will focus and enhance their work around these three foci. Congregations are also encouraged to take on this initiative locally.

On behalf of the General Presbyter Search Committee, Rev. Dr. Patrick Johnson presented Rev. Dr. Byron Wade, Pastor of Davie Street Presbyterian Church in Raleigh, to be our next General Presbyter. **After prayer, Dr. Wade’s nomination was unanimously approved by the body.** Dr. Wade will begin his ministry with us in October.

COM News Anchor(!), John Pea, delivered the report from the Committee on Ministry (COM). PWNC welcomed three Ministers of Word & Sacrament into the body—Julie Hester, Lance Perry, and Alexandra Lusak. The examination and ordination of Katheryn McGinnis was unanimously sustained and her call as pastor at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Santa Cruz, CA was affirmed. *“May your good news always be the gospel.”*

The PWNC passed a **Child & Youth Protection Policy** from the Sacred Boundaries Committee, a revision of a previous draft in response to feedback gathered from around the presbytery in January.

Rev. Dr. Wade made brief comments expressing gratitude and excitement about his new call and Rev. Dr. Marcia Shoop lifted prayers of intercession for our church and world.

Moderator Dick Larson adjourned the meeting with gratitude and prayer at 11:57 AM.

Grace + Peace,
Rev. John Hagmann
Senior Pastor, FPC Morganton

Below are links to various videos from Tuesday's meeting:

Highlights from the Meeting: https://youtu.be/II_-9OA5Hzo

Examinations Video: https://youtu.be/7yh_lkOFH2E

The COM Report: <https://youtu.be/ZNgYiHozV3k>

Comments from GPNC: https://youtu.be/eze_B6Xbo3U

Diane Moffett sermon: https://youtu.be/VdQmUiEod_w