

SYNOD OF THE MID-ATLANTIC
Summary Digest of the 231st Stated Meeting
March 18-19, 2013

The 231st Stated Meeting of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic was held at the Ginter Park Presbyterian Church in Richmond, Virginia on March 18 & 19, 2013. The following is a summary digest of the discussions, actions and decisions.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The following candidates to fill vacancies on several Synod Committees and Commissions were presented by the Committee, or offered as nominations from the floor (all were elected by acclamation):

Committee on Representation: Eddie Deas (Western NC), Tae E. Park (James) – Permanent Judicial Commission: William Millsaps (James), Dong Yung Kim (AKAP) – Speer Fund Committee: Richard Haney (James), Sung Cho (AKAP) – Jubilee Fund Committee: Arthur Canada (Charlotte), Julius Jackson (New Castle) , Sue McLaurin (New Hope), Bo Chang Seo (AKAP) – Nominating Committee: James Pak (AKAP).

MASSANETTA SPRINGS ANNUAL REPORT

Fred Holbrook, Executive Director of Massanetta Springs Conference Center, presented an annual report. He noted that the Living Waters campaign was making good progress, including completion of the first phase of rehabilitation to the Historic Hotel. He also noted that the Massanetta Board is exploring the wisdom and necessity of changing the corporate structure of Massanetta so that the Synod is no longer required to ratify the election of Board members, and also no longer the legal owner of Massanetta Springs.

ADMINISTRATION AND PERSONNEL

Executive Search Committee – the Administration Committee chair, Beverly Bullock, reported on plans to move forward with the search for a new Synod Executive & Stated Clerk to fill the half-time position authorized by Synod at its September 2012 meeting. The Synod Assembly then authorized the Administration Committee to assemble and nominate a slate of seven persons to serve on a search committee. The nomination and election process is to be conducted electronically – insofar as permitted by Robert’s Rules of Order – and completed by April 16th. Once the Synod has elected the search committee, Jill Hudson (G.A. Coordinator of Mid-Council Relations) will begin working with the committee as process advisor.

Review of Presbytery Minutes – the annual process for review of presbytery minutes in regional groupings will begin on April 1st. The Presbytery Clerks asked that the Administration Committee provide a rotation system among the regional groupings, and also assess and revise as necessary the checklist used in the review.

Staff Care - The Administration Committee, in its function as Personnel Committee, is making a special effort to reach out in supportive ways to the synod staff.

Future Synod Assembly Meeting Dates

The next Stated Meeting of the Synod — the 232nd – will be held September 16-17 at the Ginter Park Presbyterian Church in Richmond.

The following dates have been set for Stated Synod Assembly meetings in 2014 and 2015 – also to be held at Ginter Park Church:

2014 -- March 17-18 (233rd) and September 15-16 (234th).

2015 – March 16-17 (235th) and September 14-15 (236th).

FINANCE

Kenna Payne (James), Acting Chairperson, reported for the Committee, The Committee conducted a general review of synod finances, noting that a money market account of \$150,000, while not losing ground, could be more productive. No specific recommendations for synod action were presented.

Grants & Awards

Synod approved grants from the following funds:

New and Small Church Grant Fund

- Grace Chapel (New Hope) -- \$2,500 for hurricane damage repair
- Mt. Vernon (Salem) - \$2,500 for cemetery restorations
- Thyne Memorial (James) - \$2,500 for roof repairs
- Dulatown (WNC) - \$2,500 for HVAC repair & replacement
- Perry Hall (Baltimore) - \$2,500 for accessibility needs
- Knox Church (Baltimore) - \$2,500 for summer enrichment camp
- Maryland Church (Baltimore)- \$2,500 for field education student

Euler Scholarship Fund

Grants of \$2,750 were approved for each of the following returning students: Richard Bellomy, Shin Bok Cha, John Craft, Antonia Lawrence, Sami Athisu, Jaechul Pi and Patricia Reid.

The following new applicants were approved for grants of \$2,500 each: Sarah Bird, Leah Elizabeth Epps, Eunjee Lee, Jason Myers and Thomas Neil Taylor.

W.Z. Stultz Scholarship Fund

A grant of \$4,500 to Timothy Bates was approved, contingent upon his meeting certain requirements regarding submission of a transcript and letter of acceptance from a qualified Presbyterian college, and a letter from his church's Clerk of Session.

Visionary Fund

Presbytery of Western North Carolina - \$2,500 for renovations of existing but vacant office space to be then useable for education, training and meeting purposes.

Visionary and Peacemaking Funds

Timothy Darling (New Hope) -- \$5,600 total for training of clergy and laity in targeted counties to provide pastoral care to first responders during and after crisis and disaster situations. Half of the grant will come from the Visionary Fund, and half from the Peacemaking Fund.

Union Presbyterian Seminary – It was reported that the second \$5,000 installment was disbursed to Union Presbyterian Seminary's Scholarship Fund, in continuing fulfillment of the Synod's \$25,000 gift in observance of Union's 200th Anniversary Celebration in 2012.

Catawba Camping Scholarship Fund – Katherine Jackson, committee chair, asked commissioners to take back to their presbyteries information about the existence of this fund. Uncertainty exists about eligibility, given the changing status of presbytery camping programs and facilities. The Grants & Awards Committee will address these questions and work toward providing relevant information to presbyteries and others.

Task Force on Reviewing Grants & Awards Policies and Procedures

The Task Force authorized at the last Synod Assembly reported that they have held an initial organizational meeting, and met again during this Assembly. They will continue addressing their task in the coming months, paying particular attention to funding formulas, allowing for the possible changes in the existence of synods within the next few years. They anticipate making a report to the September Synod Assembly..

PRESBYTERY INITIATIVES COMMITTEE

Presbyterian Women 25th Anniversary Celebration – Approval was given for a grant application of \$2,000 from the PW of New Castle and Salem Presbyteries to provide reusable grocery bags – as a “green” way to celebrate this milestone.

Application Form and Award Letter -- The committee made several editorial changes for clarity to the application form and award letter used in its work. Those changes will be incorporated in presentations offered by committee members and synod commissioners to their home presbyteries.

Summer Gathering Mission Projects – Approval was given to an initiative from New Hope and Coastal Carolina Presbyteries to grant \$6,000 for mission projects of the PW Summer Gathering.

Other Business

Transfer of a Congregation -- The Synod voted unanimously to concur with an overture to the General Assembly, adopted by both National Capital Presbytery and Atlantic Korean-American Presbytery, to transfer the Hanna Presbyterian Church of Lanham, Maryland, from National Capital to AKAP. The Hanna church is seeking to join with the Yeram Presbyterian Church, already a member of AKAP, under the new name of Maryland Presbyterian Church.

Massanetta Springs Gift – In support of Massanetta’s “Living Waters” campaign, the Synod Assembly approved a motion to contribute 10% of the proceeds from the sale of the former office building to this campaign – a gift of \$15,000.

Expense Reimbursement Policy – It was noted that the current policy for reimbursement of travel expenses incurred in connection with synod business prohibits the inclusion of tips and gratuities in the reimbursement. Discussion revealed that while this policy is a fairly recent addition, no one present could recall just how it came about. A motion was approved to allow the reimbursement of tips and gratuities (up to 20%) given by those travelling on synod business.

“Round Table” Discussion – Having completed its scheduled and necessary business well before the projected adjournment time, and at the request of Commissioner Michael Hickman (Peaks), the synod commissioners used these “found” moments to share information about their presbyteries and to have a general discussion of the current issues before and state of the Presbyterian Church (USA).