

**PRESBYTERY OF ALASKA - GENERAL COUNCIL
MINUTES
FEBRUARY 5, 2008**

The General Council of the Presbytery of Alaska met via teleconference on March 6, 2007. Due to scheduling conflicts and inclement weather conditions in portions of Southeast Alaska, the meeting was conducted via teleconference. The meeting began with prayer led by the Rev. Dr. Charles Bovee at 1:09 PM.

ROLL CALL

Following the prayer, the Presbytery Moderator, the Rev. Randy Russom, serving as the acting coordinator of the Council, declared the meeting open. The Council Coordinator, Elder Joyce Schultz, joined the meeting by phone later. In addition to Rev. Russom the following voting members of the Council participated in Juneau: The Rev. Dr. Chuck Bovee, President of the Trustees; The Rev. Linda Wescott, representing the NW M&M group; Elder Janell Privett, representing the Presbyterian Women. Participating via teleconference were: Elder Sheryl Dennis, Finance Committee Coordinator; Elder Rick Greene, the Presbytery Moderator-Elect; The Rev. Ron Horn, COM Coordinator; and Elder Bonnie Sharnbroich, representing the NE M&M group. The Stated Clerk, Elder Guy Warren was present as a non-voting member and as secretary of the Council. Also joining the meeting later was Council member-at-large, Elder Rosie Fay and the Rev. Jesse Perry.

With over 50% of the voting members present, a quorum was declared.

DOCKET

The meeting docket was presented and approved.

PRESBYTERY PLANNING

Following discussion, the Council voted to convene the Spring 2008 meeting at 9:00 AM on Saturday, March 29, 2008.

The Council Coordinator, Elder Joyce Schultz joined the meeting at this time by teleconference. She requested that Rev. Russom, being physically present in Juneau, continue to moderate the meeting.

Elder Guy Warren, the Presbytery Stated Clerk, reported that in response to concerns about how to conduct a secret ballot via teleconference, he had developed a method for allowing voters to vote in such a fashion that only the clerk and themselves would know how they voted. The Council was shown the system and agreed it should work.

With written reports being an essential part of the meeting the Council voted to require that all reports be made available to the Presbytery office by the close of business on March 12, 2008.

It was agreed that the meeting would close with a worship service on Saturday. This will allow all of the participants to attend services on Sunday in their own home communities.

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COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

The Rev. Ron Horn presented a written report detailing the activities of the Committee on Ministry.

It was noted by a member of the Council that the Gephardts (who have been leading worship in Kake) will be leaving the area. Rev. Horn noted that he had only unofficially heard about this.

Rev. Horn presented the beginnings of a plan for an Anna Jackman Parish / Walter Soboleff endowed pastorate. The plan is to provide an ordained pastor to serve in our churches without such leadership. The plan would be to have the presbytery prepare a Presbytery-wide Church Information Form for a designated pastor to serve in this role.

There is some hope that a position such as this might be attractive to a pastor approaching retirement or perhaps even a retired pastor.

One member of the Council expressed concern that the person filling this role be properly trained in native cultural issues and hoped that the plan would provide for the training. It was also noted that we need to ensure that we are meeting the true needs and desires of the congregations covered.

Elder Rosie Fay joined the meeting at this point.

It was also stressed that if Anna Jackman funds are to be used that we work with the Jackman family to ensure that the Anna Jackman funds are appropriately used.

The Rev. Jesse Perry joined the meeting at this point. He has been serving as the Moderator of the Hoonah session.

Rev. Perry presented background on a possible plan to have Vicar Michael Borg of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod (LCMS) lead services at the church in Hoonah. He has been placed by the LCMS in Hoonah for three years to lead a mission to the people of Hoonah. The Council discussed some of the issues, particularly those of a doctrinal nature which would complicate his leading services in a PCUSA congregation. It was noted the the LCMS is not in direct communion with the PCUSA, and generally opposes most ecumenical relationships. Borg was en route to this meeting, and thus additional consideration of this matter was held until his arrival.

The Council resumed discussion and debate on how we might go about continuing the design of the Anna Jackman Parish Concept. The Council voted to ask the Committee on Ministry work with Rev. Perry to draft a CIF for a designated pastor to serve a Presbytery-wide Anna Jackman Parish.

RECESS

The Council recessed at 2:40 PM. Following the recess the meeting reconvened at 2:52 PM.

PRESBYTERY ADMINISTRATOR

It was reported that Personnel Committee is advertising for a Presbytery Administrator. The position has been officially posted. The closing date for the position has been set at April 1, 2008. They hope to get the Personnel Committee together to review the

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applications they receive by mid-April. A written report from the committee coordinator, Elder Dave Turcott, was presented to the Council.

PRESBYTERY BROCHURE

The current supply of Presbytery Brochures is almost exhausted. A slightly revised version of the current document has been created and is being produced. A grant of \$12,000 has been received from National Mission Partnership Funds to the brochure.

The Council discussed how the brochure might be designed to work with the mission video being developed by KTOO-TV and that we definitely want something to distribute at the booth we will be having at this year's General Assembly.

The Council members were asked to submit names to the Presbytery office of people who would be interested in serving on a task force to create the new Presbytery Brochure.

BUDGET AND FINANCE REPORT

A written report was presented by the Finance Committee. It was noted that Venus Zink has been hired as our bookkeeper. She has been loading our information into our version of Quickbooks Online and hopes to have the work of entering our Chart of Accounts done by the end of the next week.

The report noted several issues that Zink has uncovered, including the fact that there has not been a year-end closeout for at least six years and that there were some VYM program receipts not properly processed. This is being rectified. Zink's next focus will be on looking at our Foundation and investment accounts.

The plan is to have everything cleaned up by the end of the quarter and request a full financial review during the second quarter.

Elder Privett brought a document from 2005 which she thought would be useful for the Treasurer to have. A copy of this document will be forwarded to her. Privett also suggested that Zink consider meeting with Nancy Eiler who served as the Presbytery treasurer in the later part of the 1990's for additional information.

SHELDON JACKSON CLOSING ISSUES

The Council reviewed the status of the efforts by the Presbytery to cover the medical and pension program costs for the Rev. Pat Sheahan in light of the closing of Sheldon Jackson College and the fact that they had been arrears in their pension program payments prior to the closure. It was reported that his health insurance costs have been covered by the Presbytery and the fund established managed by the Sitka church through June 1, 2008. The Council reviewed its options for the future and received a report on Rev. Sheahan's plans for the future. It was suggested that the Council and its members continue to keep Rev. Sheahan in their prayers.

It was noted that the Sitka fund has continued to provide support to those displaced by the closure and that the fund continues to have funds for this purpose. It was suggested that the Council be notified if the Sitka fund should need additional funding from the Presbytery.

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With other commitments, Rev. Perry left the meeting during this discussion.

VICAR MICHAEL BORG

Vicar Borg arrived at the meeting and was introduced to the members of the Council. He gave a brief history of the Lutheran's work in Hoonah.

Borg noted that at this point what he was asking of the Hoonah church and the Presbytery was permission to rent or lease the Hoonah church on Sunday afternoons for the purpose of holding a Lutheran service following the regular Presbyterian Service.

It was observed that this was somewhat different from the proposal heard earlier. Borg agreed this was the case, and that the reason for the change was that his leading a Presbyterian service would not be acceptable to his denomination.

The Council discussed this matter with Borg to ensure a proper understanding of the request. It was noted that they are currently using the Assembly of God church for this purpose, but believe the Presbyterian Church would be better suited for this purpose. They would also hope that they could rent the current Presbyterian Manse as it is adjacent to the Presbyterian Church.

Vicar Borg left the meeting. The Council voted to ask Rev. Horn and Rev. Perry take this revised proposal back to the Hoonah Session for their consideration. During the discussion on this proposal it was observed that the meeting was being recorded. The Stated Clerk can make copies of the discussion with Vicar Borg available as necessary.

RECESS AND RECONVENE

The Council recessed at 4:05 PM. Following the recess, the Council was called back to order at 4:13 PM.

NATIVE AMERICAN CONSULTING COMMITTEE (NACC)

The Rev. Linda Wescott reported on behalf of the NACC. The biggest issue for the NACC is Elder Isabella Brady who has been hospitalized for sometime and is not in the best of health. She hopes to be able to return home as soon as possible, possibly today.

In Brady's absence, Elder Adeline deCastro has been leading the NACC. DeCastro met with the Reverend Irvin Porter of the Synod NACC at an ethnic gathering in Los Angeles and at a meeting in Louisville.

DeCastro is working on setting up a teleconference meeting for the NACC.

A question came from the Synod as to who will represent the Presbytery of Alaska on the Synod NACC. Neither of the Presbytery's two representatives, Elder Selina Everson or Elder Isabella Brady have been able to attend. Rev. Wescott agreed to ask Elder deCastro about this.

Rev. Wescott noted that the next national multi-cultural event will be held April 29-30, 2009 in San Jose.

Prayer for Elder Isabella Brady was offered by Elder Rosie Fay.

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SYNOD COUNCIL

Elder Janelle Privett spoke on the recently conducted Synod Council meeting. She noted that the Rev. Joyce Emery did an excellent job leading the meeting. Rev. Emery has produced a flowchart to help explain the work of the Synod.

Elder Privett noted that she has been charged to work with Misty Jensen of Yukon Presbytery on developing action steps for how the Synod Council can lead the Synod in claiming the People in Mission program.

Elder Privett also noted that the Synod is very concerned about the situation at Sheldon Jackson College and is concerned about the denomination sending Joy Offering funds to the college. It has been learned that such funds were given to the school in 2007. With the school not currently in operation, there is question as to if additional gifts under this program should be made.

Elder Privett read an email from the Rev. David Dobler to the Synod Stated Clerk. In the letter Dobler lists the various steps the college is taking as part of its reorganization. Elder Privett then read a letter from Thomas R. Branton expressing concerns about the relationships between the PCUSA and its entities and the college.

Elder Privett is of the opinion that the Synod is seeking to separate itself from the college, believing that the college is not now an active Christian college.

It was noted that there has been a considerable amount of negative attention given to the church as somehow being responsible for the decisions made by the college and its board and officers. It was reported that Dr. Dobler has expressed a hope that the school can remain a Christian college, but that this may not occur.

The Council discussed the Presbytery's relationship with the school and the presence or absence of an official covenant relationship with the school. It was noted that for some time our General Presbyter has served as an ex officio member of the school's trustees. Since we have not had a General Presbyter for some time we have not recently had a representative on the school's Board of Trustees.

Privett reported that the Synod is hoping for a position from the Presbytery as to our current relationship with the school.

After considerable discussion the Council voted to instruct the Stated Clerk to send a letter to the Synod Stated Clerk advising him that the Presbytery does not currently have an active covenant with Sheldon Jackson and has never had a formal covenant with them.

Elder Privett reported that the Synod is seeking information on those who would be willing to receive their various publications via e-mail. This will reduce postage costs. Elder Privett noted that the Synod is doing a great job in getting news items from around the Synod in these publications.

Elder Privett noted that North Puget Sound Presbytery is exploring the idea of creating a shared position for some of their administrative/financial service tasks. The position would be shared

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with some of the other presbyteries of the Synod.

Elder Privett took questions concerning the Synod's web presence and the proposal from North Puget Sound Presbytery.

STATED CLERK REPORT

Elder Guy Warren presented a written report listing his activities since the last meeting.

PRIOR MINUTES

Since copies of the minutes were not readily available for those participating by teleconference, the Council agreed to defer consideration of the minutes of the October 12, 2007 meeting to a later date.

SYNOD LOAN REVIEW

The Stated Clerk reported that all loans from the Synod to the churches of the Presbytery are current. This review is required by a covenant between the Presbytery and the Synod.

FINAL QUESTIONS

In response to questions from the floor, the Stated Clerk reviewed some of the details to be used in planning the Spring Presbytery meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The Council adjourned with prayer led by Elder Janell Privett at 5:21 PM.

Guy Warren
Stated Clerk