

**PRESBYTERY OF ALASKA - GENERAL COUNCIL
MINUTES
MARCH 4, 2009**

The General Council of the Presbytery of Alaska met at the Chapel by the Lake in Juneau on March 4, 2009. The meeting began with a scripture reading and prayer led by the Council Coordinator, the Rev. Randy Russom at 9:00 AM.

ROLL CALL

Following the prayer, the Council Coordinator declared the meeting open. In addition to Rev. Russom, the following voting members of the Council were present: Elder Fred Baxter, Presbytery Moderator; The Rev. Ron Horn, COM Coordinator; Elder Paul Wescott, NW M&M Representative and Synod Elder Commissioner; The Rev. George Pasley, South M&M Representative and Synod Minister Commissioner; The Rev. Dr. John Zimmerman, Presbytery Moderator-Elect; The Dr. Rev. Chuck Bovee, Trustee President; Elder Sheryl Dennis, Finance Coordinator; Elder Isabella Brady, Native American Consulting Committee Representative and Elder Bonnie Sharnbroich, NE M&M Representative. Also attending the meeting were the Stated Clerk, Elder Guy Warren; The Rev. Dr. David Dobler, Pastor to the Presbytery; Venus Zink, Presbytery Treasurer; and the Rev. George Pasley, Synod Ministerial Commissioner. Not present was a representative of the Presbyterian Women.

A quorum was declared.

STATED CLERK'S REPORT

The Presbytery Stated Clerk, Elder Guy Warren, presented a written report of his activities since the last meeting of Presbytery. This included working with the churches to get the data for the annual congregational reports. 11 of the 15 churches have had their information submitted.

Elder Warren noted that with the departure of the Rev. Dixie Anders to accept a call in Nebraska that the Presbytery has a vacancy on the Committee on Ministry. This information will be forwarded onto the Nominations Committee.

Warren also reported that the General Council still had need of a nominee for the Presbytery Nominations Committee. The nominated individual must be a minister of Word and Sacrament. The Council agreed to take up this matter at the end of the meeting.

SYNOD LOAN REVIEW

Elder Warren reported that he had checked with Dean Mielke of the Mission Development Certificate (MDC) program and that all loans to churches within the Presbytery were current.

Mielke has started conversations with the church in Sitka who have approached the MDC staff about a possible loan. He has also been told that the church in Auke Bay may also be interested.

He is willing to come to Alaska to talk with those churches seeking capital project funding to explain the MDC program.

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PASTOR TO THE PRESBYTERY REPORT

The Pastor to the Presbytery, the Rev. Dr. David Dobler, spoke on the issues facing the Presbytery. In his opinion the issue the Presbytery must deal with first concerns the presbytery budget. He reported that the long-feared discontinuation of the Mission Partnership program is likely upon us. The program has agreed to send the Presbytery \$120,000 for 2009, but that no additional funding for the future is anticipated. Assisted by the Presbytery Treasurer, Venus Zink, Dr. Dobler presented a summary of the revenues and expenses the Presbytery has, demonstrating the need for a solution to our budget issues.

RECESS/RECONVENE

The Council recessed at 9:51 AM. The meeting was called back to order at 9:58 AM.

PRESBYTERY FINANCIAL REPORT

The Presbytery Bookkeeper, Venus Zink, presented a financial report for 2008 and a report of the revenues and expenditures made thus far in 2009. Zink reported that the accountants performing a review of the Presbytery's finances had been in Juneau earlier this year and had completed their field work. A report of their findings is expected next week.

PRESBYTERY STRUCTURE AND STAFFING

Dr. Dobler and Elder Warren presented a report listing a number of possible suggestions for simplifying the Presbytery's structure. The Council proceeded to discuss these suggestions.

The NACC coordinator, Elder Isabella Brady, spoke on the importance of maintaining a Native Alaskan voice in the structure.

Consideration of the structure suggestions was held until after lunch.

SYNOD COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Brief oral reports were given by the Rev. George Pasley and Elder Paul Wescott. The Synod meets annually with its next meeting in Spokane in May.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The Rev. Dr. John Zimmerman, representing the Personnel and Staff Support Committee, presented a written report for the Council. The Committee is recommending that the 2010 Presbytery Budget support the three current part time staff positions. No action on this recommendation was taken at this meeting.

The committee also recommended that the hourly wage of the Presbytery Bookkeeper/Treasurer be increased by \$1.55 per hour in lieu of the Treasurer's stipend. The Council VOTED to approve this recommendation.

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

The Committee on Ministry presented a written report listing their actions since the last meeting of Presbytery. These actions included approving a recommendation to the Presbytery that Elder Crystal

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Badgley of Haines be commissioned as a Commissioned Lay Pastor for Worship and Congregational Care at the Haines Church.

PRESBYTERY TRUSTEES

The Presbytery Trustees are completing work on a proposed rewrite of the Presbytery's Sexual Misconduct policies. This document will be presented to the Presbytery for their consideration at the Spring 2009 meeting.

The Presbytery Trustees are also dealing with a potential tax liability issue concerning a day care program operated in Hoonah. A report on this matter with the financial implications will be presented at the Spring Presbytery Meeting.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The coordinator of the Presbytery Finance Committee, Elder Sheryl Dennis presented a written report. The Committee will be meeting to review the Financial Review Report and will be presenting the report to the Presbytery at the Spring Meeting.

NATIVE AMERICAN CONSULTING COMMITTEE

The Coordinator of the Native American Consulting Committee, Elder Isabella Brady, presented a brief oral report noting the things she hoped to present to the Presbytery at its Spring 2009 Meeting.

LAY PASTOR EDUCATION COMMITTEE

A written report prepared by Elder Harriet Schirmer of the Lay Pastor Education Committee was distributed. The Committee is proposing that its name be changed to the Leadership Equipping Center and that its mission statement be revised. The Council VOTED to recommend that the Presbytery adopt both proposals.

The Committee is looking at the increased use of distance education models so as to permit reductions in the costs required to participate in their programs. They are also looking at providing educational opportunities for other church workers, such as church treasurers and Session clerks.

BOOK OF ORDER AMENDMENTS

The Presbytery Stated Clerk, Elder Guy Warren, provided a report on the Book of Order amendments to be considered at the Spring Presbytery meeting and how the Presbytery might seek to provide the "period of discernment" the General Assembly proposed be employed when considering Amendment 08-B.

RECESS/RECONVENE

The Council recessed for lunch at 12:05 AM. A prayer for the meeting and the meal was offered by the Rev. Randy Russom. Following lunch, the meeting was called back to order at 12:35 PM.

BOOK OF ORDER AMENDMENTS (CONTINUED)

The Council VOTED to recommend that the Presbytery discuss Amendment 08-B on Friday afternoon for a fixed length of time and then vote on the matter following prayer on Saturday afternoon.

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PRESBYTERY STAFFING

As part of a continued early drafting of the 2010 Presbytery Budget the Council VOTED to recommend that the Presbytery maintain the 2009 staffing levels in 2010. They agreed to refer consideration of the Presbytery's 2011 staffing levels to the Personnel & Staff Support Committee.

PELICAN COVENANT

Hearing that other worship opportunities were available to the people of Pelican and that the Presbytery office had not heard from the congregants of the Pelican Mission in some time, the Council VOTED to not renew the Pelican Mission covenant. The existing covenant expires on March 31, 2009.

MISSION SUPPORT

The Council as part of the work on the 2010 Presbytery Budget VOTED to request that the Rev. Dr. David Dobler meet with representatives from each of the Mission Partnership churches (with appropriate additional participants) to discuss how best to solve the Presbytery's budget issues and how best to meet the needs of each congregation.

PRESBYTERY STRUCTURE

The Council VOTED to recommend that the Presbytery adopt a number of changes to the By-Laws of the Presbytery reducing the number of committees, reducing the size of the Committee on Ministry and altering the makeup of the General Council. The Stated Clerk will prepare the precise text for review by the members of the Council and will then distribute the proposed amendments to the Presbytery in time for consideration at the Spring 2009 Meeting. *The specific text for these changes as adopted by the Presbytery will be included in the minutes of the Spring 2009 Presbytery Meeting.*

PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Council voted to approve as distributed the minutes of the October 12, 2007, February 5, 2008 and August 27, 2008 meetings of the Council.

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

The General Council discussed possible names for the ministerial term on the Presbytery Nominations Committee. The term will expire on December 31, 2011. Individual members were designated to obtain the permission of the proposed nominees.

STATED CLERK SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Council VOTED to recommend that the Presbytery request that the Presbytery Moderator appoint a search committee for a new Stated Clerk. It is hoped that a new Stated Clerk could be chosen no later than the Spring 2010 Presbytery meeting. The term of the current Stated Clerk, Elder Guy Warren, expires on December 31, 2010. Elder Warren has previously reported he will not be available to serve an additional term as Stated Clerk.

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ADJOURNMENT

The Council adjourned with prayer led by the Rev. Ron Horn at 2:40 PM.

Guy Warren
Stated Clerk