

**Elder Synod Commissioner Report
October 14, 2011
Juneau, AK**

I last reported on the Synod of Alaska-Northwest Assembly meeting of July 12-15, 2009. That meeting initiated the movement to restructure and downsize the Synod in view of changes in funding by the national church and consequent change in Synod responsibilities in that regard. It was proposed that the Synod Council be eliminated and the number of ex-officio people called to Synod reduced. The number of meetings is to be reduced. Provision is to be made to conduct more meetings electronically. Synod Commissioners will also be its Trustees. Since July 2009 there have been several notable meetings as follows:

June 9-11, 2010, Synod Assembly Stated Meeting Bellevue First Presbyterian Church, Bellevue, Washington



At this meeting, many of the proposals suggested at the previous Stated Meeting were finalized. The Transitional Synod Executive position was eliminated in favor of a Presbyterian to Synod called position. The Rev. Dr. Joyce Emory, who filled the former position, was called to and installed in the latter. Elder Jim Irwin of Central Washington Presbytery was elected and installed as the next Moderator of Synod. Rev. Leisa Carrick of Yukon Presbytery was elected and installed as next Vice-Moderator.

Yakutat Presbyterian Church set up one of the display tables with photos and text describing work accomplished with four grants received through the Synod and expressing its appreciation to the Grantors and the Synod.

Future Synod meetings are to be held at the request of one or more Presbyteries to address specific ideas or issues – calls to table or, as Rev. Emory characterized it, calls to synod (“coming together along the way”). Commissioners would meet at least once a year to address other Synod issues.

The Synod learned that The University of Dubuque would not set up a satellite campus at Sheldon Jackson College. Consequently, Sheldon Jackson College is no more as a Christian college.

October 12-13, 2010, Final meeting of the Synod Council, Synod Office

January 19-20, 2011, Stated Meeting of Synod, Calvin Presbyterian Church, Shoreline, Washington



This meeting continued the work of restructuring the Synod. Most of the action items concerned Synod operations. Several reports of interest to the Synod as well as staff reports were delivered and discussed.

A decision on an emergency funding request by Mt. View Presbyterian Church was postponed. Funding was provided for the North Puget Sound Transformation partnership grant. Church of the Indian Fellowship, Olympia Presbytery, is to receive support funds. The full amount obligated may not be required.

March 31, 2011, Special Meeting of Synod, Conference Call

This meeting primarily concerned proposed revisions to the Corporation Bylaws and the Manual of Administrative Operations to conform to the revised structure and responsibilities of the Synod.

July 12, 2011, Stated Meeting of Synod, Web/Conference Call

This meeting was originally scheduled to take place at Whitworth University but was changed to a Web/Conference Call meeting. It addressed the role of the Synod in regional higher education institutions, nominations for various committee positions and a proposal/request by Seattle Presbytery that the Synod partially finance the Presbytery's Congregational Transformation initiative.

Rev. Leisa Carrick was installed as Synod Moderator and Rev. Eric Chavis was installed as Vice-Moderator. I was selected to serve on the Personnel Committee.

The Personnel Committee met at a later date. The meeting was changed on relatively short notice from a teleconference to a face-to-face meeting so I was unable to attend. Just on the off chance that the Committee was still set up for call-ins, I phoned the conference operator and checked in from the ferry in Haines but no one else came on the line.

August 9, 2011, Stated Meeting of Synod, Web/Conference Call

This meeting considered an emergency repair grant to Mt. View (approved), forgiveness of an amount of Yukon Presbytery's Per Capita owed (approved), approval of a recent communion service at a Transitional Ministry Education event (approved), change of Stated Clerk position from a contracted position to a salaried one with details to be worked out by Personnel (approved), a letter from Seattle Presbytery recommending that Synod be limited to administrative and judicial duties (received) and minor changes to the draft Manual of Administrative Operations because of the recent adoption of the New Form of Government of the PC(USA). What had been the Synod Assembly is now a Council.

Synod electronic meetings will be held every month tapering off to every other month beginning in November. A face-to-face retreat is to be held in February.

A September Synod meeting was cancelled.

Summary

It seems to me that the Synod is struggling against having become largely irrelevant in the missions and ministries of its constituent Presbyteries. I think it would be prudent to seriously consider the suggestion by Seattle Presbytery that the Synod be reduced further still to perform only those basic administrative and judicial duties required by the PC(USA).

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul Wescott, RE
Synod Commissioner