

DIGEST

A short review of the Presbytery of Grand Canyon meeting of March 17-18, 2006
held at Gilbert Presbyterian Church

Roll for March 17-18, 2006

Churches: Of 70 churches, 43 were present and 27 were not.

Commissioners:

Ministers Of the 100 non-retired members on the combined roll of active members in service in congregations, in other service, in ministry beyond the jurisdiction and members-at-large, 52 were present and 48 were not.

Of the 111 retired ministers on the rolls, 10 were present and 101 were not.

Elders Of 135 Elders authorized to attend as voting members from churches under the Imbalance Procedure approved on January 21, 2006, 57 were present and 78 were not.

Of 10 Commissioned Lay Pastors, 5 were present and 5 were not.

Of 17 Elder Officers of the Presbytery or Elder members of Council
12 were present and 5 were not.

Summary Voting Members Present (unduplicated count)

Ministers	62
Elders	74

Total	136
-------	-----

Corresponding Members Enrolled	7
Visitors Present	20

Multi-Cultural Procession and Call to Order

The meeting opened at 9:00 a.m. with the singing of "Come Christians Join to Sing" and a Procession of Presbyters carrying their Church Banners which were then displayed in the Chancel. The meeting was called to order with the Convening Prayer led by Moderator Hodgson and ending with the Lord's Prayer recited in Spanish by Rev. G. Derney Ramos, the new Pastor of Betannia P.C. and in Pima by Elder Annette Stewart of Vah Ki P.C. Singing of "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing" preceded the Lighting and Litany of the Peace Candle. Following the Hymn of Praise "Let All Things Now Living" those attending for the first time were introduced, Corresponding Members were enrolled, a quorum was reported, the Agenda approved and Rev. Terry Palmer, Host Pastor, welcomed everyone.

Agenda and Service of Worship

The entire meeting of the presbytery was conducted in the context of Worship. The formal Service of Worship and the Agenda Items were again combined into one document and periodically throughout the meeting there were times for prayer and the singing of a hymn.

Executive Presbyter Report

The overarching subject of the report was evangelism with the annual statistical report of membership for the year 2005 in Grand Canyon Presbytery serving as the immediate context. "For the year 2005, only sixteen of the seventy churches reported gains of at least five members...The net loss for the presbytery as a whole comes out to 286 people, or a 1.7% decline. That may not look like a dramatic loss, but it's discouraging when we

compare it with the fact that our presbytery encompasses one of the fastest growing population regions in the nation. This week the Arizona Republic reported that in the last five years, Maricopa County has experienced the largest population growth of any county in the nation.”

As part of his report Ken Moe shared his experience of reconnecting with a number of his high school friends after he returned to Phoenix to become Executive Presbyter. He indicated that these high school buddies had “...three things in common. They grew up in Christian homes. They believe in God. And with one limited exception, they do not attend church. The single exception attends holiday services, such as Christmas and Easter, for what he describes as aesthetic reasons. He loves the drama of the liturgy but does not believe the doctrines. Generally they see themselves as not religious, but most of them are deeply spiritual souls. I have had some long one-on-one conversations with my spiritual friends about my Presbyterian faith and about the Christian faith in general, but that has not led any of them to become involved in church.” Ken further observed “...that most of our new members are reshuffled from other churches (our own or other denominations) rather than coming from the growing ranks of the genuinely unchurched. [As opposed to the temporarily unchurched, who come back when their children are old enough for Sunday school.] As I worship in churches throughout the presbytery, I see very few adult baptisms. The church world we live and work in can function as a cocoon, isolating us from the larger secular world around us. Therefore it has been instructive for me to reconnect with these people I grew up with. Among them I am clearly the exception, not because I’m a minister, but simply because I am actively involved in church.”

(Full text of his observations and the report may be found on the Presbytery Website at:
http://www.pbygrandcanyon.org/pdfs/exec_pres_report/epr_mar06.pdf)

Celebration of the Big Event

Moderator Hodgson called upon Co-chairs Elders Kiki Swanson and Betty Brazie, Valley P.C., in a celebration of a successful Big Event held on February 4, 2006. Framed Certificates of Appreciation were presented to Kiki and Betty by the Moderator with thanks for their dedicated service.

Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program

Rev. Mickie Choi, Development Officer from the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program which provides loans to churches was present to describe the program and present Interest Rebate Checks to six churches whose designated investments from church members or from the Presbytery or Synod on behalf of the particular church reached certain levels. She then shared the story and work of PILP by sharing a brief DVD presentation.

Committee on Ministry

Rev. Palmer, Chair of COM, presented the following four ministers who were received into membership: G. Derney Ramos – Pastor, Betannia P.C. from the Presbyterian Church of Colombia; Ruth Reinhold – Associate Pastor, Valley P.C. from San Francisco Presbytery; Troy Jarvis – HR, from Santa Fe Presbytery; and John Borden – HR, from Heartland Presbytery. In addition the Presbytery approved Changes in Terms of Call which had been reported as of March 15, 2006.

Report of the Synod of the Southwest Meeting

Minister Commissioners Judy Wellington, Mae Hicks, John Poling and Ex-Officio Members Mary Lynn Walters and José Olagues provided a synopsis of the meeting held at Historic First Presbyterian Church, Phoenix. Highlights included a report of the Task Force by Judy, a member of the task force. The Task Force has been reviewing the work of the synod, assessing its accomplishments since the last major change and restructure; and conducting meetings over the last year-and-a-half with various presbytery councils and presbytery executives, and holding conversations to gather people’s ideas, wishes and hopes, for the future of regional ministry within the Southwest. Mae, John and Mary Lynn shared their observations on the importance of regional ministry and highlights of the meeting. They also announced that Rev. Al Gephart, University P.C. had been elected Moderator of the Synod and that Alyson Lewis who was attending the meeting fell on Friday evening and suffered a head injury and broken leg. Prayers were requested and offered for Alyson.

José Olagues called attention to the action taken by the Synod to send an Overture to the 217th General Assembly (2006) on the subject of the present national immigration policies that are not working effectively along our southern border with Mexico and urging “all synods, presbyteries and congregations to discover other communities of faith and people of conscience to enter into intentional dialogue with them to develop ways to promote humane reform of national immigration laws.”

Upon recommendation of the Social Justice and Peacemaking Committee that had previously reviewed the approved Synod of the Southwest Overture, Rev. Art Campbell, its Chairperson, moved that the Presbytery of Grand Canyon endorse the overture. Following opportunity for discussion and debate the presbytery voted in the affirmative to endorse the overture.

Service of Worship

A Service of Worship was held under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Marian McClure, Director of Worldwide Ministries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Dr. McClure’s sermon was titled “[The Yeast Has to be Moved](#).” Scripture Readings were Matthew 13:33 and Ephesians 1:8-10. Dr. McClure indicated that the Kingdom of Heaven is like leaven and that it is important to have the right ingredients, the “Love of God and the Caring Tongues of Angels.” No one of us is all the ingredients; we are incomplete and need each other. She shared stories of mission involvement throughout the world. The Gilbert P. C. Choir shared in music ministry; the Sign Language Interpreter was Diana Williams (Associate Pastor, St. Matthew United Methodist Church) and The Lord’s Supper was administered by Revs McClure and Palmer.

Presentation and Interactive Dialogue – *Gathering For God’s Future* – Witness, Discipleship, Community: A Renewed Call to Worldwide Mission

The Rev. Dr. Marian McClure, Director of Worldwide Ministries presented and led a discussion on the worldwide mission work of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The presentation centered on The Challenges We Face in witnessing and evangelizing worldwide - where there is a need to share the gospel for the first time; where witness to the gospel is endangered; where the church is dealing with explosive growth. The Challenges We Face in equipping the Church for transforming Mission – to become equipped as a church for transforming mission; to become equipped to live out the call we receive in baptism to be part of the universal church of Jesus Christ and to equip one another. The Challenges We Face in engaging in ministries of reconciliation, justice, healing and grace; in living the Good News of Jesus Christ in community with people who are poor; connecting mission near and far; and sharing people and resources. A vision for the future requires the church to name and understand the dynamics at work in the World – the dynamics of Globalization, Ecology, Interfaith Tensions, Population and power shifts and Diseases of poverty. A vision for the future requires the church to name and understand the dynamics at work in the Church – the dynamics of changing patterns of growth and mission, facing religious conflict, responding to opportunities and problems of globalization and dealing with shifts in patterns of support and connectionalism. For a more in-depth discussion of the above points see the booklet: ***Gathering For God’s Future* – Witness, Discipleship, Community: A Renewed Call to Worldwide Mission**, by visiting the Worldwide Ministries Division website at www.pcusa.org/navigation/mission.

Enrollment of Candidates

Upon recommendation of the Preparation for Ministry Committee inquirers Kristen Willett, Mt View P.C. and Brandon Willett, Flagstaff Federated PC, were examined and approved by the presbytery for enrollment as Candidates for Ministry of the Word and Sacrament. Kristen and Brandon shared their faith journeys and experiences at Princeton Theological Seminary where they are currently enrolled. Members of their family and members of their churches were invited to join them. They responded affirmatively to the questions posed jointly by Moderator Hodgson and Moderator-elect Walker and Rev. Ralph Meredith, on behalf of both Mt. View and Flagstaff gave a brief charge and offered prayer.

Commissioning of Commissioners and Advisory Delegates to the 217th General Assembly (2006)

The presbytery under the leadership of Moderator Hodgson and Moderator-elect Walker participated in a Commissioning Service for Minister Commissioners Marilyn Manning and Judy Wellington; Elder Commissioners Willy Zunker and Marcus Dawes (who was unable to be present because of work requirements)

and Advisory Delegates Linda Bailey and Harlan Glinski (who was unable to be present because of school requirements).

George Brooks Awards

Rev. Art Campbell, Chair of the Social Justice and Peacemaking Committee, announced that Elder Doris Lewis, Southminster, and Elder Lillian Oats, Mission del Sol, were both receiving awards this year. Unfortunately Doris Lewis was unable to be present because of illness and Lillian Oats was out of town. The awards will be presented appropriately in their local church settings and the full description of their work that qualified them for receipt of the award will be included in the Minutes of the Presbytery of Grand Canyon Meeting of March 17-18, 2006.

Multicultural Task Force

Elder Grace Mossman (Gilbert), Chair of the Task Force presented the Mission Statement and Primary Goals. The purpose of the Multicultural Task Force is to lead the Presbytery of Grand Canyon into Intentional Celebration of the cultural diversity within its bounds. Churches were encouraged to share new (or old) ways that they have found to celebrate diversity.

Expressions of Thanks and Closing Prayer

Moderator-elect Barbara Walker expressed thanks for the gracious hospitality of the Gilbert Presbyterian Church and to the members of the congregation for all of their work. Following prayer the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m. on Saturday March 18, 2006.