

Dear friends in Presbytery of the James,

The 97<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of the James was held on Saturday, October 21, 2017, at Tuckahoe Presbyterian Church, Richmond, VA. It was a beautiful fall day and hospitality of the folks at Tuckahoe made the meeting very enjoyable and productive. It was a full agenda, but we were able to finish by the projected ending time.

We were led in worship by the host Pastor, Patrick Dennis, and Dr. Dan Roberts, POJ member and Professor at the University of Richmond. Dan preached on the Reformation, and our worship included celebrating the Lord's Supper and the reading of the necrology of elders.

We welcomed new ministers

- Rev. Shannon O'Leary, from Lake Michigan Presbytery to serve as Interim Pastor, Sandston Church.
- Rev. Katherine Jackson, from Peaks Presbytery, to serve as Covenant Pastor, Bott Memorial Church
- Rev. Esther Choi, from Grace Presbytery, to serve as Interim Associate at First Church, Richmond.

We were inspired by two mission trip reports: one team went to Guatemala and the other team went to Haiti. It was exciting to hear the good work that is being done in both countries.

We voted to dismiss the Wylliesburg Congregation to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church denomination upon completion of all of the requirements. We also dissolved the Bethany Presbyterian Church, Charles City County. Both congregations were blessed with prayer led by the Moderator.

A rather spirited discussion centered on the Vision 2020 Final report. After much discussion and following the lunch break, the presbytery voted to express appreciation to the Vision 2020 Team and dismiss them. In addition, the presbytery voted to form a Strategic Planning Team to determine a strategic plan for 2020-2025. This Team would be appointed by the Moderator and the Stated Clerk and will make an initial report at the June, 2018, Presbytery meeting. While there was disappointment from many about this action, the presbytery was not ready to move forward with the Vision 2020 proposals.

We examined and approved for ordination three persons:

- Laura Kelly, POJ, to serve as Second Year Pastoral Resident at VCU Health Systems.
- Andrew Whitehead, Foothills Presbytery, to serve as Associate Pastor, River Road Church.

- Brett Underdown, POJ, to serve as Covenant Pastor, New Covenant Church, for two years in order to receive a commission as an Army Chaplain.

In addition, we took the following actions:

1. Approved the June, 2017, Presbytery minutes.
2. Approved the proposed 2018 Presbytery budget with the understanding that further reductions may occur if Statements of Intents from Congregations are not sufficient.
3. Dismissed the All Souls Advisory Committee as requirements for election of Elders has been satisfied.
4. Approved the 2018 balancing of Commissioners for Presbytery meetings.
5. Elected persons to various boards and committees and heard that only three vacancies exist in the presbytery.
6. Approved the Rise of White Supremacy and Racism Overture and will distribute it to all congregations, the media, and other sources. In addition, the Moderator is to convene a small group to talk about further actions that might be possible.
7. Received the revised Position Paper against Gun Violence.
8. Approved a number of ministers to become Honorably Retired or Members at Large.
9. Approved an alternative method for Candidate Humphrey Muyara's ordination exams.

*H. Carson Rhyne, Jr.*

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Stated Clerk

98 <sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting	February 17, 2018	Grace Covenant Church, Richmond, VA
99 <sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting	June 19, 2018	Westminster Canterbury Richmond, VA
100 <sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting	October 20, 2018	First Church, Charlottesville, VA
101 <sup>st</sup> Stated Meeting	February 16, 2019	Three Chopt Church, Richmond, VA
102 <sup>nd</sup> Stated Meeting	June 18, 2019	Invitation Needed
103 <sup>rd</sup> Stated Meeting	October 19, 2019	Invitation Needed