

**Minutes of the Stated Meeting
of the Presbytery of San Joaquin
September 17, 2009**
First Presbyterian Church, Exeter, CA

Attendance:

Pastors:

David Abdo, Noel Anderson, Paul Armstrong, Sandy Brown, Steven Carter, Charles Castles, Jeff Chandler, Arcesio Cruz, Paul DePledge, Tom Elson, Greg Ehlert, Jamie Evans, Rick Hansen, Rick Irish, Paul Irwin, Carl Knoch, Rich Latta, Rick Lemberg, Mgrdich Melkonian, Roger Minassian, Ruth Musson, Louis Paradise, Tom Parsons, Ron Owens, Mary Raine, Lana Roberts, Jim Rogers, Karl Schafer, Randy Scheer, Dan Schwan, Pat Sheahan, Chuck Shilito, Sharon Stanley, Jung Kil Suh, Arlin Talley, Tony Winterowd, Gus Wright

Elders:

Ron Statler (First Armenian), Gregg Wilkerson, Vidson Chan (First, Bakersfield), Verna den Hartog (Coalinga), Jose Ramon Palafox (Corcoran), Connie Feathersten, Fred Leavitt (Exeter), Brian Roberts, Julie McGuire (First, Fresno), Tim Lewis, Thomas Feaver (Fowler), Tony Santa Maria (Foothill), Sostenes Infante Jr. (First, Hanford), Sharon Overgaard (Harvest), Don Howard (Lemon Cove), Jim Clark (Lemoore), John Gutierrez (Lindsay), Ron Wade (First, Orange Cove), Jeff Altimus, Bryana Frembling (Sierra Vista), Richard Crain (Three Rivers), Robert Christopher, Curtis Cookingham (Trinity), Terry Barnhill, Ruth Smith, George Marberry (Terra Bella), Joe Wilson, Lorna Bosavanh, John Bosavanh (University), Mark Vanciel, Carlyn Lambert, (First, Visalia), Midge Barrett, (Westminister, Fresno), Linda Hengst (Woodlake)

General Council:

Betty Braddy, David Nash, Terry Holland, Scott Henderson

Corresponding Members:

Harry Phillips (Stated Supply at Orosi), Chris Gil (Stated Supply at Visalia Korean NCD), Deb Debor

Visitors:

Pat Caploe, Graham Baird, J. Scott Kroener

The Presbytery Meeting was opened with Prayer at 4:10 pm by Noel Anderson. Host pastor Tom Elson welcomed everyone as well as visitors Pat Caploe and Graham Baird. A quorum was present.

The Docket was **approved**. The Consent agenda was **approved** as printed:

Actions of COM, June 9, 2009, for information purposes only:

1. Wayne Deibel was removed from the ministerial rolls. (G-6.0600)

Actions of Finance and Property, July 27, 2009, for information purposes only:

1. The Avenal church property was sold for \$175,000. The Presbytery of San Joaquin will carry a note of \$155,800 with The Life Church, secured by a deed of trust, at 7%.
2. The F&P Commission approved Nuevo Amanecer's request for a \$20,000 Line of Credit for five years, interest free, to be used only at the new property for upgrading and repairs, or whatever is needed to be able to move in.

Actions of General Council, August 25, 2009, for information purposes only:

1. Voted to renew the contract with Rick Irish for his services as Interim Evangelist Presbyter under the same terms as last year, effective September 26, 2009, through September 25, 2010.

The minutes of June 13, 2009, Presbytery meeting were **approved**.

The meeting adjourned for worship at 4:15 pm. The Rev. Graham Baird preached. Following the message, Cindi Rogers explained about collecting for Care Packages that the Presbytery was sending to the Ellingtons in Egypt, the Zovaks in Australia, and the Gundys in Armenia. An offering was taken to pay for the shipping of the packages and to supplement the packages with items that were not collected at the presbytery meeting. The meeting was then called back to order at 5:15pm.

Transition Team - Rick Lemberg

Before bringing the recommendations for action to dismiss the following congregations, Trinity, Fowler, and First Pres Fresno, Rick introduced the Transition Team and explained the process they had undertaken to arrive at their recommendations, including sending postcards to all members of the three congregations asking whether or not they desired to leave PC(USA). He indicated that each congregation had been evaluated separately in determining the appropriate response. He said that each of the three congregations has made a financial pledge to the Presbytery. Following the presentation of the recommendations for each congregation, the floor was opened for discussion, and many stepped up to voice their opinions and feelings. The resolutions presented were as follows:

RESOLUTIONS TO DISMISS

In November 2008 the Council of the Presbytery of San Joaquin appointed a committee to make inquiry into the requests of several churches to be dismissed, with their property and with their pastors, to the Presbytery of the West, Evangelical Presbyterian Church, and to make recommendations to the Presbytery concerning the requests.

Committee members include Rev. Noel Anderson, Dick Braddy, Jim Clark, Rev. Chris Erdman, Mel Khachigian, Carlyn Lambert, Rev. Rich Latta, Rev. Rick Lemberg, Bob Line, Sharon Overgaard, Rev. Lou Paradise, and Rev. Arlin Talley. Rev. Rick Irish served as an advisor to the committee.

The committee submits its recommendations in the following resolutions:

TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Clovis

Whereas, The session of Trinity Presbyterian Church, Clovis, California, voted unanimously to request that the church be dismissed, with its pastor, The Reverend Chuck Shillito, and its property, to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church;

Whereas, The request has been made in proper form and proper consideration has been given to the interests of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);

Whereas, The Presbytery is satisfied that the vast majority of the members of the church concur with the request of the session, that the majority of the members constitute the true church within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and that due consideration has been given to the request of those members who wish to remain members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);

Whereas, The property of the church is not encumbered by any means through the Presbytery, Synod, General Assembly, or any agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);

Whereas, The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is in correspondence with the General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church;

Whereas, The Reverend Chuck Shillito has requested to be dismissed to the Presbytery of the West, of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church;

Whereas, The committee appointed by the Council of the Presbytery of San Joaquin, having conducted its inquiry in accord with intent of the Book of Order that each case should be judged on its own merits, recommends that the Great Ends of the Church (G-1.0200) will be best served by dismissing Trinity Presbyterian Church, with its property, to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church; therefore be it,

Resolved, That the Presbytery of San Joaquin dismiss Trinity Presbyterian Church to the Presbytery of the West, Evangelical Presbyterian Church;

Resolved, That the Presbytery of San Joaquin transfer to Trinity Presbyterian Church any interest, expressed or implied in the trust clause (G-8.0201), in the property, real and personal, currently held by Trinity Presbyterian Church; and

Resolved, That the Presbytery of San Joaquin dismiss The Reverend Chuck Shillito to the Presbytery of the West, Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Fresno

Whereas, The session of First Presbyterian Church, Fresno, California, voted unanimously to request that the church be dismissed, with its pastors, The Reverend Jamie Evans, The Reverend David Abdo, The Reverend Lana Roberts, and The Reverend Greg Ehlert, and its property, to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church;

Whereas, The request has been made in proper form and proper consideration has been given to the interests of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);

Whereas, The Presbytery is satisfied that the vast majority of the members of the church concur with the request of the session, that the majority of the members constitute the true church within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and that due consideration has been given to the request of those members who wish to remain members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);

Whereas, The property of the church is not encumbered by any means through the presbytery, synod, General Assembly, or any agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);

Whereas, The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is in correspondence with the General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church;

Whereas, The Reverend Jamie Evans, The Reverend David Abdo, The Reverend Lana Roberts, and The Reverend Greg Ehlert have requested to be dismissed to the Presbytery of the West, of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church;

Whereas, The committee appointed by the Council of the Presbytery of San Joaquin, having conducted its inquiry in accord with intent of the Book of Order that each case should be judged on its own merits, recommends that the Great Ends of the Church (G-1.0200) will be best served by dismissing First Presbyterian Church, with its property, to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church; therefore be it,

Resolved, That the Presbytery of San Joaquin dismiss First Presbyterian Church to the Presbytery of the West, Evangelical Presbyterian Church;

Resolved, That the Presbytery of San Joaquin transfer to First Presbyterian Church any interest, expressed or implied in the trust clause (G-8.0201), in the property, real and personal, currently held by First Presbyterian Church; and

Resolved, That the Presbytery of San Joaquin dismiss The Reverend Jamie Evans, The Reverend David Abdo, The Reverend Lana Roberts, and The Reverend Greg Ehlert to the Presbytery of the West, Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

FOWLER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Fowler

Whereas, The session of Fowler Presbyterian Church, Fowler, California, voted unanimously to request that the church be dismissed, with its pastor, The Reverend Paul Irwin, and its property, to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church;

Whereas, The request has been made in proper form and proper consideration has been given to the interests of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);

Whereas, The Presbytery is satisfied that the vast majority of the members of the church concur with the request of the session, that the majority of the members constitute the true church within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and that due consideration has been given to the request of those members who wish to remain members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);

Whereas, The property of the church is not encumbered by any means through the presbytery, synod, General Assembly, or any agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);

Whereas, The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is in correspondence with the General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church;

Whereas, The Reverend Paul Irwin has requested to be dismissed to the Presbytery of the West, of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church;

Whereas, The committee appointed by the Council of the Presbytery of San Joaquin, having conducted its inquiry in accord with intent of the Book of Order that each case should be judged on its own merits, recommends that the Great Ends of the Church (G-1.0200) will be best served by dismissing Fowler Presbyterian Church, with its property, to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church; therefore be it,

Resolved, That the Presbytery of San Joaquin dismiss Fowler Presbyterian Church to the Presbytery of the West, Evangelical Presbyterian Church;

Resolved, That the Presbytery of San Joaquin transfer to Fowler Presbyterian Church any interest, expressed or implied in the trust clause (G-8.0201), in the property, real and personal, currently held by Fowler Presbyterian Church; and

Resolved, That the Presbytery of San Joaquin dismiss The Reverend Paul Irwin to the Presbytery of the West, Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

The votes were taken by secret ballot and the results are as follows in response to the question, should this congregation be dismissed, along with its pastors, to the Presbytery of the West of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church?

Trinity Presbyterian Church, Clovis, CA: It was **moved to dismiss**, 18 no and 58 yes;

First Presbyterian Church, Fresno, CA: it was **moved to dismiss**, 16 no and 60 yes;

Fowler Presbyterian Church, Fowler, CA: it was **moved to dismiss**, 11 no and 63 yes.

Following the announcement of the results of each motion, Presbytery members laid hands on the pastor(s) and elders of these congregations and prayed for God's blessings as they left.

The meeting adjourned for dinner at 6:30 pm and then resumed at 7:20 pm.

Moderator's Moments - Noel Anderson

Noel spoke on churches leaving the Presbytery of San Joaquin, restating that it is not the Presbytery's fault but rather the fault of the parent body of PC(U.S.A.). The points at issue in the Book of Order have not changed, and we need to stand together and be strong. Our Presbytery is still working with the same values: Worship, Connect, Grow, and Serve. We are still here and fighting for what we believe in and will always speak truth and stay on task!

Interim Evangelist Presbyter/Stated Clerk's Report - Rick Irish

In light of the dismissal of three beloved congregations, Rick urged the Presbytery to maintain its focus on the Light within the clay vessel of the Presbyterian Church and not become discouraged by painful changes in that vessel, as we will be continually transformed by Jesus Christ.

He announced that the Covenant Presbyterian Insurance has been replaced with insurance through the United Church of Christ and to be sure that your church made the transfer. There are issues ahead with the CPIC, which may impact both the Presbytery and the Synod.

Nancy Collins, a PC(USA) mission worker, will be visiting churches throughout this presbytery during October 10-15, 2009.

Rev. Bill Goheen joined the church triumphant on July 25, 2009, and Rev. Ed Spongberg on August 13, 2009.

General Council report - Noel Anderson

The Council's recommendations for the Presbytery's future are summarized as follows: As the Presbytery of San Joaquin has adopted as its essential tasks, to Worship, Connect, Grow and Serve, in order to contribute best toward vital, thriving, healthy congregations, the Presbytery Council believes that strong relationships between pastors and congregations are vital. As an initial step toward this end, the Council proposes dividing the presbytery into three regions and assigning a part-time pastor-to-pastors to serve each. Their primary role would be to invest

themselves in the lives of pastors and their relationships with one another. Overseeing the pastors-to-pastors and coordinating the work of the Presbytery as a whole would be a part-time Stated Clerk/Executive Presbyter. Officers and committees/ commissions/teams would play pivotal roles in the life of the presbytery, which would continue to meet during the year as a whole and in regions. Feedback is welcomed.

Finance and Property - David Nash

David Nash gave the first reading of the 2010 proposed budget, which omitted budget items that are only occasionally needed by committees. In the future, when one of those items is required, a request would be made through Finance and Property to draw from a smaller limited budget "pool," created from deleting those same items.

Approved per capita for 2010 at \$27.00, broken down as follows: GA \$6.15, Synod \$5.17 and Presbytery \$20.68.

Nominating Committee – Noel Anderson

In lieu of the changes coming, Nominating recommended temporarily suspending section 5820 of the Presbytery's Policy and Procedures and elect six members for a one-year term, equally represented by lay men, lay women and clergy. It was so **moved**. They **voted** to elect Elder Anne Myers, CLP John Gutierrez, Florence Ulrich, Rev. Sandy Brown and Elder Bob Frembling for one-year terms. Gus Wright, who has already been elected to it, is the sixth member.

Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) - Beth Downie

Lydia Suh was presented to be advanced to candidacy. Following the reading of her statement of call and a period of questions and answers she was **approved** to advance to candidacy. Following a similar procedure, David Dack was **approved** to advance to candidacy.

Committee on Ministry (COM) - Terry Holland

Members of presbytery expressed appreciation for the ministries of Rev. Sandy Brown and Rev. Calvin Hoff as they were each honorably retired from the ministry of Word and sacrament.

Calvin Crest - Scott Henderson

Calvin Crest is asking for suggestions for members for their Board of Directors, which elects its own members but is required to seat a majority of members from this Presbytery. He thanked everyone for their ongoing support of Clean Water U, West. The first training will be October 4-8, 2009. The Annual Golf tournament has been moved to next year, May 1, 2010, due to the economy.

Presbyterian Women - Florence Ulrich

The next meeting of Presbyterian Women will be Oct 17th at the 210 Café in Visalia.

One Minute Messages were given, among which was expression of gratitude from Nuevo Amanecer NCD for the support given by the Presbytery and First Pres, Bakersfield.

The meeting was then closed in prayer at 9:20 p.m.

The **next meeting of Presbytery** will be on Saturday, November 14, 2009, 9 am to 4 pm at the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno.