

**Minutes of the Stated Meeting  
of the Presbytery of San Joaquin  
February 6, 2010  
First Armenian Presbyterian Church, Fresno, CA**

**Attendance:**

*Pastors:*

Ren Adams, Noel Anderson, Terry Barnhill, Sandy Brown, Steven Carter, Charles Castles, Paul DePledge, Bill Ekhardt, Rick Irish, Adam Knudson, Rich Latta, Rick Lemberg, Tedd Lyons, Betty Martin, Mgrdich Melkonian, Louis Paradise, Tom Parsons, Alan Reutter, Jim Rogers, Randy Scheer, Dan Schwan, Pat Sheahan, Arlin Talley, Tony Winterowd

*Elders:*

Terry Barnhill, Lorna Bosavanh, Jim Clark, Jim Conners, John Davis, Verna DenHartog, Beth Downie, Richard Eckerman, Norman Ferrcira, Iwan Gunasan, John Gutierrez, Jan Sin Han, Anne Myers, Steve Musson, David Nash, Robbyanto Notomihardjo, Jose Palafox, David Prewitt, Ruth Smith, Brian Vaccaro, Judi Vaccaro, Johnett Watt, Joseph Wilson, Gregg Wilkenson

*General Council:*

Betty Braddy, Terry Holland, Mel Khachigian, Florence Ulrich

*Corresponding member:*

Elder Bruce McIntosh, Walnut Creek Pres, Presbytery of San Francisco

*Visitors:*

Simon Biasell, Richard Braddy, John Lynex, Jonathan Phillips

The presbytery meeting was opened with prayer at 9:10 a.m. by Moderator Ruth Smith and welcomed by host Pastor, Mgrdich Melkonian. A quorum was present.

The docket was **approved** with the addition of a motion from the Discernment/ Transition Team under new business. The minutes of the November 14, 2009, meeting of the Presbytery were **approved**. The *Consent Agenda* was **approved** as follows:

*Actions of COM, September 8, 2009, for information purposes only:*

1. Betty Martin was restored to active member-at-large for service as Parish Associate at Westminster Presbyterian, Fresno.
2. Woody Bagwell was approved retroactively for Honorable Retirement in 1990.
3. Joseph Cejka was approved for Honorable Retirement on December 7, 2009.

*Actions of COM, November 10, 2009, for information purposes only:*

1. Housing allowances were approved as follows: Rick Irish - \$36,100 ; Arcesio Cruz - \$16,800 ; Rich Latta - \$30,000.

*Actions of Finance and Property, September 15 , 2009, for information purposes only:*

1. The commission approved a grant of \$7700 to FIRM.

*Actions of Finance and Property, November 10 , 2009, for information purposes only:*

1. A new cell tower and lease were approved for Harvest Community Church in Madera.
2. An increase of \$100,000 to Calvin Crest's loan was approved to cover unexpected construction costs.

The presbytery joined in worship together, followed briefly with Moderator's Moments by Ruth Smith.

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

General Assembly's 2010 funding has been approved for our new church developments, Nuevo Amanecer and LifeSpring. Nuevo Amanecer is still seeking their own building, and Pastor Arcesio Cruz was congratulated for recently completing requirements to become an American citizen.

Healthy Congregations Facilitator Training will be conducted in Visalia on February 23-25, with the goal of equipping COM to more ably assist congregations in strengthening the health of their relationships.

Rev. Allan Philp, a retired member of our presbytery, joined the church triumphant on January 28, 2010.

#### **General Council report - Noel Anderson**

Jim Rogers was **elected** as a minister member to Presbytery Nominating Committee.

The following changes to the Presbytery's Policy and Procedure Manual were moved and **approved**:

5830: Committee on Ministry.

5831: The committee shall consist of ~~eighteen~~ fifteen members, of whom half shall be ministers and half elders. The stated clerk shall be an ex-officio member without vote. ~~The committee shall annually appoint a member as liaison to the Mission Program Committee.~~

#### **Report of the Task Force for the Future - Sandy Brown**

The Task Force is at work seeking discernment of God's ways for us to move into the future and there will be more details to follow at later meetings. He challenged us with the words from Dylan Thomas:

“And you, my father, there on the sad height,  
Curse, bless me now with your fierce tears, I pray.  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.”

#### **Moments for Witness**

Jim Rogers - The churches were challenged to send youth to Youth Triennium this summer at Purdue University. This extremely well-done conference, through Christ-centered worship and Bible studies, prepares high school or college youth to go back into their communities to make a difference.

Alan Reutter - The Presbytery Retirees' Luncheon was announced for April 22 at University Pres, Fresno. The program will include Mark Frey from the Board of Pensions, fellowship, entertainment and great food, at no cost to the retirees. Discussion will include consideration of forming a fellowship of retirees in PSJ.

Ruth Smith expressed thanks to former Moderator, Noel Anderson, and presented him with a plaque.

#### **Hispanic Committee - John Gutierrez**

Support each of these ministries by keeping them in prayer:

A new Hispanic ministry has begun in Hanford where they have an average of 46 in worship after one year. The committee is currently providing leadership training to prepare this fledgling congregation to stand on its own.

The Committee is looking at the possibility of a new Hispanic congregation in Visalia.

Centro Cristiano Agua Viva in Corcoran currently has about 100 in worship, and, responding to a need, they are seeking to bring Living Waters to work in Mexico.

Nuevo Amanecer is looking to purchase a building and have between 80 to 90 in worship.

Le Fe in Lindsey, also has between 80 to 90 in worship, along with around 25 to 30 in a youth program.

Easton Hispanic Ministry is beginning home Bible Studies and youth outreach.

#### **Nominating Committee - Sandy Brown**

The following were presented and **approved**:

*Elder Commissioner to GA* – Elder David Prewitt, First Pres, Hanford

*Minister Commissioner to GA* – Rev. Sharon Stanley, FIRM, Fresno

*Alternate Minister Commissioner to GA* – Rev. Jim Rogers, Foothill Pres, Porterville

### **Consider concurring with a Remedial Complaint – Ruth Smith**

Elder Bruce McIntosh, Walnut Creek Pres, was seated as a corresponding member. He introduced the Parnell v Presbytery of San Francisco Remedial Complaint, which has been filed with the Synod of the Pacific Permanent Judicial Commission in response to Presbytery of San Francisco's vote to ordain Ms. Lisa Larges, who has stated she will not submit to G-6.106b. The basic question is whether or not a Presbytery can declare an exception to a mandatory requirement of the Constitution. The Presbytery of San Joaquin was asked to join as a complainant in this case. It was **voted** that the Presbytery of San Joaquin file a joinder in support of the complaint of Eric Parnell et al v Presbytery of San Francisco, to the Synod of the Pacific Permanent Judicial Commission.

**At noon the meeting was recessed for lunch, reconvening at 12:53 p.m.**

### **Nominating Committee (continued)- Sandy Brown**

Jonathan Phillips of Lemon Cove was introduced and **approved** as the Young Adult Advisory Delegate to GA.

### **LifeSpring New Church Development - Rich Latta**

Simon Biasell was introduced as the new Community Outreach Director. Simon and his wife, Natasha, had previously worked in youth ministry at First Pres in Napa. His purpose is to develop the LifeSpring congregation as a community center that will draw people into worship.

### **Calvin Crest - Sandy Brown**

Appreciation for Scott Henderson's 3 years of service as Calvin Crest's Executive Director was expressed following announcing his resignation, effective December 31, 2009. Scott challenged the Presbytery to act on tangible opportunities at Calvin Crest to engage people in life changing experiences of faith. He encouraged pastors to give one week per year in service to Calvin Crest and Sessions to free their pastors to do so.

Calvin Crest will hold a golf tournament May 1, 2010.

### **Presbyterian Women - Florence Ulrich**

All women of Presbytery were invited to attend the San Joaquin Presbyterian Women Spring Gathering to be held on March 20, 2010 at University Pres, Fresno.

### **Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) – Alan Reutter**

Justin Spurlock, a second-year student at McCormick Seminary, was introduced for advancement to candidacy, recommended by the Session of University Pres and CPM. Following questioning, he was **approved** to advance to the status of candidate for the ministry of Word and Sacrament, and the Presbytery prayed for him.

### **Commission on Ministry (COM) - Arlin Talley**

Arlin reiterated COM's request for information regarding the terms of call for every minister, explaining that the Book of Order requires the Presbytery to approve them each year.

COM **approved** the call for Rich Hansen to serve as a PC(USA) mission co-worker in Ethiopia. They recommended that the Presbytery concur in the dissolution of the relationship between Rev. Hansen and First Pres, Visalia, effective June 30, 2010, which has been approved by the congregation and requested by Rev. Hansen. It was **approved**.

In regards to the postponed motion from the Nov. 9, 2009, presbytery meeting to restore Stephen Wing to the exercise of the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament, COM changed their recommendation to a "no" vote by the Presbytery on this motion. The rationale for this recommendation was explained, indicating that a "no" vote would mean Stephen would continue under temporary exclusion until such time as the COM believed he was ready to be reinstated. The original motion to reinstate Stephen Wing was unanimously **defeated**.

### **Overtures to General Assembly - Noel Anderson**

**Approved** sending the following overture to the 219<sup>th</sup> General Assembly:

### *Overture: Middle East Peacemaking*

The Presbytery of San Joaquin overtures the 218<sup>th</sup> General Assembly to answer all overtures concerning Israel and Palestine with the following statement:

The Arab/Israeli conflict presents an unprecedented level of complexity amid constantly changing political conditions in the region. Thus, the best course of action for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is to defer from positions or policy statements that appear to favor either side in the conflict.

Therefore, we call upon the leadership of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to use our limited resources and influence to direct our specific involvement as peacemakers to:

- Offer our prayers to God for the success of all peaceful efforts;
- Support peacemakers who encourage tolerance and reconciliation;
- Advocate for the process of establishing a step-by-step, negotiated two-state Israel/Palestine solution;
- Condemn all acts of terrorism and unwarranted violence;
- Provide humanitarian assistance to innocent victims of the conflict.

As we witness for peace in this manner, we will defer from taking actions or making statements that align the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) with unilateral support for any of the specific parties involved in the struggle.

The General Assembly also appeals to the General Assembly Council to ensure that employees, entities, affiliated organizations and networks abide by these directives.

We pledge our constant prayers and conscientious support for the overall welfare of all the peoples in the region, and indeed for the world.

#### **RATIONALE:**

The 217<sup>th</sup> General Assembly overwhelmingly adopted an approach to Middle East peacemaking that singled out neither the Palestinian Authority nor Israel for condemnation.

The 217<sup>th</sup> General Assembly resolution, as adopted, rejected a process of divestment that singled out the State of Israel. Instead, it encouraged affirmative investment and engagement as the most constructive means to achieve “positive outcomes” when peace and stability has returned to the region.

The goal, as adopted, would result in the “creation of a socially, economically, geographically and politically viable and secure Palestinian state, alongside an equally viable and secure Israeli state, both of which have a right to exist.”

The resolution delegated to the Church’s Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) committee the task of some aspects of implementing this policy, in full recognition of the complexities and the difficulties confronting peacemakers on both sides in a rapidly evolving situation in the region.

Since then, Hamas and Hezbollah continue to advocate the destruction of Israel and continue to reject a two-state solution advocated by, among others, the United Nations, the United States, the European Union, and Fatah. The prospect for an early peace in the region greatly deteriorated with tragic consequences in both Israel and Lebanon following the initiation of military combat operations by Hezbollah from its base in Lebanon, the continuation of military operations of Hamas and Fatah in Gaza against each other, and military operations of Hamas against the Israelis, the latter primarily in the form of thousands of increasingly destructive rocket attacks on Israeli cities and towns.

The cumulative effect has been one of an escalation of violence in the region, further isolation of the Gaza Strip by Israel, military retaliation strikes by Israel against terrorists, an increase of internecine Palestinian fighting, and the creation of a humanitarian and health crisis for the residents of the region. There has also been a concomitant increase in risk of life for Palestinian Christians residing in the Gaza Strip.

Any statement of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) policy or action by its entities that has the

appearance of unilateral alignment/and or support with either side in the Arab/Israeli conflict will be counter-productive toward achieving the positive peacemaking results we all desire. It may instead, set back the efforts of those committed to working for lasting peace in the region.

Therefore, by this action, the 218<sup>th</sup> General Assembly seeks to provide continued encouragement for all peacemakers and persons of good will who desire and support constructive efforts to achieve a negotiated peace.

**Voted** to concur with:

1. Overture from New Covenant Presbytery re: Marriage
2. Overture from Sacramento Presbytery re: Belhar Confession
3. Overture from Shenango Presbytery re: Missionary Support

**Discernment/Transition Team**

Presbytery voted to approve: "In its work with sessions who request dismissal from the PCUSA, the Presbytery, through the Discernment/Transition Team, may call a meeting of the congregation at the appropriate time in the process to determine the will of the congregation regarding the session's request."

**One Minute Messages**

The Westminster Pres, Fresno, congregation invites the Presbytery to join them in their celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their move to their current site on April 17, 1960.

The meeting was adjourned with prayer.