**MINUTES**

123rd Stated Meeting

Presbytery of the Pines

Shreveport, Louisiana

June 7-8, 2018

**June 7 -- First Presbyterian Church**

**CONSTITUTION**

Moderator David Stipp-Bethune called the 123rd Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of the Pines to order in the Sanctuary of First Presbyterian Church, Shreveport, at 7:00 p.m. The opening prayer of the Service of Worship served as the constituting prayer.

The following roll was taken, showing that a quorum was present

*Ministers of the Word and Sacrament*

John Albright Present

Sara Anne Berger Present

Alford Branch Excused

Harry Cooper Present

Chris Currie Present

Julia Nance Farrell Present

James Freeman Present

James Giddens Excused

J. Daniel Hignight Present

Kathleen Hignight Present

Joseph Hill Present

Jason Leonard Present

Allison Moody Absent

Tom Renowski Excused

Seth Saathoff Present

Beth Sentell Present

Jungsuk Seo Excused

David Stipp-Bethune Present

Jim Van Hook Excused

Art Vance Excused

George Wortham Present

Dianne Brown Excused

Ralph Burns Excused

Philip Faris Excused

Lee Grisso Excused

Grant Groves Excused

Mark Kennedy Excused

Stephen Kim Excused

John McClelland Excused

Bryan Dowell Present

Phil McLarty Excused

Lauren Moore Excused

Robin Nygaard Excused

Maetta Snyder Excused

Rhodes Stipp Present

Jerry Tompkins Excused

Bill Willis Excused

*Elders Commissioned by Session*

Alto Excused

Athens Absent

Baskin Excused

Bastrop L. Blackmon

Belcher S. Sanders

Benton Larche Watters

Bossier C. Korean Absent

Bossier C. Trinity Linda Davidson

Camden Ham Singleton

Carthage Absent

Chidester Absent

Choudrant Absent

Crossett Excused

Dermott Excused

El Dorado Mike Landers

Ferriday Absent

Frierson Audrey Lucky-Fontenot

Grand Cane Absent

Haynesville Absent

Homer Excused

Hope John Ed Watkins

Johnsville, Absent

Jonesville Martha Brallier

Keatchie Absent

Lake Providence Absent

Lake Village Excused

Magnolia Absent

Mansfield, First Absent

Mansfield, Red Lick Excused

Monticello, Holmes Ch. Excused

Monticello, First Absent

Natchitoches Excused

Newellton Absent

Plain Dealing, First Absent

Plain Dealing, C.G. James Strayhan

Rayville Sandra Watson

Ruston Jayne Jenkins

Shreveport, Frist Joan Rigby

Jacque Brinegar

Shreveport, Bmoor Christy Kennedy

Shreveport, St. A. Absent

Shreveport, Hwood Joe Etta Foster

Sreveport, John C. Sheryl Nix

Tallulah Absent

Texarkana Dan Boyles

Vidalia Absent

Vivian Absent

Warren First Excused

West Monroe Robyn Jordan

Winnfield Absent

Winnsboro John Guice

*Elders Commissioned to a Congregation*

Edith Hill Present

Kay Childs Travis Excused

Clyde Ray Webber Absent

*Elders Enrolled in Presbytery*

Barbara Callaway Present

Danny Logan Present

Donna Rose Present

*Corresponding Members Seated*

RE Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri, Co-Moderator of the 223rd General Assembly

RE Valerie Young, Synod of the Sun Leader and Stated Clerk

**DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER**

Immediately following the Call to Order the body entered a time of Worship. Liturgists were MSW: Chris Currie, Julian Nance Farrell, Seth Saathoff, and Bryan McDowell. RE Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri proclaimed the Word. The Table was presided over by Chris Currie. Music was provided by Dr. Hollice Watson and combined choir of people from across the presbytery.

**WELCOME BY HOST CHURCH**

The Rev. Dr. Chris Currie welcome the body to the church and invited them to reception honoring the visiting Co-Moderator of the General Assembly.

**RECESS**

At 8:20 p.m. the Moderator declared the presbytery to be in recess until 10:30 a.m. the following morning when it will reconvene at Broadmoor Presbyterian Church.

**June 8 -- Broadmoor Presbyterian Church**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Moderator called the body to order at 10:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary of Broadmoor Presbyterian Church and offered an opening prayer.

**WELCOME BY HOST CHURCH**

The Rev. Dr. Jim Freeman, pastor of the host church, welcomed the council.

**STATED CLERK’S REPORT**

Dan Hignight, Stated Clerk, presented the report. IT WAS VOTED to adopt the following recommendations:

1. That the Docket for this Meeting be approved as presented.
2. That the Minutes of the February 9, 2019, meeting be approved as circulated.
3. That all Corresponding Members be seated.
4. That the Minutes of the Administrative Commission to work with John Calvin Presbyterian Church be entered into record. (See Appendix A)

**GREETINGS FROM THE CO-MODERATOR OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri, Co-Moderator of the 223rd General Assembly of the PCUSA, brought greetings to the body.

**GREETINGS FROM THE SYNOD**

Valerie Young, Synod Leader and Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Sun, brought greetings to

the body.

**GENERAL PRESBYTER’S REPORT**

Joe Hill, General Presbytery, gave an oral report which was received as information.

**SYNOD COMMISSIONERS’ REPORT**

Edith Hill, Elder Commissioner presented the report on behalf of Harry Cooper and herself. During the report IT WAS VOTED to approve the following proposed change to the *Vision and Bylaws of the Synod of the Sun:*

*3.1.2 Six commissioners (three ruling elders and three teaching elders from six different presbyteries) shall be elected as at-large commissioners to represent racial-ethnic constituencies. The Coordinating Team, serving as the nominating committee, shall make recommendations for at large commissioners at the Fall Stated meeting. At-large commissioners are elected by the Assembly.*

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

***Future of Presbytery Task Force***  [The Task Force was originally appointed by the Presbytery Leadership Council in 2017; the group asked to report to the full Presbytery for further instruction and action] David Stipp-Bethune and Sandra Watson presented the report. IT WAS VOTED to enter the key findings into record, and to adopt the following recommendations:

***Key Findings***

*The responses we received to our survey and conversations conducted at Presbytery and in small groups revealed much. We heard over and over that the ministry of the Presbytery needs to continue, but be changed. This task force also observed, that the Presbytery being changed will not be effective if congregations are unwilling to change. By some measure, we believe that as leaders, we have to be changed and seek change together.*

*Based on responses we received and heard:*

*• We heard and believe that within the Presbytery, there is more feeling of “disconnection,” than “connection. This is one of our primary challenges and deserves our full energy in addressing together and turning around.*

*• We heard and believe mission is important, and will remain a key to our success—both the ministry of local congregations and ministry of the Presbytery.*

*• We believe the Presbytery needs the support of its members and member congregations—financially, but also participatorially. We heard complaints that there aren’t enough people doing the work. We believe cultivating the investment of financial and human resources must be addressed.*

*• We heard and believe Presbytery expects and desires someone to continue leading the Presbytery in a General Presbyter role. It is anticipated that the person who fills this role will not “be the connection” for Churches, but will help create/recreate connections among Churches for the purpose of building the ministry of local congregations AND the ministry of the Presbytery.*

*• We heard much desire for Presbytery, or the Presbytery Office to be more of a communications hub; and we believe the Presbytery can be well served by communicating regularly what’s happening in churches, what the Presbytery needs, and how we all can help and participate.*

*• We have heard, “we are small” (a reference to individual congregations and the Presbytery as a whole; but we also heard and believe, “being small does not mean we are ineffective or can’t be more effective!*

*• We heard over and over, and believe fervently, the ministry of the Presbytery is not over, but needs to continue. And while there are comments and rumors that our Presbytery “could combine” with other Presbyterians—to the north, or the south, or the west, or the east—it isn’t clear to us that such unions would preserve or expand our ministry, and might even spread our resources (financial and human) even more thin. We believe the place to begin is with ourselves, where we are and relying on the Holy Spirit.*

*• As we listened, we came to believe more and more that just doing the same things “better” won’t prove helpful. We believe that we need to “do differently,” but this begins when we act differently. Not holed up in our churches trying to survive, but being encouraged to reach out into the world. We heard and believe this is easier said that done; but believe that working together, living connected, we can accomplish the dreams our common calling in Christ have placed within and before us.*

1. This report be received as information.

2. That the Presbytery of the Pines establish a Presbytery’s Future Commission to address critical short-term needs for when our current General Presbyter retires, as well as managing long-term critical shifts in strategy and practice necessary to achieve our common calling together. The Commission should be established with these powers:

a. To work on behalf of the Presbytery of the Pines, in consultation with the Presbytery Leadership Council, the General Presbyter, and the Stated Clerk—to gather all the information about all Presbytery operations and responsibilities—including, but not limited to property; office space and equipment; budget; financial commitments; investments and resources; staff positions, duties, and responsi-bilities; locations of specific records; and other information necessary to preserve and continue the presbytery and its work.

b. To make recommendations to appropriate presbytery bodies for technical changes in administrative operations as deemed necessary and efficient (to be creative in exploring possible “shared services;” financial services, to explore current contractual obligations for office space, and advantages in moving or eliminating office space, or not; to be able to negotiate future agreements or contracts on behalf of the Presbytery in consultation with current partners).

c. To consider adaptive changes for the structure and function of the Presbytery that will help move us beyond just “doing what we’ve always done,” and living into new ways of doing ministry that will help meet critical shifts that have already become evident in the culture to which we must adapt if we are to be successful in furthering the ministry and mission of congregations and the presbytery.

d. To work with current and any new staff, temporary or permanent, to continue to assess adaptive changes and make them a priority, and make recommendations about future staffing.

3. The Presbytery’s Future Commission shall report to the Presbytery, both verbally and in writing, and at a minimum, at every meeting of the Presbytery, until the Commission is dissolved.

1. That the Presbytery elect the following persons to the Presbytery’s Future:

MSW RE

Sara Anne Berger John Guice

Alford Branch Danny Logan

Harry Cooper Audrey Lucky-Fontenot

Chris Curry Sandra Watson

Jason Leonard Larche Watters

1. The Moderator of Presbytery and the Moderator of Presbytery’s Leadership Council will serve as *ex-officio* members with voice but no vote.

***Administrative Commission to Work with John Calvin Church*** Jim Freeman, and Dana Stinson gave the report. IT WAS VOTED to adopt the following recommendations:

1. That the report be received as information.
2. That the Presbytery dissolve John Calvin Presbyterian Church effective June 30, 2019.
3. That service of thanksgiving be held at 3:00 p.m. on June 23, 2019, at the church. General Presbyter Joe Hill will preach and the presbytery is invited to attend.
4. By June 30, 2019, the Commission will assign members to church membership for those who have not selected a such a church.
5. That Presbytery dissolve the Commission with thanks effective June 20, 2019.
6. That Presbytery enter into a time of worship and thanksgiving for the life and witness of John Calvin Presbyterian Church, Shreveport, Louisiana.

**GOOD NEWS FROM CONGREGATIONS**

Members and observers were given a time to celebrate successes in their congregations.

**LUNCH RECESS**

The Moderator declared a recess for lunch at 12:45 p.m. A prayer of thanksgiving for our meal was offered.

**RECONVENE**

The body reconvened with prayer at 1:15 p.m.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

***Business Affairs*** Danny Logan, Moderator, presented the report. IT WAS VOTED to adopt the following recommendations:

1. That this report be received as information

2. That Sunday, October 13, 2019 (the Sunday following October presbytery meeting) be designated as Church and Manse Fund Sunday in the Presbytery.

***Congregational and Pastoral Care*** Barbara Callaway, Moderator, presented the report. IT WAS VOTED to adopt the following recommendations:

1. That this report be received as information.

2. That the following action taken by the Committee under its commission powers be entered into record:

a. The approval of the Mission Information Form from First, Texarkana, to search for a Solo Pastor.

b. Approved the Mission Information Form from First, Magnolia, to search for a Co-Pastor.

c. Approved the Mission Information Form from First, Camden, to search for a Solo Pastor.

3. That Presbytery reinstate training for Sacramental Elders and authorize Dan Hignight to coordinate the training curriculum and dates for training.

***Ecclesiastical Communications*** Rhodes Stipp, Moderator, presented an oral report which was received as information.

***Recruitment and Representation*** Edith Hill, Moderator, presented an oral report. She stated that this year the committee is asking those interested in being a commissioner or YAAD to the 2020 General Assembly to submit a letter of interest. The report was received as information.

**CONCLUDING WORSHIP AND ADJOURNMENT**

The body was led in a time of praise by Harry Cooper and friends. Moderator Stipp-Bethune adjourned the body with benediction at 2:00 p.m.

APPENDIX A

**MINUTES**

**ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION**

**PRESBYTERY OF THE PINES**

**JOHN CALVIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA**

**March 17, 2019, 1:15 P.M.**

Present:

Elders, John Calvin Presbyterian Church: Susan Anthony, Karen Joines, Shay Joines, Anna Kay Kidd, Rita Martin, Sheryl Nix

Commissioners, Presbytery of the Pines: Rev. Jim Freeman, Elder Dana Stinson (Co-Moderators), Rev. Chris Currie, Elder Barbara Callaway

The meeting was opened with prayer.

Rev. Freeman stated that the purpose of the meeting was to assist in determining the future of the congregation. He acknowledged the previous receipt of information indicating that the current session of the church has reached unanimous agreement that the time for closure has arrived. Rev. Freeman led a discussion which highlighted the following factors which have led to this decision by the session:

The congregation, comprised largely of elderly members, has steadily diminished in recent years. New members have not been successfully recruited. The church roll stands at approximately 40. Participation in worship has declined and currently averages 10-20 attendees. Attendance among younger members is sporadic. Energy level among members is generally low.

The church historically has served as a neighborhood church, established in the 1950s. Factors in the congregation’s decline include shifts in the local population and the closure or downsizing of major area employers.

Funding for church activities has equally declined. Regular offerings currently are barely sufficient to cover basic expenses. No funding cushion exists. Major building repairs are needed.

Congregation members have not responded to session efforts to engage them in activities required to maintain the church programs and building. Beyond Sunday worship services they are unable to provide associated programs for children and adults. Session members are exhausted

Following discussion it was agreed that the congregation may begin planning for closure ceremonies to be held in early June. Session members agreed to develop plans for commemorating the life and history of the congregation. They also agreed to develop an orderly plan for distribution of special church incidental items and memorabilia to congregation members upon written request. Certain items, including the communion table and service, baptismal font, and records of membership and financial matters, will become the property of the presbytery.

The commission commended the elders for their faithful efforts to maintain the congregation in pursuit of the mission of Jesus Christ. The meeting was closed with prayer.

/s/ Jim Freeman, Co-Moderator /s/ Dana Stinson, Co-Moderator

**ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION**

**PRESBYTERY OF THE PINES**

**JOHN CALVIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA**

**June 2, 2019, 1:30 P.M.**

Present:

Elders, John Calvin Presbyterian Church: Susan Anthony, Karen Joines, Shay Joines, Anna Kay Kidd, Rita Martin, Sheryl Nix; Moderator, Rev. Beth Sentell

Commissioners, Presbytery of the Pines: Rev. Jim Freeman, Elder Dana Stinson (Co-Moderators), Rev. Chris Currie, Elder Barbara Callaway

The meeting was opened with prayer.

Rev. Freeman stated that the purpose of the meeting was to assist the session in final deliberations regarding the closure of the church and in organizing efforts regarding the distribution of furnishings and other elements of the church’s movable property. As previously agreed, certain items, including the communion table and service, baptismal font, and records of membership and financial matters, will become the property of the presbytery. It was agreed that session has the authority to dispose of other items through sale or donation after review by the commission. Session will provide to the commission a listing of any remaining items, which then may be offered to other churches within the presbytery upon request. Any monies remaining in financial accounts will be transferred to the presbytery.

Session requested permission to hold a final family covered dish event at the church on June 30, and commission members agreed, setting that date as the official date for closing. As previously agreed the final worship service will be conducted on June 23. Rev. Freeman agreed to discuss with the Presbytery Treasurer the details necessary to effect the transfer of the property to the presbytery, including insurance, utilities, maintenance and other necessary items.

Regarding the transfer of congregation memberships it was agreed that as far as is possible letters of transfer should be executed prior to closure for congregation members who have chosen to move memberships to churches of other denominations. It was also agreed that members who have chosen to become affiliated with another church in Pines Presbytery will have their memberships transferred to the church of choice upon closure. Any remaining members of the congregation included on the church roll on the date of closure will be transferred to another local congregation to be determined.

The meeting was closed with prayer.

/s/ Jim Freeman, Co-Moderator /s/ Dana Stinson, Co-Moderator