

REPORT BY Our SYNOD COMMISSIONERS

The Synod of the Trinity met in October. Your commissioners, Ruling Elder Margaret Mielke and Teaching Elder Charlie Best, were present.

Before business, the movie The Doctrine of Discovery was viewed and discussed.

Ruling Elder Ufford-Chase, former moderator of the General Assembly and Administrator of Stony Point, was our worship leader.

The theme for the Assembly was: Celebrate with us the 50th anniversary of "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood." This was an opportunity to discuss what it means to have a neighbor and be a neighbor! Discussion centered on our neighbors and our biases - assumption and misunderstanding that can be at the beginning of bias that leads to hate. How can we be more aware? Using a clip from Mr. Roger's Neighbor from the late 1960s when there were controversies about blacks and whites using the same swimming pools, Mr. Roger's invited a black postman friend to cool his feet with Mr. Roger's in a swimming pool. This addressed the issue without being too "in your face".

The Synod has partnered with the Community Responders Network Skits to produce videos on this subject for use across the Synod.

New rules were approved for "Electronic/Digital Meetings.

The following was approved: WHEREAS the Rev. Susan Faye Wonderland has served as Transitional Executive of the Synod of the Trinity with energy, intelligence, imagination and love, and led the Synod during a major change in the way mission and ministry is done, and government is carried out through the implementation of Policy Government principles, and WHEREAS there remains transitional work to be done to further solidify the concepts of Policy Governance in the Synod's operation. NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Rev. Wonderland's position as transitional Executive be extended until the assembly meeting in October 2021.

Elder Margaret Mielke was elected to the Governing Commission, Class of 2019 and Charles Best to the 2019 Committee on Representation and Nomination.

- The Synod Transitional Executive & Stated Clerk work a lot with Presbytery Councils.
- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance training was organized by synod with Presbyteries serving as hosting sites and people to help with the organization.
- Campus Ministry Advisory team continues with the provision of money availability and the redistribution of funds.
- The deadlines and purposes of Synod grants were reworked. Grants are now tied to the Ends/goals of Synod.

- The COM/CPM gathering has been themed to open new ways of relating to tasks and groups. This year flourishing ministers and flourishing congregations.
- Spring Regional Synod gatherings are being planned - dates to be announced later
- Personnel, budget & finance, changing staffing in presbyteries are some of the issues being looked at.

The Synod approved the following concerning the 2010 Synod Per Capita amount. At the September 5, 2018 meeting of the Finance and Budget Advisory Team, a recommendation was made for Synod portion of Per Capita for 2020 to be set at \$2.40. This increase of \$.10 is the first increase in four years. Some factors considered in making this motion were:

1. The Synod has not raised its Per Capita rates for four years
2. \$.10 is only a 5% increase over a four-year period.
3. \$2.40 does not cover all those items identified as Per Capita expenses.
4. Synod Reserves will be utilized to fund any shortfall.
5. \$.10 for a church with a membership of 150 is only \$15.00. Deferring increases until later would make the increase potentially significantly higher. Congregations and Presbyteries are all facing financial challenges due to 6.45% inflation reported for the same period.

The Synod continues to allow Presbyteries to adjust their membership and therefore their Per Capita obligation to the Synod as of December 31 of the previous year if General Assembly permits such an adjustment. Presbyteries may request an updated Per Capita assessment from the Synod until March 31 of any year that GA also is permitting such an adjustment. The Synod will utilize the membership reported in the official yearend Presbytery Report. For example: If a presbytery has lost members in 2018, they may request their 2019 Per Capita assessment be based on their membership as of December 31, 2018, rather than December 31, 2017 as is currently the policy. This request must be received by March 31, 2019. It was moved, seconded, and passed. The report of the Moderator of the

The Communications Advisory Team shared some strategies

- A. Zoom Video was demonstrated (a conferencing product with many functions.
- B. Archimedes (OWL) was demonstrated -- a piece of equipment used to enhance whole room video conferencing.
- C. Announced a grant for presbyteries for 1 free year of Zoom Video Conferencing
- D. Doing presentations of communications plan for presbyteries and congregations.

The Synod will be looking at General Assembly Actions Directed to Mid-Councils In the months ahead.