



234TH SYNOD ASSEMBLY HIGHLIGHTS

- Finance Committee chair, Ruling Elder Carolyn Sprinkle, presented the following items for approval: The 2015 Operating Budget with per capita remaining at 75 cents; the 2014 Audit; and investing \$300,000.00 held by RBC Wealth Management with First Light management. Approved!
- Grants and Awards Committee chair, Teaching Elder Nancy Rowland, presented the following New and Small Church Grant Request. Grants were awarded to (1) Baird's Creek Presbyterian Church, Salem Presbytery for Handicapped Accessibility; (2) Cameron Presbyterian Church, Salem Presbytery for Heating and Air Conditioning; (3) Covenant Presbyterian Church, Eastern Virginia Presbytery, for Air Conditioning; and (4) Mt. Vernon Presbyterian Church, Salem Presbytery, for cemetery restoration. Provisional New and Small Grant Awards were made to (1) St. James Presbyterian Church, Salem Presbytery, for Handicapped Accessibility; and (2) Cotton Memorial Presbyterian Church, New Hope Presbytery, for Air Conditioning. One Visionary Grant was provided to Covenant Presbyterian Church, Eastern Virginia Presbytery, for Auto Communication in the Sanctuary. The committee set firm guidelines for the receipt of all materials in grant applications: February 15 and August 22 by email or postmark. Grants up to \$5000 will be considered. Tolokun Omokunde, commissioner from New Hope Presbytery, was elected the new chair of Grants and Awards Committee, Nancy Rowland as Secretary
- Presbytery Initiatives, Teaching Elder Eddie Deas, presented a proposal from Shenandoah and New Castle Presbyteries to fund Spirituality Retreat for Women in the amount of \$2,000. Approved!
- An Omnibus Motion approved reports from the Executive Committee, Jubilee Fund, Kate B. Reynolds Trust Fund, Speer Trust Fund and the Committee on Representation.

Teaching Elder Helen Locklear, Regional Representative for the Board of Pension announced the election of Frank C. Spencer as President. She gave other updates to include approval of a 4.6% experience apportionment for the pension plan effective July 1; a balanced investment portfolio with a market value of \$8.7 billion and forecast that loss of churches will not threaten the payment of benefits to members.

Ruling Elder Olanda Carr, Ministry Relations Officer, Presbyterian Foundation discussed how the foundation assists churches with property issues, Stewardship Education, and focus on small church ministry. Churches can partner with the foundation if they don't have a website. There are opportunities for planned giving and estate planning. Foundation services are free and it has been in existence since 1799.

Passing of the Gavel: With humility and sincere gratitude, CRE Bill Parish – Abingdon presbytery, thanked the Assembly for its confidence and support over the last 12 months. The Assembly responded with applause and Amen.



Teaching Elder Laura Lupton – Coastal Carolina Presbytery – Presented a certificate of appreciation to Bill for his service, prior to her installation. All commissioners whose terms will end in 2014 were presented pens to mark their service. The Assembly then moved to install the new moderator. Members of Coastal Carolina Presbytery were invited to stand with and participate in the installation services for Moderator Laura Lupton. Persons from left to right included Ed Boyce, John Goodman, Helen Locklear, Laura Lupton, Bill Reinhold, Bill Parish and Warren Lesane. The Moderator

was welcomed to the post with a rousing applause and a standing ovation. After the Moderator adjourned the Assembly, we gathered at the Moderator's Reception around cake and coffee. AMEN! AMEN! And AMEN!



What do you get when a co-chair of Mid Council Commission 2, the Associate for Mid Council Relations and a Presbytery Executive and Stated Clerk sit together at a Synod Meeting? **That's an easy one! A FATHER, A MOM and A HOLY POPE!** (LoI)

Byron Wade, Sue Krummel and Bill Reinhold

Worship, Fellowship and Old-fashioned Hard Work dominated the 234th Synod of the Mid-Atlantic that met in Richmond VA., September 15-16, 2014. Weather was not a factor compared to the snow, ice and chilling cold in February; however every moment was filled with meaningful interaction laced with discerning dialogue.

Eight Visitors were seated as corresponding members that included three-presbytery executives, two-synod committee chairs and three-General Assembly Staffers. Teaching Elder Susan Krummel, Mid-Council Relations staff was present in a consultative role; Teaching Elder Helen Locklear represented the Board of Pension and Ruling Elder Olanda Carr represented the Presbyterian Foundation. Commissioners were present from Abingdon, AKAP, Baltimore, Coastal Carolina, Eastern Virginia, James, National Capital, New Castle, New Hope, Peaks, Salem, Shenandoah, and Western North Carolina Presbyteries. Charlotte was not represented.

Synod Stated Clerk report highlighted the following: The Synod Permanent Judicial Committee (SPJC) had five cases filed from Oct 2013 - June 2014. Remedial Case #13-02 Bennett/Smith v. Presbytery of the Peaks Order was shared. The SPJC Chair and Clerk spoke of costs; hours invested to date, and articulated the need to meticulously hear and adjudicate each case with precision and care. The General Assembly issued an Authoritative Interpretation applying to the Atlantic Korean American Presbytery (AKAP) regarding non-geographic presbyteries boundaries. 221st General Assembly Actions for the number of Synods to be reduced from 16 to no more than 10 to 12. Abingdon Presbytery is searching for a Presbytery Shepherd. A Call to prayer for situations in the Middle East, in Ferguson, MO, and other troubled places in nation and world

Bag Pipes and All – Teaching Elder Fred Holbrook, Executive Director, shared that Massanetta Springs, a Presbyterian camp and conference center provides a place for discovery and renewal through worship, nurture, and fellowship, inviting all to share in the grace and hospitality of Christ. This mission enabled them to host all in the same week; the Bible Conference; A Retreat of Preaching; Teaching, and Praise; and the widely renowned Church Music Conference. Four Middle School Conferences were held using 84 leaders, 44 high school youth and 40 volunteer adults which attracted 1009 registrants from 114 churches in 24 presbyteries and across 13 states. The synod awarded a \$5,000 Leadership development grant to assist this ministry.

MCC 2 – Represented by Teaching Elder Byron Wade, who having been invited to return by the 223rd Synod Assembly provided an overview and update of actions taken by the 221st General Assembly (PCUSA). In

summation, General Assembly voted to **“Direct a new configuration of synod boundaries be established [based on an emerging sense of purpose, partnership, context, and call] through a collaborative process between the synods and presbyteries resulting in no more than 10-12 synods.”** Byron discussed the dialogue and debate that occurred in committee meeting and on the plenary floor. In short, the General Assembly approved most of MCC2 recommendations, but changed the reduction number of synods. Thanks Byron!

Synod Executive Forum – The Synod Stated Clerk reported that the 15 of the 16 Synod Executives meet three times yearly. August forum centered on the GA’s mandate of directing new boundary configurations. This forum takes seriously the mandate and will seek to fulfill it faithfully. We have offered our assistance and availability in helping to facilitate the conversation among and between synods and presbyteries at the Fall Polity Conference. While there are many venues for this conversation to take place, the most important is between synods and their respective presbyteries, who understand their emerging context and purpose best. We will engage MCC2 in their appointed role as resources to our conversations as needed. Each synod is responsible for its own recommendations based on its conversations with its own presbyteries, to be coordinated by the synods, if possible through a process yet to be determined, into a single report to GA by January 2016. While there are already some innovative ideas being discussed, they are at this point merely conversation points for our consultations with presbyteries. We look forward to exciting and generative possibilities for mission to emerge from our collaborations and conversations that will ultimately serve God’s people and our beloved church.



Discerning Synod’s Identity: Teaching Elder Susan Krummel, Associate for Mid Council Relations, facilitated a process to engage commissioners to begin discerning who and what is God calling the Synod to become and do at this particular time in its journey. Every Commissioner was challenged to respond to questions such as: ‘Who is our neighbor and what does the Synod do that is most meaningful to churches and presbyteries?’ Luke 10:19-25 was assigned for reading to stimulate conversations around “What would you do if you were the lawyer in the text? What is Jesus teaching us through the story? Commissioners met in small self-forming groups to contemplate such questions as: “If we combined with other synod (s) what would be our mission? To whom do we need to talk who is not in this room? What do congregations need beyond their sessions to be vital outposts for the mission of God? What are centers of energy in the Synod for new ventures? Three clear themes or purposes emerged from this time, namely, (a) synod is a place where financial resources can be tapped to help; (b) synod is a place where connectionalism is maintained across our differences, this church is the body of Christ; (c) synod is the place for preservation of the voice(s) of justice and a voice for racial ethnic persons. Thanks Sue!



Celebrations of Worship – Teaching Elder Jim Moseley captivated Commissioners riveting them to their seats as he challenged the body of believers with a reading and sermon based on Ezra 3:7-13. He entitled the message, **“Do You Hear What I Hear?”** Is it possible to distinguish between the sounds of those who cry out with joy in light of change and those who cry out in sorrow because of the loss associated with change? Worship included the Celebration of the Lord’s Supper and the Necrology. Thanks Jim!

Teaching Elder Edward Lacy was on point as he facilitated Tuesday Morning Worship. Edward is pastor of the Wild Goose Uprising, located in Abingdon Presbytery. It is a fantastic and creative 1001 New Worshipping Community. With banjo in tow, Ed demonstrated through song and speech what a Tuesday worship experience is like where rocking chairs are the pews and mason jars are used for communion. His energy, testimony and very presence enabled commissioners to hear from God in an inspiring and unexpected sort of way. We pray God’s continued blessings upon Wild Goose Christian Community. Thanks Edward!

What Have We Heard? Teaching Elder Jim Mosely, Executive Presbytery of New Castle Presbytery, task was to help process and bring before commissioners a collective of what he observed and heard occurring during the Assembly up through his moment. Jim summarized the activities and speakers. He talked about commissioners' visioning for the future and the work of committees also being done. He spoke about the angst with some Presbytery Executives and the perception that synod and GA create work that will then dictate the time and energy of the EP’s for the next few years, while the have no voice on the floor of GA. Even the YADS and TSAD have voice and advisory votes. Jim introduced the recommendation from the Administration Committee that enabled the appointment of a 9-member committee with the explicit purpose of doing the heavy lifting for the Synod Assembly. Commissioners were given ample time to review the document, to ask questions and to suggest changes prior to the business session where the vote would be taken. Thanks again Jim!



Committee Reports Received and Approved

- **Nomination Committee:** Newly elected chair, Teaching Elder Nancy Rowland, presented names for the following positions to be elected: Committee on Representation, Synod Permanent Judicial Commission, Jubilee Fund, Speer Fund, Nominating Committee, and the Trustees of Westminster Presbyterian Homes, Lynchburg.
- **Administration Committee:** The newly elected chair, Teaching Elder Brett Morgan, offered two recommendations, namely, (1) that the 234th Synod of the Mid-Atlantic Assembly enter into 12 months of prayer and discernment about its identity and future, and that church members, sessions, congregations, and presbyteries throughout the region be encouraged to pray for the Synod regularly. (2) That the 234th Synod of the Mid-Atlantic Assembly appoint a committee of 9-persons with the mandate to *“Review in total and to recommend to the full Synod Assembly a clarification and or redirection of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic’s core mission and ministries in light of actions taken by the 2014 General Assembly to direct a new configuration of synod boundaries to be established based on an emerging sense of purpose, partnership, context and call through a collaborative process between the synods and presbyteries resulting in no more that 10-12 synods.”* The Synod Stated Clerk and the Synod Moderator will appoint the committee after receiving names and supporting information from Synod Commissioners. The committee should be named no later than October 14, 2014. Future Synod Assembly Meeting Dates include:
 - 235th Assembly March 14-15, 2015 in Richmond VA.
 - 236th Assembly September 14-15, 2015 in Richmond VA.
 - 237th Assembly March 14-15, 2016 in Richmond VA.