

**A Summary of the
135th MEETING OF THE SHENANDOAH PRESBYTERY
August 18, 2007**

Held at the First Presbyterian Church, Martinsburg, West Virginia

The reception of Presbyters began in the street with blue shirted members of the host church guiding cars to park them decently and in order. The Eastern Panhandle Mission Community arranged and led the Service of Worship. Leaders were John Cushwa, Pastor, Falling Waters, William D. Moore, CLP, Tabler, and Rufus Burton, Pastor of the Martinsburg First Church preaching. The texts were Isaiah 6:8-13 and 2 Timothy 1 and the Sermon was entitled "Princeton Seminary Lied". A snippet from about half-way in the sermon: *Knowing that Timothy will suffer and encouraging him not to be ashamed of the Lord who leads him into suffering Paul offers him the only anchor he can, "Hold to the standards of the sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus." ... What deserves to be pointed out is the simple truth that theology does matter. Soundness of doctrine and the health of the words we preach and pray are of vital importance to the Church.*

"I learned this lesson at the feet of my professor. He spoke of a church debate which, as they often do, strayed far from the point. He ended the debate by standing and offering this simple truth, "it cannot be pastorally right if it is theologically wrong." I have found this to be a sound test of pastoral truth and duty. We are often urged to divide the theological and the pastoral as if one is the realm of rarefied academic concerns and the other about the nitty-gritty and grey world in which we minister in Christ's name. It is a false dichotomy. Whatever ministers have to offer the church it is found almost solely in this, that we have been trained, very well, to see the world theologically. Ministers tend to make poor lawyers, poor accountants and by more reports poorer still interior decorators. What we offer, what all elders offer their churches and their colleagues is a theological view of the world – that is a view of the world that holds to the standard of the sound teachings we have heard from the saints, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

"So guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us."

Major elements of the day were the CPM, COM, Council and Synod Commissioners Reports.

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry reported they continued as Inquirers for ministry Emily Miller and Helen "Punker" Robertson; as Candidates Will Vaus and Stan Farthing; and as ready to receive a call Robert Hamilton and Suellen Skinner. Presbytery voted to enroll Jeffery Hicks (First Church, Harrisonburg) and A. Shawn Hevener (Tinkling Spring) as Inquires for ministry, and Patrick Lanaghan (Slanesville) as a Candidate for ministry.

The Committee on Ministry reported twelve actions including the addition of the group of eleven Elders completing their first year in the lay pastor program. Presbytery approved the terms of call and Installation (September 23, 11:00 a.m.) of Designated Pastor Lisa M. Webb as Pastor of Woodstock; the retirement of K. Braxton Garriss; a Committee of Support and Counsel for the Mt. Olive congregation; and salary guidelines for 2008, plus a paragraph strongly suggesting a sabbatical time for those not now covered by the policy effective four years ago. The proposed Parental Leave policy was sent back to the COM for reconsideration.

Presbytery Council reported approving sending the draft 2008 budget for a first reading and policy for the Funds Administration Committee regarding the McClung Fund. Presbytery approved the History Committee request to sell the Lexington Presbytery Heritage books for \$20 each and CDs of Winchester Presbytery history for \$15 each with proceeds to go toward the Shenandoah Presbytery History Book Fund. Presbytery also elected to the Nominating Committee Fawn Fleagle and Amy Summers-Minette, and authorized Homer Cornish to be Shenandoah's advocate at the 2008 General Assembly for its Missions related overture adopted in February.

Synod Commissioner Tom Biggs began his report on the Synod of Mid-Atlantic July 23-25, 2007 meeting at Massanetta Springs Conference Center with "The revolution continues!" Other quotes: "Now the Synod Assembly will consist of 30 persons, 2 named by each of the 14 presbyteries plus a moderator and a vice-moderator." "That means 1 minister and 1 elder from Shenandoah Presbytery, each serving normally a 3 year term spending potentially 6 or more days each year in meetings, will represent us in the Synod Assembly." This, staff reduction and other changes will yield more than a 30% reduction in Synod's budget in 2008. Commission Robert Kuykendall, Elder, Tinkling Spring, served on the Governing Bodies Relations Committee of the Synod and also filed a full report of the meeting.

Other Reports included in brief:

1. The Administrative Commission for the Poplar Hill Church (the congregation was dissolved this year) has agreed for an independent church to use the building for the cost of utilities and maintenance while an appraisal is processed. The occupying congregation having stated it is interested in purchasing the facility.
2. The Administrative Commission to Study the request of the Barton and Lonaconing churches to transfer into Shenandoah Presbytery held its initial meeting on August 7 and will meet with representatives of the Baltimore Presbytery and of the two churches on October 17th.
3. An offense has been alleged and the statement has been referred to an investigating committee.
4. The Presbytery approved Hebron Church, Staunton, to host the Tuesday, May 13, 2008 and Warrenton Church, Warrenton, VA, to host the Saturday, August 22, 2009 meetings of Presbytery. See the www.shenpres.org web site for a full listing, and many resources, too.
5. The Nominations Committee recommendations for the Funds Administration and Disaster Response Team Mission Community Representatives were approved. In addition a reminder was given that the deadline for applying to be a commissioner to the 2008 General Assembly is September 20, 2007.
6. Presbytery's Youth Council was well represented by Alex Shaw (Highland Memorial).
7. Church Development noted that data now indicates that Winchester is the most populous area and Martinsburg the fastest growing area of our Presbytery.
8. Board of Pensions Regional Representative Helen Locklear gave an overview of new needs based grant programs including Transition to College; Sabbatical Support; Seminary Dept Reduction; and Supplement for Retired to move to a retirement community.
9. The Lyle M. Moffett Grant Fund is to "empower congregations to be centers for mission...." The committee handed out grant applications which are available on the www.shenpres.org and have a deadline of October 12, 2007.

10. The World Wide Missions Committee urges each church to link with a world mission and to report their link to the Committee as requested in a letter to Clerks months ago. They are drafting an Overture for Presbytery to consider to ask the General Assembly to move the denominations' Mission season to February each year.

11. Presbytery through The Ethiopian Partnership Committee will celebrate 20 years with Illubabor Bethel Synod next year, along with the (national U.S.) Ethiopian Mission Network 2008 Conference in Washington, D.C. Visitors from the IB Synod plan to be here about the first two or three weeks of November.

12. First reading of the budget was conducted with the comment by its chair that the Budget Committee is "blessed by seeing the work of Shenandoah Presbytery, its breadth and blessings."

13. Applause resounded after the report on Camp Paddy Run which is operated by a dedicated volunteer staff. See their web site for ideas and rental information - www.CampPaddyRun.org

14. The Westminster Foundation contributes to 24 Campus Ministry units. One is the JMU Lutheran-Presbyterian - whose minister Kathleen Haines distributed then collected cards for names of students on any campus so they can be referred to a campus ministry or an area congregation. Hint: contact students on their cell phones as many ignore emails now.

15. The History Committee announced that half of the estimated \$30,000 cost for professional writing of the history of Shenandoah Presbytery (since the two works on Winchester and Lexington presbyteries were completed and take it into this millennium) has been received as memorials in honor of June Bucy and Mollie Heizer Ramsey. A History preservation workshop will be held Saturday, November 4th.

16. The revised 2007-2009 Book of Order is on line at pcusa.org/oga/publications.htm. The presbyteries approved the amendments from the General Assembly that made significant change especially to Chapter 14, in an effort to clarify and better organize it. Printed versions should be available within a month.

17. The Stewardship Education Resource Team (SERT) has an abundance of information on the Presbytery's web site including many resource persons for your use.

Presbytery adjourned about 2:55 p.m. The preliminary count was 72 Elders, 54 Ministers, and 36 registered visitors and guests for a total attendance of 162 persons.

Philip L. Sieck, M.Div., Ed.S. Stated Clerk

Next Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Shenandoah is
Tuesday, November 13, 2007 at the
Mount Horeb Presbyterian Church, Grottoes, Virginia
In the Highland-Augusta Mission Community