

MINUTES OF THE PRESBYTERY OF CAYUGA-SYRACUSE

The Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse held a Stated Meeting on Saturday, May 16, 2015 at Westminster Presbyterian Church of Auburn, New York. The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by the Moderator, teaching elder Stuart Hayes, who opened with prayer.

When asked by the Moderator, the Stated Clerk, teaching elder Steve Plank, confirmed that a quorum was present. The docket for the meeting was approved as presented. Teaching elder Allison Seed, regional representative from the Board of Pensions and member of Heartland Presbytery, teaching elder Amaury Tañón-Santos, Synod Networker of the Synod of the Northeast and member of Elizabeth Presbytery, ruling elders Ruth Hunt and Linda Russell (Westminster, Auburn) who are coming on to the Leadership Team beginning in June, and the Rev. Dr. David Cleaver-Bartholomew (Oneida Association, United Church of Christ) were introduced to the Presbytery and were seated as corresponding members of the Presbytery. First-time ruling elder commissioners were introduced. Teaching elder Dwain Lee from the host church, Westminster Presbyterian Church in Auburn, welcomed the Presbytery.

Teaching elders Allison Seed (regional representative from the Board of Pensions) and Amaury Tañón-Santos (Synod Networker from the Synod of the Northeast) brought greetings and shared comments about the work and ministries in which they are engaged.

The minutes of the October 28, 2014 Stated Meeting and the May 5, 2015 Special Meeting of the Presbytery were approved as submitted, with minor editorial corrections.

The Stated Clerk/Communicator presented his report as follows:

1. All correspondence received on behalf of the Presbytery has been assigned, referred, or answered.
 - a. I have received the resignation of ruling elder Charlie Hood (Whitelaw) from the Leadership Team. This has been referred to the Nominating Committee.
 - b. We have received information on a proposal from First Pres. in Chittenango about their plan for becoming formally affiliated with us and the Presbytery of the East (EPC). Our COM Work Group continues to work with them as they continue exploring this.
2. There are several “annual things” that I need to do and report:
 - a. It is to be noted for the record that this meeting, as the first stated meeting of the year, constitutes the annual corporate meeting of the Presbytery. There is no business of a strictly corporate nature that needs to come before us, but the minutes need to record that the annual meeting of the corporation was held as required.
 - b. I am required to report to the Presbytery at its first stated meeting of the year the location of stored minutes.

The Presbyterian Historical Society has the following minutes on deposit from the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse:

Middle Association (Presbytery) Records of Ministers and Churches on the Military Tract and its vicinity – 1 volume, from May 29, 1804 to September 5, 1810. (*Note: The Middle Association united with the Presbytery of Geneva to form the Presbytery of Cayuga on October 4, 1810*)

Presbytery of Cayuga – 16 volumes of minutes, from 1811-1955
Presbytery of Syracuse – 5 volumes of minutes, from 1887-1892, 1906-1909, 1927-1956

Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse – 4 volumes of minutes, from 1961-1968, 1989-2000

The Presbytery has bound books of copies of its minutes stored in the Presbytery's storage room at the offices of the Synod of the Northeast, as follows:

September 24, 1968 – April 30, 1974

June 10, 1974 – March 31, 1979

June 19, 1979 – January 28, 1984

March 20, 1984 – November 12, 1988

January 21, 1989 – November 16, 1993

January 22, 1994 – September 23, 1997

November 25, 1997 – November 28, 2000

The Presbytery has minutes in archival boxes stored in the Stated Clerk's office, as follows:

January 27, 2001 – November 17, 2009

The Presbytery has a bound book of its minutes stored in the Stated Clerk's office, as follows:

January 23, 2010 – January 21, 2012

The Presbytery has minutes in archival boxes stored in the Stated Clerk's office from March 27, 2012 – July 22, 2014

- c. I am required to report annually to Presbytery the names of former members of the Permanent Judicial Commission whose terms have expired within the last six years (arranged alphabetically within classes, beginning with the most recent class):
 - Class of 2013: Teaching elder Harold Abram, ruling elder Norman Hatt (Fayetteville)
 - Class of 2011: Ruling elder Tania Anderson (Onondaga Hill)
3. Identification cards for teaching elders and commissioned ruling elders for 2015 are available at today's meeting.
4. I occasionally am asked to write an interpretation about Church law and/or Constitutional issues that arise. I wrote one such interpretation on July 11, 2014 regarding questions about who may administer the Sacraments.
5. One of the key principles of Presbyterian church polity is to have equal numbers of teaching and ruling elders in all councils above the session. For this reason I am required to report annually to Presbytery any imbalance between the number of teaching elders on

the roll of Presbytery and the number of ruling elders who are entitled to vote at Presbytery meetings, so that adjustments can be made if necessary to maintain the parity of teaching and ruling elders at Presbytery meetings (G-3.0301). The following are the numbers of which we need to be aware in this matter (as of December 31, 2014), based on the Presbytery’s policy for the Annual Equalization of Presbyters:

One ruling elder commissioner from each congregation	= 38
One ruling elder commissioner from Isaiah’s Table	= 1
Ruling elder members of Leadership Team	= 9
Ruling elder members who chair Nominating or PJC	= 0
Ruling elder officers of Presbytery	= 1
Commissioned Ruling Elders	= 2
Additional ruling elder commissioners from churches with additional teaching elders on staff: Skaneateles (1), Park Central (2), Marcellus (1)	= 4
Additional ruling elder commissioners from churches with membership between 176-400: Westminster Auburn, Baldwinsville, Cazenovia, DeWitt, North Syracuse, Skaneateles, Robinson Memorial, First United of East Syracuse, United Church of Fayetteville	= 9
Additional ruling elder commissioners from churches with membership over 401: Skaneateles	= 1
Total ruling elder commissioners	= 65
Ministers in installed pastoral relationships	= 20
Ministers in specialized or temporary ministries	= 11
Minister members-at-large	= 6
Retired minister members	= 27
Temporary members of Presbytery	= 6
Total teaching elder members	= 70

Since the number of teaching elder members is more than the number of eligible ruling elder commissioners, our Presbytery’s policy states that “the requisite number will be filled by asking sessions of churches to elect additional commissioners, rotating among the congregations in alphabetical order.” As a result, I have notified the following five sessions/boards that they are eligible to send one additional ruling elder commissioner to Presbytery meetings until the 2016 Annual Meeting of the Presbytery: Amboy Belle Isle, First Auburn, United Ministry of Aurora, Chittenango, and Collamer United Church.

6. Regarding 2014 annual reports to the General Assembly:
 - a. I filed all required annual reports from the Presbytery with the General Assembly within the prescribed time requirements. (The Presbytery’s Annual Statistical Report is included as Appendix A to these minutes.)
 - b. The following sessions/boards did not complete and file annual reports to the General Assembly for 2014:
 - i. First United Church of East Syracuse

- ii. Collamer United Church
 - iii. United Church of Fayetteville
 - iv. Hannibal Community Church
 - v. Jamesville Community Church
 - vi. King Ferry
 - vii. Morrisville Community
 - viii. Federated Church of Port Byron
 - ix. Sennett Federated Church
 - x. Korean Church
 - xi. Westminster Church of Syracuse
 - xii. Taunton Memorial
- c. During 2014, our congregations received a total of 148 new members and lost a total of 344 members, for a net Presbytery loss of 196 people. The total number of members in the churches in our Presbytery as of December 31, 2014 was 4,539. Four congregations increased in membership during the year, twenty decreased in membership, and one remained the same.
- d. Other items to note in terms of membership:
- i. There were 60 infant baptisms in our congregations during the year, and 14 adult baptisms!
 - ii. Our churches have a total of 423 members under the age of 25, and another 612 between the ages of 26 and 45. 1,117 members are over the age of 65.
 - iii. A total of 1,216 individuals were involved in educational ministries and programs of our churches!
 - iv. Reporting congregations received over \$2.9 million in regular contributions and just over \$770,000 in investment income.
 - v. Reporting congregations spent over \$3.1 million in local programs, over \$362,000 in local mission, almost \$60,000 in validated mission, and over \$68,000 in other mission.
7. I have been working with the legal staff of the General Assembly and the leadership from Isaiah's Table to affirm their eligibility under the umbrella of the tax-exempt status of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). After lengthy e-mail exchanges over the past few months, we have devised a rewording of the bylaws of Isaiah's Table that should satisfy the requirements for inclusion. I also have written a resolution that I would ask the Presbytery to approve. If the Presbytery does not feel ready to act on this today, since this material was not ready until yesterday, then I would suggest that we allow for questions and/or comments from the floor, and that this then would be presented to the Leadership Team for consideration and action at their meeting next week. (The resolution is included as Appendix B.) After discussion, the resolution was approved by vote of the Presbytery.

The report of the Stated Clerk/Communicator was approved.

The consultant who was employed by the Leadership Team, the Rev. Dr. David Cleaver-Bartholomew, was introduced to the Presbytery by teaching elder Pete Shidemantle, chairperson of the Leadership Team. Dr. Cleaver-Bartholomew presented the results of his work with the Presbytery. The Presbytery then discussed the report. (The Background Paper prepared by the

Leadership Team for this discussion is included as Appendix C. Dr. Cleaver-Bartholomew's report is included as Appendix D.) Dr. Cleaver-Bartholomew highlighted several parts of his report.

1. He noted that, as with most organizations that try to think in new ways, the Presbytery moved from one extreme to another in terms of where power and authority lie. What might be helpful is for the Presbytery to recapture positive elements from our old structure and life and merge those with newer elements of what we've been doing that have worked.
2. Have more meetings of the Presbytery, but provide opportunities for things other than business: such as worship, program, building community, awareness of opportunities for service and growth.
3. David highlighted issues related to the development of vision and goals, dealing with our history, the role and functions of the Leadership Team, and church growth and evangelism.
4. Is "going it alone" as a Presbytery the wisest choice for us to make at this time in our life together, or should we be looking at sharing structure, program, staff, and other resources with neighboring presbyteries and/or with ecumenical partners?
5. There is an awful lot of potential in the basic ways we've been trying to do things. He commended us for taking the bold steps we've taken these past three years.

The Presbytery expressed deep appreciation to David for his work with us. The Presbytery voted to receive this report, with thanks.

The Presbytery entered into a time of worship. During the worship service, the Sacrament of Holy Communion was celebrated. After worship, the Presbytery recessed for lunch.

Ruling elder Linda Russell announced about an upcoming visit from one of our partners from South Korea with the Presbytery's Korean Partnership Team. More details will be announced soon.

When the Presbytery reconvened, discussion was held about the question of what to do concerning the Great Commission Funds. A motion was made and seconded to distribute \$350,000 to assist churches in fulfilling the Great Commission. After discussion the motion was approved. A motion was made and seconded to postpone the decision about how to distribute these funds until the October 20, 2015 Stated Meeting of the Presbytery. After discussion the motion was approved.

Concern was raised about how to follow up on making a decision about this issue. Teaching elder Tracie Martin and ruling elder Mary Browne agreed to chair a task force to develop means to help the Presbytery to do this. Teaching elder Garrett Anderson volunteered to serve on this task force, as did ruling elder Neil Rotach.

Teaching elder Pete Shidemantle presented the written report of the Leadership Team:

Since the October 28, 2014 Stated Meeting of the Presbytery, the Leadership Team has held meetings on November 13, 2014, and January 15, January 29, March 24, and April 16, 2015.

The regular meeting that was scheduled to be held on February 19, 2015 lacked a quorum, due primarily to inclement weather that evening.

Actions taken on behalf of the Presbytery on November 13, 2014:

- A-1 To approve the call of First United Church of East Syracuse to the Rev. Debra Thomas to serve as pastor, pending the vote of the congregation on November 16, 2014, beginning January 4, 2015, with the following terms:

Cash Salary	\$ 10,514.00
Housing:	
Housing and/or utility allowance	\$ 18,000.00
EFFECTIVE SALARY (<i>total of above</i>)	\$ 28,514.00

Board of Pensions:

Medical, pension, disability, and death benefit coverage	\$ 13,541.68
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Other benefits:

Social Security offset	\$ 2,181.32
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Professional reimbursable expenses:

Travel expense at IRS rate per mile	\$ 600.00
Continuing Education reimbursement	\$ 900.00
Miscellaneous professional reimbursement	\$ 1,000.00

Paid vacation leave of five weeks annually

Paid continuing education leave of two weeks annually

The committee affirms that the search followed all AAEEEO guidelines.

- A-2 Approved the report of the 2013 audit of the Presbytery's financial records. The formal, concluding opinion of the auditor is as follows: "...the financial statements... present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse as of December 31, 2013, and the change in its net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America."
- A-3 Accepted the resignation of ruling elder Christian Imboden from the Leadership Team, due to his recent move to Oregon.
- A-4 Accepted the results of the research done by the Stated Clerk/Communicator, teaching elder Steve Plank, who, with the help of former Presbytery attorney Fred Marty, determined that the Presbytery's incorporation papers were filed on October 9, 1956 in Onondaga County, attesting that we were incorporated on that date "pursuant to Section 15 of the Religious Corporation Law of the State of New York."
- A-5 Approved a request for monies from the Benevolent Care Grant Fund for \$1,000 from Health Tapestry. The money will be used to provide funds for low-income clients who are in need.

Actions taken on behalf of the Presbytery on January 15, 2015:

- A-6 Approved a recommendation from the Committee on Ministry Work Group for a waiver request for vacancy dues owed the Board of Pensions by the King Ferry church.
- A-7 Approved a request from Rita Hooper, moderator of Presbytery’s PW, asking for permission to hold a “rock-a-thon” at the next Presbytery meeting as a fund-raiser for the Kay Lero Fund which provides assistance to PW members to attend PW Churchwide Gatherings.
- A-8 Approved the request from the Stated Clerk/Communicator, Steve Plank, to have his effective salary divided as follows:
- | | |
|------------------------|----------------|
| Cash salary | \$34,025 |
| Housing allowance | \$29,000 |
| <u>Annuity (403b)</u> | <u>\$3,600</u> |
| Total effective salary | \$66,625 |
- A-9 Set the following dates for Stated Meetings of the Presbytery:
Saturday, May 16, 2015
Tuesday, October 20, 2015
Saturday, May 14, 2016
Tuesday, October 18, 2016
- A-10 Approved an Administrative Commission to install teaching elder Deb Thomas as pastor of First United Church of East Syracuse on Sunday, February 8, at 3:00 p.m. with the following members:
The moderator, teaching elder Stuart Hayes, or his designee
Teaching elders: Tracie Martin, Jerry Platz, and Steve Plank; Rev. Caroline Simmons
Ruling elders and United Methodist representatives: Charlie Smith (Marcellus), Lynn Jacques, Charlie Coombs, Joan O’Donnell, Paul Spero, and Karen Novak (all from the East Syracuse congregation)
Ecumenical member: United Methodist District Superintendent Darryl Barrow or his designee
- A-11 Made assignments to Work Groups for Leadership Team members for this year:
Camping Ministry – Pearl Fischer, Dave Sandwick, Jeff Raner
Committee on Ministry – Charlie Smith, Yong Jee
Committee on Preparation for Ministry – Jean Smith
Committee on Representation – Craig Williams, Pete Shidemantle
Finance and Property – Doug Russell, Karen McDonough
Human Resources – Craig Williams, Sarah McTyre
Leadership Development – Patricia Simmons, Sam Dance
Records and Overtures – Sandy Sanderson
- A-12 Approved the call of the First United Church of Marcellus to the Rev. Pam Gnagy to serve as pastor, on a full-time basis, beginning February 23, 2015, with the following terms:
- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Cash Salary | \$ 30,000 |
| Housing and/or utility allowance | \$ 20,000 |
| EFFECTIVE SALARY | \$ 50,000 |
- Board of Pensions:
Full medical, pension, disability, death benefit coverage \$17,500

Social Security Offset (if less than 50%)	\$ 2,000
Dental Insurance reimbursement	\$ 500
Professional reimbursable expenses:	
Travel expenses	\$ 2,500
Continuing Education reimbursement	\$ 1,000
Professional expenses	\$ 1,000
Paid vacation leave of four weeks annually	
Paid continuing education leave of two weeks annually	
Eligible for 3 months sabbatical leave after 6 years of service	
Moving expenses	\$ 6,800

The committee attests that AAEEEO policies were followed during the search.

Appointed Ms. Gnagy moderator of the Session, effective February 23, 2015.

The congregation voted to approve this call at a special meeting on January 11, 2015.

Received Ms. Gnagy as a member of the Presbytery, pending her transfer from John Knox Presbytery.

- A-13 Approved the contract, "Agreement for Professional Services," between the Presbytery and Peters and Associates,

Actions taken on behalf of the Presbytery on January 29, 2015:

- A-14 Decided that the decision of how to use the Great Commission monies would be made by the Presbytery at the May Stated Meeting.

Actions taken on behalf of the Presbytery on March 24, 2015:

- A-15 Accepted the resignation of ruling elder Anita Wagner as the incoming chairperson of the Leadership Team
- A-16 Received notice attesting to the discharge of the mortgage that had been held by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), dated July 22, 2005, for Pebble Hill Presbyterian Church, in the amount of \$450,000. The mortgage was discharged, having been paid in full, on January 23, 2015.
- A-17 Approved a proposed promissory note between the Presbytery and the First Presbyterian Church of Auburn.
- A-18 Approved the contract between teaching elder Kathleen Waters and the Homer Congregational Church (UCC) for her to serve as their Interim Pastor.
- A-19 Approved employing an outside consultant to lead the Presbytery through an evaluative process.
- A-20 Dismissed the Administrative Commission named to install teaching elder Deb Thomas as the pastor of First United Church of East Syracuse, with thanks.
- A-21 Approved the installation of teaching elder Pamela Gnagy as the pastor of First Pres. in Marcellus, to be held on Sunday, April 19, at 3:00 p.m. (Members of the Administrative Commission will be named later.)
- A-22 Called call a special Presbytery meeting for Tuesday, May 5, 2015, at 6:30. Place is TBD. The purpose is:
1. To hear a report on financial issues, including the mortgage, related to Vanderkamp.
 2. To vote on proposed amendments from General Assembly.

3. To vote on proposed amendments from the Synod of the Northeast.
- A-23 Approved the termination of the contract between the Session of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Syracuse, and the Rev. Patricia Simmons. The Session action was taken on February 13, 2015. Her last day of pastoral service is March 1, 2015, with salary and benefits continuing in full through April 30, 2015, and prorated education benefits.
- A-24 Approved the contract between the Session of First Pres. in Cazenovia and teaching elders Ed Townsend and Dennis Dewey, members of Utica Presbytery. The agreement specifies that the teaching elders conduct a mission study and provide various transitional services for \$3,000 per month, paid to Three Steeples United. This agreement is for a period of six months, beginning March 1, 2015. Either party may terminate this agreement with 30 days written notice.
- Activities:
1. Mission Study
 - a. Rev. Townsend will lead the congregation through the mission study process, meeting with the congregation once a month following the worship service that he leads.
 - b. A written mission study document will be generated, in conjunction with the Mission Study Committee, at the conclusion of the mission study.
 - c. Regular updates on the five tasks of interim ministry will be provided to the Cayuga-Syracuse Presbytery COM liaison (Rev. Deb Thomas).
 2. Worship
 - a. Rev. Dewey will lead worship services 2x per month.
 - b. Rev. Townsend will lead worship service 1x per month.
 - i. Rev. Townsend will also lead an introductory service on the first Sunday of this agreement.
 3. Board & Committee Support
 - a. Rev. Townsend will serve as moderator of Session during this agreement. Rev. Townsend or Rev. Dewey will provide leadership to committees and other boards as needed.
 4. Pastoral Care
 - a. Emergency Pastoral Care will be covered.
 - b. Routine care and visitation will be provided by the Deacons and Congregation.
 5. Office Presence
 - a. One half day in the office per week (Tuesday).
 - b. Other days or evenings as needed.
 6. Assist staff in Worship preparation.
 7. Prepare monthly message for the Church newsletter.
 8. Conduct weddings and funerals as needed.
- A-25 Appointed teaching elder Jerry Shave as moderator of the Elmwood Session.
- A-26 Approved the Office Space Agreement for our bookkeeper between the Synod, our Presbytery, and the Presbyteries of Utica and Susquehanna Valley. (The other two presbyteries already have signed this.)

- A-27 Approved the Professional Services Agreement between our Presbytery and our bookkeeper, Paula Lamberson. Among other things, this specifies that the bookkeeper is not an employee but an independent contractor.

Actions taken on behalf of the Presbytery on April 16, 2015:

- A-28 Accepted the resignation of teaching elder Yong Jee from the Leadership Team.
- A-29 Approved presenting the Presbytery Background Paper 2015 to the Presbytery, to be a part of the discussions about our future together.
- A-30 Approved the report of the Camping Ministry Work Group, with amendment, to be presented to the May 5, 2015 special Presbytery meeting.
- A-31 Appointed an the following Administrative Commission to install teaching elder Pam Gnagy as Pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Marcellus on Sunday, April 19, at 3:00 p.m.:
- Moderator or appointee
 - Ruling elders: Nancy Wind (Isaiah's Table), Charlie Smith (Marcellus), Bert Richardson (Northminster)
 - Teaching elders: Craig Lindsey, Tracie Martin, Ginny Smith, Steve Plank
- Permission to celebrate the Sacrament of Communion at the installation service.
- A-32 Reviewed a recommendation from the Committee on Ministry Work Group that the Leadership Team approve the Plan of Union of the First Presbyterian Church of Chittenango to become a union congregation, affiliated both with our Presbytery and with the Presbytery of the East (Evangelical Presbyterian Church). However, the Leadership Team asked for clarity about how to resolve differences between that document and a related document before they will consider final approval.
- A-33 Approved the retirements of the Rev. Barb Wright (Scipioville) on July 15, and the Rev. Neil Strong (Port Byron) on August 31.
- A-34 Approved a draft of the 2016 budget for the Presbytery, presented by the Finance and Property Work Group, that is based on the following seven assumptions:
1. per capita not more than 2015 (\$31.36)
 2. 5% of endowment funds used as income
 3. Slight decrease in membership from 4735 to 4700 (actual number is not available until later in the year)
 4. 97% of Per Capita Paid (versus 91% we used in 2015) consistent with 2014 payment
 5. GA and Synod per capita stay the same
 6. Only increase in Stated Clerk Salary is for benefits
 7. Increase cost of audit, decreases in Bookkeeper and CPA Assistance costs
- A-35 Approved a Letter of Agreement between our Presbytery, Utica Presbytery, and Susquehanna Valley Presbytery for the bookkeeping services of Paula Lamberson.
- A-36 Changed the dates to establish a deadline for applying for Benevolent Care Funds as being November 1 each year, with distribution being done on January 1. This is to be effective Nov. 1, 2015, with distribution in January 2016.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the report of the Leadership Team as presented.

Teaching elder Pete Shidemantle called on ruling elder Charlie Smith, chair of the Committee on Ministry Work Group, to lead the Presbytery in recognizing the upcoming retirements of the Revs. Robert French (from Aurora), Barbara Wright (from Scipioville), David Nethercott (from Fulton), and Neil Strong (from Port Byron). Several individuals spoke in appreciation of the ministries of each of these pastors. After expressions of thanks, the Presbytery presented the retirees with Certificates of Honorable Retirement.

Steve Plank, the Stated Clerk/Communicator, presented the report of the Nominating Committee, as follows:

The Committee presents the following nominations for immediate election:

Leadership Team

Class of 2016:

Teaching elder Craig Lindsey

Class of 2018:

Ruling elder Lennie Turner (Pebble Hill)

Teaching elder Pam Gnagy

The Moderator asked for nominations from the floor. Hearing none, the Presbytery voted to elect these new members of the Leadership Team.

Based on the election of the above, the Leadership Team membership will be as follows, beginning June 1, 2015. (Note that we still need to elect a chair and vice-chair, who, according to the Presbytery's Bylaws and Standing Rules, will need to be in the Class of 2018. This means that if the chair or vice-chair are not now members of the Class of 2018, we'll ask one or more members of that class currently to switch to one of the other classes).

Class of 2016

RE Pearl Fischer (Isaiah's Table)

TE Craig Lindsey

RE Jeff Ranor (Parish)

Class of 2017

RE Sam Dance (Onondaga Hill)

RE Doug Russell (Syracuse Westminster)

RE Dave Sandwick (LaFayette)

RE Jean Smith (Weedsport)

Class of 2018

RE Nancy Caple-Johnston (Park Central)

TE Pam Gnagy

RE Donna Hunt (Auburn Westminster)

RE Linda Russell (Auburn Westminster)

RE Lennie Turner (Pebble Hill)

Ex-officio members

TE Stuart Hayes, Moderator of Presbytery
TE Sandy Sanderson, Vice-Moderator of Presbytery
TE Steve Plank, Stated Clerk/Communicator
RE Mark Peters, Treasurer

Noting that there was not currently either a Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson, a motion was made and seconded to authorize the Leadership Team to elect people to these positions. After discussion, the motion was approved.

Two names were placed into nomination to attend the 222nd General Assembly (2016) June 18-25, 2016. Nominated were Gordon Howard (Otisco) to be our ruling elder commissioner, and Shaughn Anson (Otisco) to be our Young Adult Advisory Delegate. The Moderator asked for nominations from the floor. Hearing none, the Presbytery voted to elect them as our ruling elder commissioner and Young Adult Advisory Delegate.

The Presbytery recognized and installed the new members of the Leadership Team: teaching elders Craig Lindsey and Pam Gnagy, and ruling elders Nancy Caple-Johnston, Donna Hunt, Linda Russell, and Lennie Turner. The Presbytery then expressed its thanks to the retiring members of the Leadership Team: teaching elders Pete Shidemantle and Sarah McTyre, chairperson and vice-chairperson respectively, and ruling elders Karen McDonough, Charlie Smith, and Craig Williams.

Teaching elder Mario Bolivar informed the Presbytery about an event known as the National Hispanic Prayer Day. It will be held in Washington, D.C from June 15 – 18. Among other things, there will be groups gathering to focus on technology and new church development.

There being no further business, this meeting of the Presbytery was adjourned with prayer by the Moderator at 2:25 p.m.

Steven W. Plank,
Stated Clerk/Communicator

Roll –

Teaching elders present: Garrett Anderson, Mary Anderson, Lorrie Day Anson, Earl Arnold, Mario Bolivar, Lorrie Cooney, Paul Doriani, Beth DuBois, Robert French, Pamela Gnagy, Karen Green, Stuart Hayes, Yong Ju Jee, Dwain Lee, Roger Martin, Tracie Martin, Sarah McTyre, David Nethercott, Janet Newman, Steve Plank, Jerry Shave, Pete Shidemantle, Kathleen Waters, Barbara Wright

Teaching elders excused: Karen Dimon, Dan McCollister, Andrew McTyre, Nick Preuninger,
Sandy Sanderson

Commissioned Ruling Elders present: Donna Chapman, (Gail Banks – excused)

Ruling elder commissioners present:

Amboy Belle Isle (2) – Robert M. Armstrong, (excused)
Auburn, First (2) – Ann L. Wiley
Auburn Westminster (2) – George Hiza, Jill Fandrich
Aurora (2) – Vivian Hughes
Baldwinsville (2) – Jean Harshaw
Cazenovia (2) – Kathy Knoff, Sharye Skinner
Chittenango (2) – Steve Rothamel, Sue Rothamel
Collamer (2) – Judy Schuyler, Jim Schuyler
Dewitt, Pebble Hill (2) – Lennie Turner
East Syracuse (2) –
Fayetteville (2) –
Fulton – Rita Hooper
Hannibal –
Jamesville –
King Ferry – Neil Rotach
LaFayette –
Liverpool – Karen Fay
Marcellus (2) – Deb English, Helen Stevens
Mexico – Susan Stillman Smith
Morrisville – Sylvia McKinnon
North Syracuse, Northminster (2) –
Onondaga Hill –
Oswego –
Otisco – Shaughn Anson
Parish, New Hope –
Port Byron –
Scipioville – Barbara Adams
Sennett –
Skaneateles (4) –
Syracuse, Elmwood – Mary Ellen Brzozowski
Syracuse, Isaiah’s Table – Nita Cleland
Syracuse, Korean –
Syracuse, Park Central (3) – Joe Russo
Syracuse, Robinson Memorial (2) – Mary Browne
Syracuse, South Valley –
Syracuse, Taunton –
Syracuse, Westminster –
Weedsport – William Smith
Whitelaw – Sandra Storr

Leadership Team ruling elders present: Charlie Smith, Karen McDonough, Pearl Fischer,
Sam Dance, Dave Sandwick, Jean Smith

Leadership Team ruling elders excused: Craig Williams

Total present and eligible to vote:

Teaching elders	24
Commissioned Ruling Elders	28
Ruling elder commissioners	1
Leadership Team ruling elders	6

Total **59**

Corresponding Members: Allison Seed, Amaury Tañón-Santos, Donna Hunt, Linda Russell

Visitors present: Sandra Kreplin, Gordon Howard, Tim Fay, Liz Buonocore, Pat Mena, Sandra Arnold, Nancy Wind, Rebecca Wind, Bob Wind

(Minutes approved by Presbytery as submitted – October 20, 2015)

APPENDIX A

Presbytery
Report
2014



Presbytery Number	180108
Name	Cayuga-Syracuse
<hr/>	
Address	PO Box 6010
City/State	Syracuse, NY 13217-6010
Phone	315-632-5698
Email	<u>steve@cayugasyracuse.org</u>
Web Site	<u>www.cayugasyracuse.org/</u>
Fax	

Membership			
Prior Active Members	4735		
Gains		Losses	
17 & Under	42	Certified	25
18 & Over	58	Deaths	83
Certified	9	Other	236
Other	39		
Total Gains	148	Total Losses	344

Total Active Members	4539
Baptized	438
Other Participants	197
Total Adherents	5174
Female Members	2758

Average Attendance	1540
Affiliate Members	48

Baptisms		Officers	
Child Baptisms	60	Male Session	105
Adult Baptisms	14	Female Session	114
		Male Deacons	41
		Female Deacons	151

Age Distribution of Active Members		Male	Female
25 & Under	423	175	221
26 - 45	612	245	305
46 - 55	483	180	263
56 - 65	638	202	350
Over 65	1117	361	644
Total Distribution	3273	1163	1783

People with Disabilities

Hearing	154
Sight	59
Mobility	131
Other	49

Christian Education

Birth 3	95	Grade 7	34
Age 4	123	Grade 8	32
Kindergarten	34	Grade 9	28
Grade 1	31	Grade 10	45
Grade 2	30	Grade 11	30
Grade 3	27	Grade 12	18
Grade 4	49	Young Adults	30
Grade 5	36	Over 25	393
Grade 6	46	Teachers/Officers	135
Total	1216		

Racial Ethnic Breakdown	Membership	Elders	Deacons	Male	Female
Asian	20			4	9
Black	11	1	1	4	6
African American	18	2	1	6	8
African	9	1	0	6	3
Middle Eastern	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic	7		1	2	4
Native American	2			0	2
White	3428	181	156	1172	1506
Other				0	0
Totals	3495	185	159	1194	1538

Potential Giving Units	1,627
Budgeted Income	4,177,962

Budgeted Expense **4,718,287**

Receipts

Regular Contributions	2,948,715	Bequests	148,136
Capital Building Fund	173,149	Other Income	845,329
Investment Income	770,977	Subsidy or Aid	3,518

Expenditures

Local Program	3,147,212	Per Capital Apprt	68,991
Local Mission	362,214	Validated Mission	59,882
Capital Expenditures	262,135	Theological Fund	900
Investment Expenditures	61,719	Other Mission	68,604

APPENDIX B

WHEREAS the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse, on March 27, 2012, approved the report from the Administrative Commission that was established to work with the First Presbyterian Church United, Syracuse: “That (a) Mission Initiative will arise from the former congregation within a period of 3-6 months and will need funding to start up, and space for worship and to focus mission and ministry.” (*This “Mission Initiative” came to be called Isaiah’s Table.*); and

WHEREAS, at the June 5, 2012 Stated Meeting of the Presbytery, the following recommendation was approved: “Council recommended that Presbytery recognize Isaiah’s Table as an Organized Fellowship in Cayuga-Syracuse Presbytery, under G-3.0301c”; and

WHEREAS, beginning at the October 13, 2012 Stated Meeting of the Presbytery, a commissioner from Isaiah’s Table was seated at Presbytery meetings; and

WHEREAS on July 1, 2014 the Presbytery, acting through its Leadership Team, voted to “establish a special Task Force to work with Isaiah’s Table... (which) would provide the following:

- A continuing relationship with Isaiah’s Table;
- The Presbytery with updates on Isaiah’s Table progress.
- Oversight in the relationship between the Presbyterian Foundation and Isaiah’s Table.
- The leadership to see that a yearly audit of funds from the income stream is accomplished and shared with the Presbytery.”

and

WHEREAS Article II, Section 1 of the bylaws of Isaiah’s Table specifies that “only people who are ordained to one of the ordered ministries (see G-2.0102) in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall be eligible for election as Directors,” thereby establishing direct and accountable relationships between the Directors of Isaiah’s Table and the Presbytery through the ordination and installation vows taken by those in ordered ministry; and

WHEREAS Article II, Section 2 of the bylaws of Isaiah’s Table specifies that “Directors shall be nominated by the Board of Directors for election by the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse,” thereby demonstrating the organizational control and oversight of the Presbytery over the programmatic, financial, and other aspects of Isaiah’s Table;

THEREFORE the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse, at its Stated Meeting on May 16, 2015, hereby declares and affirms its relationship with, support for, and oversight of Isaiah’s Table and its programs and financial integrity.

APPENDIX C

Background Paper for Presbytery Evaluation Process March 2015

Most of us grew up with and/or have lived out our professional lives in a presbytery structure that supported multiple staff members and an office. In return, the presbytery offered services to churches such as setting priorities for mission, coordinating multiple presbytery meetings each year and providing resources for ministry. That structure relied heavily on significant financial contributions from the congregations, multiple staff members, clergy who were consistently able to devote time to the presbytery and lay people who were interested in serving on committees and attending meetings during which we conducted much business and voted on many things.

Prior to the adoption of new Bylaws and Standing Rules (adopted November, 2011) many characterized the overall environment of our particular presbytery as “distrustful.” As the old structure began to come apart, the lack of trustworthy and consistent processes and leadership left many people who served in elected positions feeling that their contributions were not appreciated or respected. This often led to people resigning from positions, feeling “burned” by the system, and experiencing alienation from the work of the presbytery despite their good intentions.

The stated mission of our Presbytery is “to equip the churches to fulfill the Great Commission,” and the guiding values of our “new” Bylaws call us to return to the historical roots of how we were Presbyterians together in the early days of our denomination and nation; to be a Presbytery that shifts the focus from rules and regulations to a permission giving grace; that trusts “in the dominion of providence over the passions”; and changes the highest common denominator from being rules and the lowest common denominator being relationships to just the opposite.

The two broad sections below trace changes over the last three years in our efforts to live into this new reality in: 1) structure and decision-making and 2) finances and services along with some beginning reflections on how these areas are currently functioning.

Structure and Decision-Making

Under our former structure, we had a Presbytery Executive, a presbytery office, office staff, and a separate Board of Trustees that managed the finances of the presbytery. The Presbytery Council did the work of the presbytery between meetings of the presbytery. Leadership of the Council was by succession: the most recent Moderator of Presbytery became the Moderator of the Council. The presbytery by-laws called for a Nominating Committee to nominate candidates for election by the presbytery to council/presbytery committees. By the final year under the old structure, this had become nearly an impossible task; the presbytery was unable even to find enough people to fill the Nominating Committee.

Under the new structure, a Leadership Team is elected by the presbytery to serve as “session” and “trustees” of the presbytery (6.011), with each class of five members serving a term of three years. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Leadership Team are elected to those positions. When

they rotate off after three years, a new Chair and Vice Chair are to be elected. There is no renewal. The Moderator and Vice Moderator of the presbytery are elected for two-year terms, concurrent with each other, also without renewal.

The new by-laws of the presbytery call for all ecclesiastical “functions” required by the Book of Order to be carried out by the Leadership Team. Leadership development opportunities and programs may originate from any member of the presbytery, or from the Leadership Team itself. In its first three years, the Leadership Team has appointed Work Groups to carry out its work, some of which have carried over from the former structure: Committee on Ministry, Committee on Preparation for Ministry, Human Resources, Overtures and Records, Committee on Representation. Others have been added: Leadership Development and Camping Ministry. Each Work Group has at least one member of the Leadership Team on it, though it is not required that a Leadership Team member chair the Work Group.

The work group model has worked unevenly to this point. We have been able to carry out the required functions, but it has taken time to activate other groups. We found that the first full year of our work was taken up by the “nuts and bolts” of presbytery work – meeting the obligations of our required functions. We have also had to spend an inordinate amount of time on financial issues, which has made it difficult to move forward with the kind of fellowship, nurture, and educational opportunities that our new by-laws encourage and try to make room for. On the other hand, the Leadership Team itself, with the help of consultant Mark Betley, has worked to stay focused on the presbytery’s stated mission - “Equipping our Churches to Fulfill the Great Commission” – keeping that mission before us in all that we do. We have tried to instill processes in our work together that honor each person’s contribution and that are inclusive of all the voices of the presbytery.

In some ways, we have made progress in the direction of allowing our four core values to guide our behavior and decision-making. There have been times when the Leadership Team has been able to be less anxious about making decisions, and we have allowed ourselves to have a thoughtful, theological process, although this has been perceived by some on the Leadership Team as being reluctant to make decisions.

The Chair and Vice Chair, along with many on the Leadership Team and work groups, have spent a significant amount of time over these first three years on this ministry on behalf of the presbytery, while having other church, work and family responsibilities. Moving forward, the challenge is to engage the gifts of other ruling and teaching elders in the presbytery to share in this work by stepping forward to offer their own creative ideas and energy to our corporate life. The presbytery’s new structure was intentionally set up to let groups be creative and flexible and to allow people the space to work on projects without the constraints of multiple rules and mandated procedures.

There are certainly gaps in the by-laws and some need for ongoing policies. It will be a challenge to retain the flexibility, grace and freedom of our by-laws while providing enough order for our life together. While we do not want to return to the days of heavy structure, our Stated Clerk has begun to note places in the by-laws that need attention and has started

tracking helpful guidelines/policy pieces for a future manual of operations. Some of the gaps referred to above are indicated by the following:

- Robert's Rules of Order makes clear distinctions between Standing Rules and Bylaws; our document combines those in one.
- How are members assigned, recruited, and/or appointed to Work Groups, how many people are on each Work Group, and how do people “retire” from Work Groups?
- There is no provision for examining candidates for ordination as teaching elders between our two stated meetings each year.
- There is no Manual of Administrative Operations, as required in our Book of Order (G-3.0106), that includes all of our Presbytery's policies (including COM and CPM policies).

In the last three years, we have increased our ability to communicate digitally, but we recognize that the growing edge of our presbytery is to have gatherings where ruling and teaching elders can be together in faithful conversation, meaningful worship, and nurturing fellowship. Although some people “in the pews” may not have experienced a significant change in their perceptions of the presbytery and some are still distrustful, we have hopefully prepared the ground for the next phase of this work. We look forward to the offerings of others to help realize the vision of a new presbytery.

Finances and Services

The current structure for the presbytery has returned the major responsibility for mission funding back to the congregations. This means that less staffing and structure are needed on the presbytery level. Our new structure has helped us to decrease the staff and administrative costs from \$220,627 in 2008 to \$132,537 in 2015. The expectation is that administrative costs will be decreased even further in the coming years. There has also been a significant decrease in per capita from a high of \$40.58 to \$31.36 in 2015.

The last page of this report provides a snapshot of per capita and how our spending on staff, administrative costs and funding for presbytery committees has changed as we have made the transition to a new structure.

In the current structure, we have invested in one full-time staff person with the skills and experience to keep us faithful to our tradition, provide denominational connections and resources and serve as a communicator to link us together. The change to one full-time staff person has significantly reduced the presbytery's staff costs. We have also continually sought to decrease the budget for programmatic and administrative line items. While the progress has been substantial, there may be more room to decrease the amount of money we are spending on technology and on financial management. In decreasing the budget, we may also have gone too far on some items. There are currently not many resources to plan for excellent events (both presbytery meetings and leadership development events) that will benefit all of our congregations. Perhaps this is an area where churches with stronger financial resources could serve as partners.

It is evident that the congregations of the presbytery were ready not to spend as many financial resources on our life and work together. The calls for lower per capita and smaller budgets have been clear. What is not clear is whether the preponderance of congregations along with their ruling elders and teaching elders are ready for a presbytery structure that does not offer as many “services” – whether that be in the form of offices, paid staff members or multiple meetings that are planned for the presbytery.

The other lively financial question relates to future funding for the work of the presbytery. Should the presbytery maintain a healthy endowment and use the endowment income to support the annual budget at a higher rate? This would allow congregations to retain more and more funds and make more decisions about finances at a congregational level. Or should the presbytery disburse more of its financial resources to the congregations now even though it may mean that the presbytery would not be able to provide services and staff in the future? This has been an ongoing concern within the Leadership Team and recommendations for possible disbursement of “Great Commission Funds” to the congregations will be coming before the presbytery at the May 2015 meeting.

The financial questions do engender a great deal of anxiety as we handle issues related not only to money but also to historic personal and institutional relationships (such as Vanderkamp), but having the courage to engage them is a very important part of what will enable the presbytery as a whole to move forward.

Are we ready to build the partnerships and develop relationships among Presbyterians that will strengthen our congregations and enable us to make disciples? Are we ready to take responsibility for developing and organizing the programs and gatherings that we think are most important? Are we ready to engage younger Presbyterians who might not be invested in meeting and voting, but may be very interested in sharing mission, worship and faith formation? Are we ready to provide “services” for each other?

The new structure of our Presbytery calls for a change in the culture of our life together. We recognize that a culture change takes time, measured not in months, but in years of working together.

We give thanks to God for the gifts of grace, wisdom and courage that we have witnessed in our work together on behalf of the presbytery and pray that we will be open to the work of God’s Spirit among us in the next phase of our life together as Presbyterians in Central New York.

2008

Per capita (for presbytery, synod and GA)	\$232,368 (6103 members x \$39.00)
Presbytery committees	\$7,701
Staff	\$165,189
Administrative costs	\$55,438

TOTAL \$228,328

2010

Per capita \$212,920 (5323 members x \$40.00)
(for presbytery, synod and GA)

Presbytery committees \$5,925
Staff \$216,942
Administrative costs \$21,636

TOTAL \$244,503

2012

Per capita \$202,454 (4989 members x \$40.58)
(for presbytery, synod and GA)

Presbytery committees \$7,510
Staff \$193,205
Administrative costs \$45,090

TOTAL \$245,805

2013

Per capita \$183,274 (4907 members x \$37.35)
(for presbytery, synod and GA)

Presbytery committees \$7,660
Staff \$100,200
Administrative costs \$30,624

TOTAL \$138,484

2014

Per capita \$95,780 (4789 members x \$20.00)
(for presbytery, synod and GA)

Presbytery committees \$4,550
Staff \$99,692
Administrative costs \$29,075

TOTAL \$133,317

2015

Per capita \$148,490 (4735 members x \$31.36)
(for presbytery, synod and GA)

Presbytery committees \$4,750

Staff \$104,671

Administrative costs \$27,866

TOTAL \$137,287

APPENDIX D

Evaluation Report of the Cayuga-Syracuse Presbytery
Rev. Dr. David Cleaver-Bartholomew
May 8, 2015

Over the course of the last couple of months I have participated in two Presbytery-wide listening sessions (April 14 and 18), attended two Leadership Team meeting, one special meeting of the Presbytery, and had conversations with numerous individuals. The overall impression I have developed is a favorable one, and one that gives hope. My sense is that the Cayuga-Syracuse Presbytery has dedicated, talented, and caring individuals who want to see the Presbytery succeed and its member churches grow and develop. I have experienced a good-hearted group of people who “want things to work.”

One of the positive comments I frequently heard was appreciation for the weekly e-newsletter, *Presbytery Matters*. People enjoy receiving it as it keeps them connected with others and informs them of what is going on beyond their own church. Increasing its distribution was an often-expressed recommendation. Along these lines, another commonly expressed recommendation people voiced is increasing the number of Presbytery gatherings and/or occasions for face-to-face contact. People feel more disconnected from one another now than before, and they feel less of a sense of community than before. They also feel more disconnected from the Presbytery than before. People mentioned that with the reduced number of Presbytery meetings, there is less of an opportunity to network, to find out what other groups and churches are doing, and what opportunities are available (e.g., Presbyterian Women).

However, people also said the Presbytery meetings need to have less business and be more inspiring. I heard several times that the current meeting format is not appreciated and is not attractive. There is too much business and they are too dry. People expressed instead a desire for more lively, uplifting, and energizing worship, and an opportunity to connect with one another. I would suggest, then, that the Presbytery explore the possibility of holding quarterly gatherings of the Presbytery, but that business be restricted to no more than two of the meetings with the other two or three being devoted to moving, inspiring worship, a program on a relevant and important topic, and community/relationship building. Importantly, such an arrangement should not be interpreted as precluding the holding of additional meeting for worship, programs and/or discussion of relevant topics, and fellowship, if that were desired or considered to be helpful/beneficial.

Such an arrangement would help the Presbytery fulfill its mission of “equipping our churches to fulfill the Great Commission” as it would strengthen those engaged in ministry and remind folks why they do what they do. For most, if not all, ministry in central New York is difficult and draining regardless of your setting or your form of ministry (and here I include all in the Presbytery as all are called to ministry). Presbytery meetings that include Spirit-filled worship, engaging discussion and learning, and the opportunity to connect with God and one another, would equip the saints, and consequently, the churches for fulfilling the Great Commission by reaffirming, and drawing strength from, their connection to the life-giving vine, Jesus Christ, so that they can produce much fruit. Please remember the Presbytery’s chosen image from John 15:5, where Jesus says, “I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them produce much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.” (As an

aside, the Presbytery may want to think about whether it wants to continue with this image, or whether another new, different image might be more helpful given its new structure.)

There was also consistent appreciation for the devotion and commitment of the members of the Leadership Team and others who serve the Presbytery in various capacities. The Presbytery appreciates the effort that has been made to guide it through this new way of being. However, several times it was mentioned that the Leadership Team has not been good about making decisions or providing leadership. And, members of the Leadership Team itself have mentioned that it has too often gotten bogged down in routine, “nuts and bolts,” managerial matters, especially related to finances, than it would like. Consequently, it has not been able to devote as much time as it would like to matters that would help the Presbytery fulfill its mission.

One possible remedy for getting bogged down in its agenda may be for the Leadership Team to utilize a Consent Agenda. A Consent Agenda includes actions the Leadership Team will take without discussion; e.g., approval of minutes, financial reports and committee reports, minor financial matters/requests. Before the Consent Agenda is voted on/approved, anyone on the Leadership Team would have the ability to request an item be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed on the Discussion Agenda. Using a Consent Agenda allows more time for discussions that are future oriented and relate to fulfilling the Presbytery’s Mission and Vision by removing those items from the Discussion Agenda that tend to be routine, pro forma, and of minor significance, relatively speaking.

In light of the leadership comments, I would make two suggestions. First, that the Leadership Team avail itself of some of the resources that are available today regarding governing boards in religious organizations and their role in providing leadership. For example, the Leadership Team could read, study, and discuss Dan Hotchkiss’ book, *Governance and Ministry: Rethinking Board Leadership* (Alban Institute, 2009). Hotchkiss points out that governance and ministry are two different but interrelated, and inextricably linked, spheres of leadership (leadership in this context is understood to be a gift from God, confirmed by the church, for the service of others and the building up of the body of Christ). Governance includes the tasks of articulating the mission, selecting a strategy for getting there, making sure it happens, and ensuring that people and property are protected against harm. Good governance enables effective ministry and the accomplishment of God’s mission through the church. Closely related to this is the distinction between leadership and management/administration. Many in the Presbytery expect that the Leadership Team, not only because of its name but also because it is the “session” for the Presbytery, will lead, not manage/administer, the Presbytery and its affairs.

Second, that the Leadership Team and the Presbytery develop a common vision for the Presbytery and a set of SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-limited) goals. In my experience, a mission statement is a great beginning; however, it is insufficient by itself. A mission statement is like a skeleton as it provides the foundational support for all the organization does, but it needs flesh, which is the vision statement, to bring it to life. A logical next step for the Presbytery would be for it to develop and adopt a vision for what it hears God calling it to be three, four, or five years from now, and then to come up with some SMART goals by which to measure its progress in achieving that vision. Importantly, a vision statement would also provide an interpretation of the mission statement. Right now, there is no commonly held understanding of the Presbytery’s mission. Developing a vision statement for the Presbytery would clarify how the Presbytery as a whole and the local churches individually are to be involved in and/or carry out the Great Commission. It would provide a unity of purpose. Of course, the mission and vision statements together would then be the standards according to

which decisions would be made and actions would be taken. Along these lines, I would suggest that the King James Bible's translation of Proverbs 29:18 is pertinent: "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

One often mentioned assumption of moving to the new structure was that people were better able today to communicate with one another and find resources than before because of the Internet and social media. Unfortunately, many people expressed disappointment with respect to communications, specifically with the website. It was mentioned repeatedly that the website contains out of date information, often does not contain the information people are seeking, and is not terribly user-friendly. If the website is to continue to be the primary and first place people are to go for information, then it needs to be kept up to date, contain more and relevant information, and be easier to use. Steve has revealed that there are some challenges with the website, so perhaps this is an area where someone in the Presbytery could step forward to work with him to improve the website and to take the burden of sole responsibility for the website off his shoulders or at least share it with him. In a decentralized structure as you now have, communication is even more important than before, so it is imperative that these issues with the website be resolved as soon as practicable. It is also imperative that communication be given a special attention and high priority. The Leadership Team, the Working Groups, and the Committees need to make an extra effort to communicate more often than they think is necessary about what they are doing. The need for good, widespread communication cannot be stressed enough.

Another important observation is that there continues to be a deep, widespread distrust, suspicion, and skepticism within the Presbytery. While on the surface people can get along okay, it is quite apparent that the Presbytery has experienced a significant amount of conflict, pain, and bad behavior (including clergy misconduct) that has not been fully/completely addressed or dealt with. This lack of facing and owning the Presbytery's history inhibits the Presbytery from functioning in a healthy manner and thus realizing its full potential. As the local church can be seen through the lens of family systems theory (a la Edwin Friedman and Peter Steinke) and its dysfunctional nature recognized and dealt with such that the church becomes healthier and better able to realize its potential, so too can the middle judicatory since it, as a whole, is the body of Christ in its own right.

In addition, the Preface to the Bylaws states that this new structure depends on: trust among ourselves, responsible behavior, encouraging fellowship, seeking communion, and being community. All of these are seriously impaired by the Presbytery not acknowledging and dealing with its past as not doing so perpetuates and/or contributes to the distrust, suspicion, and skepticism that exists. And as we know, the past doesn't exist only in the past. It impinges upon the present and the future. A suggestion would be to have a program for a Presbytery meeting (or two, if helpful) on family systems theory as it applies to churches. Such a program would both help the Presbytery fulfill its mission of "equipping our churches to fulfill the Great Commission" by providing a helpful educational event, and it would provide an opportunity to apply family systems theory to the Presbytery itself, which could be a first step in dealing with the Presbytery's dysfunctional state.

As far as the Presbytery's new staffing structure is concerned, I would suggest that the combined position of Stated Clerk and Communicator be rethought and a revised job description formulated. Steve is too overwhelmed. People very much appreciate what he does (for example, the e-newsletter, *Presbytery Matters*), but because he has so much to do, he is often exhausted and he can be late in responding to people's emails and phone calls. He also recognizes that he is

not able to keep the website up to date. As mentioned above, it would be advisable to explore delegating the maintaining of the Presbytery's website to someone else and to take it off Steve's plate, or to engage someone who can work with Steve on the technical aspects of website development and maintenance.

With regard to the other staff person, the bookkeeper, while the current arrangement is not ideal, it, too, is a "work in process," and needs to be given time to develop such that the needs of the Presbytery are more fully met. For example, there is the use of the Treasurer's accounting firm, Peters and Associates, to provide some support for the Treasurer and then to bill the Presbytery. By having the Leadership Team approve a contract between the Presbytery and Peters and Associates and by having the chair of the Finance and Property Working Group be the person who requests the services, the Finance and Property Working Group has attempted to address this conflict of interest. Whether this is sufficient is uncertain; however, the perception lingers that a conflict of interest remains. Therefore, it may be advisable for the Presbytery to seek a different means by which the Treasurer's support needs be met.

Another example, is the responsibility for payroll, specifically who is responsible for contacting Paychex and requesting Steve be paid and how much. In my experience, which I think is quite common, payroll has fallen under purview of the Human Resources (HR) department; e.g., a person in HR requests the payroll service, or finance department, to pay a certain employee and states how much they are to pay. It seems to me most appropriate to have a member of the HR Working Group initiate the payroll process and be responsible for contacting Paychex and requesting Steve be issued a paycheck and what the proper amount be. The HR Working Group has discussed this issue and is going to propose that Steve would be responsible for turning in a simple Employee Time record to his supervisor (the Chair of the Leadership Team). His supervisor would approve it, and then instruct the bookkeeper to authorize payment. I support this proposal, but would raise one question: is it appropriate and/or reasonable to have the Chair of the Leadership Team be Steve's supervisor, and thus, have the additional responsibility of making sure that Steve is paid? I understand the Chair of the Leadership Team is currently Steve's supervisor; however, might this be worth reexamining and perhaps having Steve's supervisor be a member of the HR Working Group instead since supervision of employees is closely related to personnel (an HR function) and the Chair of the Leadership Team has many other, possibly too many other, responsibilities. I think this is a question worth asking, but I also continue to support the HR Working Group's proposal.

With regard to these three issues (the bookkeeper, support for the Treasurer, and Steve's paycheck), I understand the chair of the Finance and Property Working Group is in conversation with the affected/relevant parties and is working on these, and presumably the parties will be able to arrive at reasonable and appropriate solutions. It is especially important that a solution to the problems regarding Steve's pay and reimbursements be found immediately.

A significant change from the previous structure is that the new structure does not provide for any administrative support, nor is there, technically speaking, a "face" of the Presbytery. This is an area of concern that should be looked at. For example, Steve must do his own support work, including compiling reports, ordering calendars, etc. In addition, Steve is often the person people call if they don't know whom else to call because he is the de facto "face" of the Presbytery. Basic informational calls and administrative support duties that the previous Administrative Assistant for the Presbytery, Renee, used to handle, Steve is now handling. Are these the wisest/best use of Steve's time, or would it be better to take them off his plate and give them to volunteers to handle or outsource them to a church within the Presbytery?

With regard to the handling of the Presbytery's finances, it, too, like nearly everything else, is in transition (for example, the conversations between the bookkeeper and the Finance and Property Working Group and the conversations between the Finance and Property Working Group and the Human Resources Working Group). The new bylaws (6.001) specifically state that the Leadership Team serves as the Trustees of the Presbytery. This marks a major shift from the previous structure, which had both a Council and a Board of Trustees. Unfortunately, the new bylaws do not mention a Finance and Property Working Group. Under the Finance and Property heading (6.050), the Leadership Team is the responsible party. The Finance and Property Working Group was created by the Leadership Team to support and assist the Leadership Team in carrying out its financial responsibilities, and in the Feb. 4, 2014 Leadership Team meeting the Leadership Team delegated twelve financial responsibilities to the Finance and Property Working Group, many of which are articulated in the bylaws (e.g., 6.050 – 6.054 and 6.544c). Because of the Presbytery's history of having both a Council and a Board of Trustees and to avoid any ambiguity of the relationship and authority of the Finance and Property Working Group, it may be advisable and beneficial to specifically establish a Finance and Property Committee as a Standing Committee in the bylaws and to clearly state this committee's role, responsibilities, duties, and authority vis-à-vis the Leadership Team.

Related to this change in ultimate responsibility for the Presbytery's finances, the chair of the Finance and Property Working Group and/or Treasurer need to communicate more clearly and in a more easily understandable way the Presbytery's financial situation. The long, complex, and detailed financial reports that are submitted are not user friendly, and may, in fact, be counterproductive as they tend to be intimidating and alienate those who are not familiar with financial accounting and/or comfortable with numbers. For example, the reports could be presented using more visual aids, such as charts and graphs, and with ratios and percent changes between time periods. By submitting more user friendly and easily understandable financial reports, the Finance and Property would more fully fulfill their support role for the Leadership Team, and the Leadership Team would have better, higher quality (that is, more usable and useful) financial information upon which to make decisions and with which to fulfill its role as the Trustees of the Presbytery.

As far as the committees are concerned, one serious area of concern is the nominating process and the Nominating Committee. On more than one occasion, people expressed disapproval with the nominating process; that is, a person is nominated to a position at the May meeting, is elected at the October meeting, and is installed at the next May meeting, with the expectation that the elected person attend the Oct. through May meetings as a means of training for his/her position. This process has not been successful and the Nominating Committee has not been able to fill the slate of needed nominations. In fact, the Nominating Committee itself is not fully functional and Steve has had to approach people himself to fill open positions. In short, the process of constituting the Nominating Committee and the process of nominating, electing, training, and installing people both need to be revised.

Related to this, I frequently heard a strong request for a Manual on Administrative Operations. People have expressed that they do not know what the policies and procedures are for their working group or for the Leadership Team. The lack of a Manual on Administrative Operations and/or a compilation of policies and procedures for the working groups and Leadership Team has been a liability, not only with regard to the working group's productivity, but also in recruiting new people to serve. I understand that this situation is being corrected, and I suggest it be given a very high priority. In addition, I would recommend that the position

descriptions for the various leadership positions be reviewed and revised if necessary, and in some cases created.

By way of closing comments, I would offer the following:

1. The Presbytery seems to be experiencing transition pains; that is, many are living according to the old structure which was a top down structure where the Presbytery had the responsibility for taking the initiative and providing leadership, resources, and programs, yet the new structure is a bottom up structure where the local church and individuals are responsible for taking the initiative, provide leadership and programs, and seek out resources and make connections. In addition, under the new structure people/churches are required to make connections themselves with other churches/people to work with, or do joint projects with, whereas the Presbytery did this in the old structure. People/churches are slowly adapting to this new way. However, it takes a long time to change the culture of an institution, and I would suggest that it is too soon to make a definitive judgment on this new structure.

2. People need time to adjust. They also need help adjusting. So, it would probably be helpful if in this transition period, people who see a need or want something to happen, but can't take the lead themselves, were to reach out to others and ask them to take the lead. For example, if the Leadership Team were to decide it would be beneficial to have a program on church development and there is sufficient interest for such a program, yet the members of the Leadership Team don't have the time to do it themselves, they could reach out to someone in the Presbytery and ask that person or persons to take the lead on putting on such a program. Basically, I think it would be helpful in this transition period to have people who have ideas, yet who may not have much time, take the initiative to reach out to and request help from other people who may have time.

3. I am guardedly optimistic for the Cayuga-Syracuse Presbytery. This is predicated upon my experience of you as a group of people who are sincerely interested in seeing the Presbytery succeed in its mission and its churches grow by carrying out the Great Commission, and who I think have the energy and commitment to do the work that needs to be done. There is no fatal flaw in the structure you have chosen. However, it is a labor-intensive structure, and will require a change in behavior and widespread participation, including involving people who may not have been involved recently or before, and commitment to bring what you gave birth to three years ago through its infancy. It will also require you to be bold, take risks, and leaps of faith like you did recently with the funding of Vanderkamp. You have the talent. You have the resources, human, financial,* and spiritual. I think that rooted in and through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit, and by your laboring together and supporting one another in this vineyard, you can make this structure work.

* What I mean by this is that you have a significant amount of funds in savings and investments, which could be used to provide programs (e.g., evangelism, church transformation, church development, youth/young adult ministry, leadership development, stewardship) for equipping the churches to carry out the Great Commission, or perhaps even a new church start or two depending on how the PCUSA does this.

4. Two primary reasons for moving to the new structure were declining participation/membership and declining revenues. Neither of these trends has been reversed or even plateaued. I am also aware that this structure was adopted with the notion that it would not

necessarily be permanent, but rather was to be considered transitional. It was to be thought of more along the lines of a prototype than an archetype. Three suggestions/ideas I heard from different quarters were to: 1) eliminate the Presbytery altogether; 2) think about merging with another Presbytery; and 3) share the Stated Clerk's position and the Communicator position with another Presbytery. I think these suggestions have merit and would suggest a task force (or whatever you want to call it) be appointed by the Leadership Team to explore these alternatives and others that may arise.

It may be that the Presbytery has moved below the size threshold with regard to membership and number of churches where it is financially or economically wise/prudent to continue trying to go it alone and/or with the existing boundaries. The financial and human resource demands on the individual churches and their congregations may be too great and the opportunity cost may be too high to still be justifiable. At this point, and given the trends within the churches and the Presbytery, as well as those in central upstate New York, it may be wiser/more prudent to look at joining forces and resources with others (including possibly other denominations). It would seem reasonable to begin by looking at the Utica and Susquehanna Valley Presbyteries since you already have gone down this path by sharing a bookkeeper, but other contiguous Presbyteries should also be considered. And, of course, the Synod of the Northeast should be involved in these discussions. This suggestion should not in any way be construed as casting doubt on the viability of the existing structure, but rather be interpreted as gathering information about other options available to the Presbytery, so that it has more complete information with which to make future decisions, such as in a few years hence when you will presumably conduct another evaluation. It is an attempt to see what other options should be on the table, and their relative strengths and weaknesses, when you need to make future decisions about the direction and composition of the Presbytery.

5. I don't know if it is possible given your polity, or if you have already discussed this, but I would suggest the per capita cost structure be examined to see if it might be more appropriate and/or helpful to move to a different means of supporting the Presbytery; for example, a sliding scale or having a certain percentage of a church's budget go to support the broader church. Yes, this would shift more of the financial responsibility to the larger churches, but it would also presumably give smaller struggling churches with some financial relief that they could then spend on strengthening themselves, evangelism, and mission, and thus might lead to a stronger Presbytery overall.

6. One aspect that I would encourage you to think about is the absence of working groups for: 1) leadership development; 2) church development/transformation, evangelism, and new church starts; and 3) stewardship. If two reasons why you adopted this structure were (1) declining membership and participation in the work of the Presbytery and (2) declining funds, and if you are to be caring out the Great Commission, I would think that establishing working groups that directly relate to these areas would be a "no brainer" and made a top priority, especially since you continue to face challenges in these areas.

Finally, I offer the following short story for your contemplation. Perhaps you are familiar with it.

The Monastery

There was a famous monastery that had fallen on hard times. Once a great order, its many buildings had been filled with young monks and its big church had resounded with chant, but

now it was nearly deserted. People no longer came there to be nourished by prayer. A handful of old monks shuffled through the cloisters and praised God with heavy hearts. It was just a matter of time until their community would die out completely.

On the edge of the monastery woods, an old rabbi had built a little hut. He would come there from time to time to fast and pray. No one ever spoke with him, but whenever he appeared, the word would be passed from monk to monk: "The rabbi walks in the woods." And for as long as he was there, the monks would feel sustained by his prayerful presence.

As the leader, the abbot of the monastery agonized over the future looming large on their horizon. It occurred to the abbot to go visit the Rabbi. Perhaps he could offer some word of advice. So one day the abbot decided to visit the rabbi and to open his heart to him. After morning celebration of the Eucharist, he set out through the woods. As he approached the hut, the abbot saw the rabbi standing in the doorway, his arms outstretched in welcome. The rabbi motioned the abbot to enter. In the middle of the room was a wooden table with the Scriptures open on it. They sat there for a moment in the presence of the book, until finally the rabbi said: "You and your brothers are serving God with heavy hearts. You have come to ask a teaching of me. I will give you this teaching, but you can only repeat it once. After that, no one must say it aloud again." The rabbi looked straight at the abbot and said, "The messiah is among you." For a while, all was silent. Then the rabbi said, "Now you must go." The abbot left without a word. The next morning, the abbot called his monks together in the chapter room. He told them he had received a teaching from "the rabbi who walks in the woods" and that this teaching was never again to be spoken aloud. Then he looked at each of his brothers and said, "The rabbi said that the messiah is among us!" In the days and weeks and months that followed, the old monks pondered this riddle, and wondered what it could mean. The messiah is one of US? Could he possibly have meant one of us five here at the monastery? If that is the case, which one?

Do you suppose he meant the Abbot? If he meant anyone, he must have meant the Abbot. He has been our leader for more than a generation. On the other hand, he might have meant Brother Thomas. Certainly Thomas is a holy man. Everyone knows and respects Brother Thomas' keen spirituality and insight. Certainly he could not have meant Brother Elred. Elred gets crotchety at times. But when you look back on it, Elred is almost always right, often VERY right. Maybe the rabbi did mean Brother Elred. But surely not Brother Phillip. Phillip is so passive, a real nobody. But then, almost mysteriously, he has a gift for somehow always being there when you need him. Maybe Phillip is the messiah. Of course, the rabbi couldn't have meant me. He couldn't possibly have meant me. I am just an ordinary person. But, what if he DID mean me? Suppose I am the messiah, the one to save our monastery. O God, not me. I couldn't possibly do or be that important, could I?

As they contemplated in this manner, the old monks began to treat each other with extraordinary respect on the off chance that one among them might really be the Messiah. And on the off, off chance that each monk himself might be the Messiah, they began to treat themselves with extraordinary respect. As time went by, the monks began to treat one another with a very special reverence. There was a gentle, whole-hearted, human quality about them now which was hard to describe but easy to notice. They lived with one another as men who had finally found something. But they prayed the scriptures together as men who were always looking for something.

Now, because the forest in which it was situated was beautiful, it so happened that people did still occasionally come to visit the monastery. They came to picnic on its tiny lawn, to wander along some of the paths, even now and then to go into the dilapidated sanctuary

of the chapel to meditate. Hardly knowing why, they began to come back to the monastery more frequently -- to picnic, to play, and to pray. As they did so, without even being conscious of it, they sensed this aura of extraordinary respect that now began to surround the five old monks, and seemed to radiate out from them and permeate the place. There was something strangely attractive, even compelling about it.

Occasional visitors found themselves deeply moved by the life of these monks. They began to bring friends to show them this very special place. Their friends also brought their own friends. Before long, people were coming from far and wide to be nourished by the prayer life of the monks. Some of the younger men who came to visit started talking more with the old monks. After a while one asked if he could join them. Then another. And then another. More and more young men were asking, once again, to become part of the community. Within a few years, the monastery had once again become a thriving order and, thanks to the rabbi's gift, a vibrant center of light and spirituality in that area.

“The Monastery” is found in the Prologue of M. Scott Peck’s book, *The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace*.