

SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY PRESBYTERY
Report of the Committee on Ministry
September 16, 2017

MOTIONS FOR ASSEMBLY ACTION:

1. COM recommends to Susquehanna Valley Presbytery that Minister of Word and Sacrament Carol M. Wilson be granted Honorable Retirement effective November 13, 2017. Rev. Wilson is Pastor for Charlotte Valley Presbyterian Church in Davenport NY.

2. COM recommends to Susquehanna Valley Presbytery that the attached Terms of Call for 2017 be approved. (Clergy for whom we have not received information will have to be approved later.)

3. COM recommends to Susquehanna Valley Presbytery that an Administrative Commission be formed according to Book of Order G-3.0303e to work with the Hobart Presbyterian Church, and be empowered to assume original jurisdiction if necessary.

e. assume original jurisdiction in any situation in which it determines that a session cannot exercise its authority. After a thorough investigation, and after full opportunity to be heard has been accorded to the session, the presbytery may conclude that the session of a congregation is unable or unwilling to manage wisely its affairs, and may appoint an administrative commission with the full power of session. This commission shall assume original jurisdiction of the existing session, if any, which shall cease to act until such time as the presbytery shall otherwise direct.

Rationale: On Oct. 2, 2016, the SVP Cabinet had set up an Administrative Review meeting with Hobart Session members and Treasurer (3 couples and one other person), and the Stated Clerk, a Cabinet member and a COM representative.

- There were no stated Session meetings, but meetings called informally after worship (although these were more than quarterly).
- There had been no Clerk of Session since Kate Bolger's resignation after 2013, but someone had been taking minutes and said they were willing to be a "clerk in training" – however, that person and her husband left the church after something upset them two months later in December.
- For the Oct. 2016 Administrative Review, the missing Session Minutes book had been found, but the Church Register is still missing.
- Last year the Session elders thought there might have been another Stated Supply contract signed with Rev. Bert More, but were never able to locate it, and it was never sent to the COM for approval.
- The Session elders reported worship attendance of about 10-12 persons in Oct. 2016, but that is reportedly down to just a few.
- Those remaining connected to the church seem to also comprise the membership of the Session, and it is unclear if there have been elections or terms of office.
- The COM and its members have heard verbal concerns from the community and neighboring churches about the Hobart church and its leadership for many months.

4. COM recommends that the Hobart Church pulpit be declared vacant effective October 1, 2017, and Rev. Bert More then be placed on the roll of “at-large” members.

Rationale: COM never received the annual contract for Stated Supply with the Hobart Church for 2016 to approve – which concern had been brought up at the Oct. 2, 2016 Administrative Review meeting - and has never received a contract for Stated Supply with the Hobart Church for 2017. The basic Presbyterian polity requirements of not only leading worship but moderating stated Session meetings, making sure there is a Clerk of Session and that minutes are properly recorded and presented to the presbytery for review, and communicating with the Committee on Ministry have not been met.

ACTIONS TAKEN BY COM ON BEHALF OF THE PRESBYTERY:

Transfer of Earl Arnold (honorably retired) to SVP from Cayuga-Syracuse.

Approved renewal of Interim Pastor Contract for Cheryl Ann Elfond/Horseheads (Geneva Presbytery) for 12 months beginning August 1, 2017 with changed terms (money allocated differently). Workdays Sunday – Thursday, with Sunday – Tuesday in Horseheads (may work from home on sermon preparation & administrative tasks Wednesday & Thursday). Removed allowances for Synod NE responsibilities (had been on SNE PJC).

COMPENSATION

\$ 23,112 Annual cash salary (bimonthly payments to 403b account)

\$ 25,920 Housing Allowance

\$ 49,032 Effective Salary

\$ 17,896 Board of Pension dues

REIMBURSED EXPENSES

\$ 6,955 Continuing Education and books

\$ 1,780 Professional expenses

\$ 3,750 Social Security offset

Study Leave: 2 weeks (including 2 Sundays)

Vacation 6 weeks (including 4 Sundays)

11 standard holidays (New Year’s through Christmas Day & day after)

Approved renewal of part-time contract (20 hours/week) between George Carruth, Commissioned Lay Pastor, and Cincinnatus First Presbyterian Church, effective June 20, 2017-June 19, 2018:

The CLP Contract clarified what is an emergency & whether mileage was from church or from his home (Syracuse area) to do pastoral care. 30 days notice by either party to end contract. Ministry Priorities were listed as:

Provide Sunday Worship Leadership each Sunday including a children’s sermon

- Officiate at Communion, weddings, baptisms, funerals and special services.

Pastoral Care and Visitation according to the following priorities:

- Be available via phone or email in case of emergency situation
- Hospital visitation, including surgery and emergency visits
- Homebound visitation when there is a crisis situation
- Help session and congregation with electronic communication
- Elder Training

- Follow up visits with potential members, new worshipers

Attend the Following Committee Meetings: (Bible Studies etc.)

- Regularly on the following schedule:
- Session (meets on 2nd Tuesday at 7:00)
- Congregational meetings (annual meeting is in late January/early February)
- Teach an adult Bible Study or adult Sunday School (to be determined with session)

Presbytery Meetings with an elder commissioner – when possible

Community Responsibilities

- Attend major church dinners and events open to the community
- Participate in Church Alliance services at his discretion

COMPENSATION

\$ 20,865 Annual cash salary (biweekly payments)

REIMBURSED EXPENSES

\$ 700 Continuing Education and books

\$ 2,000 Travel (mileage IRS rate) & Professional expenses

\$ 1,596 Social Security offset (7.65%)

Study Leave: 2 weeks (including 2 Sundays)

Vacation 4 weeks (including 5 Sundays)

*Will serve as an employee of the congregation and should be issued an IRS W-2 form. The church pays the employer portion of Social Security on unreimbursed compensation. The church must withhold the employee portion of federal, state and local taxes. In addition, he should be added to the congregation's Worker's Compensation coverage.

Approved a contract for Charles J. Colton as “Pulpit Pastor” for the Conklin Presbyterian Church to provide preaching from June 11 through December 31, 2017, to be compensated at the rate of \$200 per Sunday (including mileage). Colton, who is a professor at Davis College, describes himself as a “Reformed Baptist” and promised to follow a Reformed model of worship (including Confession of Sin, Affirmation of Faith).

Note: COM anticipates approving at its Oct. 3rd meeting the contract for **Becky Kindig** to provide pastoral care for the Conklin Presbyterian Church, on an average of 5 hours weekly, to be compensated at the rate of \$200 per week, from July 1 – Dec. 31, 2017. (Rev. Robert Peak is the appointed Moderator of the Conklin Session.)

Concurred with **Dissolution of Interim Pastoral Relationship between Dale Francis and Stamford Presbyterian Church effective August 31, 2017**, ending the Interim contract several months early. Stamford's Mission Study was completed and their “Ministry Information Form” is posted on Church Leadership Connection looking for a part-time pastor.

Appointed Moderators for churches without a pastor: Rev. Kimberly Chastain for Ross Memorial, Binghamton, Rev. Robert Heinle for Immanuel, Binghamton, Rev. Marena Schindler-Vittorio for Stamford.

FOR ASSEMBLY INFORMATION:

Minimum Terms of Call for 2018 were already approved by Presbytery at the Nov. 19, 2016 meeting (as part of 5 year package to try to equalize Minimum Terms of Call between those with

manse and those with housing allowance). For compensation packages providing a manse, 2018 cash salary minimum is \$35,574; for housing allowance, salary & housing minimum is \$48,662. Churches are reminded that a 1.5% cost of living adjustment (COLA) is recommended, and that merit increases for exceptional work, or leadership training (e.g. earning an advanced degree) are also recommended. For 2018, the Presbyterian Board of Pensions announced that medical dues will be going up ½ percent, to a rate of 37% for member only medical, pension & death/disability benefit.

The Committee on Lay Preaching reported to COM that Rev. Lisa Ruth Mays offered a summer class on Marriage and Baptism, which Marsha Muller (CLP, Deposit) completed.

COM received reports from Interim Pastors: James Hicks at Dryden, Lisa Heckman at Owego, Dale Francis at Stamford.

Recommended to Cabinet that Rev. Julie Jensen receive a Leadership Development Grant to help attend the Stewardship Kaleidoscope conference in St. Petersburg FL Sept. 25-27.

Exit Interviews: Held an Exit Interview with Dale Francis, and will schedule an Exit interview with the Stamford Church. Realized that although an Exit Interview was held when Lisa Ruth Mays left Walton, we still needed to have an Exit Interview with the Walton Session (now scheduled for Sept. 19th).

Proposed Vision for Partnership Congregations Feedback following the March 18, 2017 SVP Assembly on how churches might resource each other indicated that meetings during lunch at assembly were not desirable, nor is trying to insert conversations into the morning meeting time at assembly. A new survey will be sent to see if churches are interested in gathering in clusters either geographically or according to topic/interest, and what date/time framework might work for them. [Note: Reminder – there are no longer COM Liaisons assigned to each church. COM is trying to resource churches in transition, churches experiencing conflict, and smaller membership churches.]

COM established criteria to be on the list of churches eligible to use Ruling Elders commissioned for “Eucharistic Service”:

- 1) Session has to request
- 2) The church is without pastoral leadership (installed, interim, stated supply)

Boundary Awareness trainings: COM Policy is that new pastors should have such training in their first year, and then every five years. Utica Presbytery offered Boundary Awareness Training on July 25th, which several SVP members attended. The UCC Susquehanna Association will offer training Monday Oct. 23rd at Homer Congregational, 9 AM – 3 PM, cost \$75. COM decided that we can recognize Boundary Awareness training offered by sister presbyteries and sister denominations (Formula of Agreement), but will have to decide on other training on a case-by-case basis.

COM Policies and Procedures: The team of Mark Montfort, Bea Mooney, Doug Hatch, and Jim Martin has been meeting again and will present their work to COM this fall. COM will then

have to recommend action to the full Presbytery. It will involve a “do-over” – eliminating old Policies and adopting new ones. There will also be a distinction between a “policy” – more formal and has to be approved by the presbytery, and a “process” – the more informal way COM recommends handling things, which can be changed within the committee itself.

Rev. James Hicks, who was honorably retired in Susquehanna Valley Presbytery but who transferred membership to Geneva Presbytery, will be completing his Interim work at Dryden Presbyterian Church. Their Pastor Nominating Committee has been hard at work, but they are seeking a temporary Interim to tide them over between Jim leaving and a new pastor beginning work. Rev. Doug Hatch has been working with their PNC.

Available Interims

Interim Pastoral Leadership is officially found through Church Leadership Connection (ministers who are open to Interim work and who include New York among their geographic choices), and through unofficial networking by talking with other upstate NY presbyteries and to Interim Ministers. Interim Ministry is not meant to be a “place holder” but to intentionally lead a church through the evaluations and challenges of transition.

- There are a limited number of qualified Interims willing to serve
- Some available Interims are not interested because SVP doesn't offer a competitive salary package
- Some available Interims are not interested because our churches are rural and isolated
- Some Interims have already accepted other positions by the time they are contacted
- Interims cannot self-refer unless a church posts an MIF seeking an Interim with Louisville's Church Leadership Connection (CLC)
- COM Co-Moderators cannot just do a search for available interims willing to serve in Central New York, but have to request a list from CLC
- Even if a church doesn't want to go through a formal CLC posting to find an Interim, they need to have Job Description and Compensation package ready.

COM has made arrangements for 5 “neutral pulpits” for a Pastor Nominating Committee to be able to experience worship leadership by a final candidate. When the candidate comes from out-of-state, COM also arranges for an interview with COM the same weekend. Even after bringing in a candidate for a “neutral pulpit”, either the candidate or the PNC may discern this is not the right “call” after all.

COM is still developing the working areas of the new 3 team structure. The **Transition team** is responsible for making sure that all the churches in pastoral transition are taken care of and have COM reps working with them. The **Small Churches team** is focusing on the needs of our smallest churches – the tiniest ones don't have regular pastoral leadership. The **Mediation/Conflict team** is making sure we have trained individuals who can resource congregations and publicize how churches can find trained support.

COM will be contacting those clergy in specialized/validated ministry (e.g Campus Minister), who are required to report annually.