

DIGEST
65th Stated Meeting of The Presbytery of New Hope
July 19, 2005
Covenant Presbyterian Church, Durham, NC
Attendance

| | |
|------------------------|----------|
| Ministers | 104 |
| Corresponding Members | 4 |
| Elders | 120 |
| Educators | 2 |
| CLP/Lay Pastors | 7 |
| Lay Members of Council | 4 |
| Candidate/Inquirer | 6 |
| Visitors | 120 |
| Staff | <u>7</u> |
| Total | 374 |

Call to Order

Reverend Mary Harris Todd, Moderator, opened the meeting with prayer.

Docket

The Docket was approved as presented with the addition of the materials in the supplemental docket.

Welcome by Hosts

Reverend Jimmie Hawkins, Pastor, welcomed the Presbytery on behalf of the Session of Covenant Presbyterian Church.

Introduction of First Time Commissioners

First time elder commissioners were introduced and welcomed. An orientation was available for all elders prior to the meeting.

Appointment of Standing Committees

The following persons were elected to serve on the committees as noted:

Resolutions: Ministers Marilyn Hedgpeth and Matt Hardin and Elders Mary Shelby and Sandy Walton.

Attendance: Minister Ed Donnell and Elders Bette Langley and Bettye Bryant.

Seating of Corresponding Members

The following corresponding members were seated: Elder Henry Gregory III (Presbytery of the Peaks), Rev. Janise Smith (Presbytery of Inland Northwest), Rev. Judy Pidcock (Presbytery of Genesee Valley), Rev. Dennis Sebesan (Salem Presbytery) and Rev. Tara Woodard-Lehman (Philadelphia Presbytery), Patricia Gill Turner (Board of Pensions Regional Representative), Vicky McQuery (Career and Pastoral Counseling Services).

Report of the Stated Clerk

Elder Barbara Campbell Davis

The Presbytery Received the following:

1. Minutes of the Commission to Ordain and Install Elizabeth Connette as Pastor of Western Boulevard Presbyterian Church, Raleigh on February 27, 2005.
2. Minutes of the Commission to Install Kerri Hefner as Associate Pastor for First Presbyterian Church, Greenville on February 27, 2005.
3. Minutes of the Commission to Install Debbie Osterhoudt as Associate Pastor of Wake Forest Presbyterian Church on February 27, 2005.
4. Minutes of the Commission to Install Andrew Martinez as Pastor of Outer Banks Presbyterian Church, Kill Devil Hills on March 6, 2005.
5. Minutes of the Commission to Install Ronald McCracken as Pastor of William and Mary Hart Presbyterian Church, Tarboro, on April 3, 2005
6. Minutes of the Commission to Install Jane Wilson as Associate Pastor of White Memorial Presbyterian Church, Raleigh on April 10, 2005.
7. Minutes of the Commission to Install Deborah Kirk as Associate Pastor of Hudson Memorial Presbyterian Church, Raleigh on April 10, 2005.

8. Minutes of the Commission to Install Monte Johnston as Pastor of Clayton Presbyterian Church on April 17, 2005.
9. Report of the Administrative Commission for Manantial de Vida Hispanic Fellowship
10. Report of the Administrative Commission for Clayton Presbyterian Fellowship.
11. Report of the Administrative Commission for Goldsboro Korean Presbyterian Church.

The Presbytery approved the following:

1. That Candidate Cader Howard, under care of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry be ordained as Minister of Word and Sacrament on July 10, 2005 at the Kirk of Kildaire on behalf of the Greater Atlanta Presbytery.
2. That Candidate Kristin Moore, under care of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry be ordained as Minister of Word and Sacrament at Hudson Memorial Presbyterian Church on August 7, 2005 on behalf of Cincinnati Presbytery.
3. The report of the Sessional Records Committee.

PRAYER CONCERNS:

1. Mrs. Roberta Howell (Elder Emeritus, Timothy Darling) who is recuperating from a broken toe.
2. Norman MacDowell (HR) who is recovering from surgery.
3. Phil Styers (Vacancy Counselor) who is recovering from surgery.
4. Tolokun Omokunde (Pastor, Timothy Darling) who is recovering from a recent illness.
5. Betty Woodruff (Elder, Bethlehem Rocky Mount) who is recovering from recent illness.
6. Lee Walton (Elder, Boyd Memorial) who is recovering from heart surgery.
7. Jerry Slaymaker (Elder, Cary) who is recovering from knee surgery.
8. Shirley McNeil (Retired Christian Educator) who is recuperating from surgery and complications.
9. Wylie Smith (Former Minister Member of New Hope) who is recovering from cancer surgery.
10. Jim Ferry (Pastor, Garner First) who is recovering from eye surgery.
11. David McDonald (Pastor Roanoke Rapids, First) whose brother, Wayne, has been diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma.
12. Claude Godwin (Administration, OGA) who is recovering from knee replacement surgery.
13. Jeff Sockwell (Pastor, West New Bern) whose mother is recovering from hip replacement surgery.
14. Joyce Bauer (Elder, Hudson Memorial) who is recovering from knee surgery.
15. Barbara Campbell Davis (Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk) whose son, Chris, is recovering from a recent hospitalization.

CONGRATULATIONS:

1. To Eno Presbyterian Church as they celebrate their 25th Anniversary on September 11, 2005.
2. Drew Clark (Pastor, Englewood) and wife Missy on the birth of their daughter, Rachel Anne, on February 25, 2005.
3. David Smith (Pastor Stanley White & Littleton) and wife Wendy on the birth of their son, Christopher David Smith, on April 3, 2005.
4. Ryan Rasmussen (AoP Goldsboro First) and wife Michelle on the birth of their son, Nathan Ryan Rasmussen, on May 5, 2005.
5. Peter Park (Pastor Cornerstone) and wife Jenny on the birth of their son, Jonah Park, on May 12, 2005.
6. Cary Presbyterian Church on their 50th Anniversary.
7. Sarah Tudor Thompson (Educator at Western Boulevard) and husband Jody, on the birth of their son Edward Russell, on May 26, 2005.
8. All the older adults honored at the meeting.
9. Graduates from high school and college

CONDOLENCES TO:

1. Frank Scott (Elder, Timothy Darling) whose wife, Mary, died on March 2, 2005.
2. The family of Margie Rinehart (Charter member of West Haven) who died on March 4, 2005 at the age of 105.
3. The family of Delores Johnson (Elder, Timothy Darling) who died on March 4, 2005.
4. The family of Junius "Pete" Grimes III (Elder, St. Giles) who died on March 5, 2005.
5. The family of Roy Bass (Elder Emeritus, Timothy Darling) who died on March 9, 2005.
6. John Etheredge (Elder, Mt. Pisgah) whose brother, Joe Etheredge, died on March 11, 2005.
7. The family of Bertha Wilson (one of the oldest members of St. Paul) who died on March 24, 2005 at the age of 96.
8. The family of Tracy Lynn Dickey (sister of Elders Stewart and Michael Dickey of Timothy Darling) who died on April 7, 2005.
9. The family of Mary Hagan Alston (Lay Pastor, Elder Nahalah) who died on April 24, 2005.
10. Elizabeth Day (LP, Elder St. Giles) whose brother, Earl Morris, died on May 10, 2005.
11. Harriet Jennings (Elder, White Memorial Raleigh) whose mother, Ruth Jarvis Tutterow, died on May 17, 2005.
12. Nancy Rozak (Educator, Westminster Durham) whose brother, Doug Sullivan, died on May 20, 2005.

13. The Family of Etta May Holding Eason (Charter Member of West Haven) who died on May 26, 2005.
14. The family of Joseph Edward Chappell, Jr. (Elder, Englewood) who died on May 28, 2005.
15. The family of William Gordon (HR) who died on May 29, 2005.
16. David Wiseman (MAL) on the death of his father, John, on May 30, 2005.
17. George Johnson (HR) whose wife, Betty, died on June 25, 2005.
18. The Family of Bettina Wilson (Elder of former Trinity, Smithfield) who died on July 2, 2005.
19. Candace Worth (Pastor Plymouth, Calvary Swan Quarter) and the Worth Family whose Grandmother, Candace Olive Worth (Member of First Presbyterian Church, Raleigh), 98, died on July 10, 2005.
20. Janice Smith (Elder, First Rocky Mount) on the death of her husband, Linwood, on July 20, 2005.
21. John Newell (Elder, Oxford) on the death of his wife, Patsy, on July 21, 2005.
22. The family of Linwood Dupree (Elder Mt. Pleasant, Willow Spring) who died on July 26, 2005.

Report of Nominating Committee

Reverend Bettie Kirkpatrick, Moderator

The following persons were elected to serve as follows:

Commissioners to Synod Assembly 2005:

Ministers: Omotolokun Omokunde (Timothy Darling)

Marla Cates (Prison Ministry)

Elders: Amy Douglas (Cotton Memorial)

Donna Frederick (Northgate)

Division for Leadership Development:

Class of 2005 - Curtis Harper/Susan Dunlap

Committee on Ministry:

Class of 2006 - Allyn Testroet

Class of 2007 - Tracy Walston-Bailey

Preparation for Ministry:

Class of 2005 - Richard McKellar

Class of 2006 - Jack Simonds

Class of 2007 - Mary Shelby

Communications: Class of 2006 - Margo Hausmann

Christian Education: Class of 2005 - James Lawton

Ministries of Mission: Class of 2007 - Sue Hinman

Sessional Records: Class of 2007 - Kathy Barnes

Self-Development of People:

Class of 2007 - Raymond Privott/ Desire Volkwijn

Committee on Representation: Class of 2006 - Edith Lee

Campus Ministry:

Class of 2007: Karla Miller, Betty Connette

Report from Board of Pensions

Patricia Gill Turner, Regional Representative

Patricia Gill Turner gave a report on the benefit changes for 2005 for participants in the Board of Pensions. New resource: *Stewardship of Life* - Living Wills and Health Care Power of Attorney. No increase in medical dues for 2006. Pat was available for individual consultation.

Worship

The worship service was led by Reverend Jimmie Hawkins, with members of the Covenant Presbyterian Church choir and liturgical dancers. Communion was offered to those present. The offering of \$1,714.27 will be presented to Housing for New Hope.

Report of the Emerging Issues Task Force

Reverend Ed McLeod

A report from the Task Force on Emerging Issues was given. More information will be presented at the October 16, 2005 stated meeting of Presbytery. (See attached report)

Report of Congregational Ministries

Reverend Juli Gicker-Anderson, Moderator

A skit was presented for the upcoming Growing Together educational conference to be held on September 17, 2005 at Johnston Community College, Smithfield.

Awards were presented to Older Adults, nominated by the congregations of the presbytery by Carole McCartney, Moderator of Older Adults Committee.

Report of Council

Reverend Leigh Gillis, Moderator

Report given by David McDonald, Vice-Moderator

The presbytery approved the following:

1. That the Presbytery make a donation to the Chamber of Commerce of Rocky Mount to help fund the Clean Team.
2. That information for the annual 2005 American Correctional Chaplains Association Southwestern Conference be posted on the web site.
3. Request from the Session of North Raleigh Presbyterian Church to sell part of the property that would not be used for future construction. The funds from the sale will help to reduce the debt of the church.
4. Request from the Session of Roxboro Presbyterian Church to borrow up to \$250,000 to complete renovations and make the campus handicap accessible.
5. Request from the Session of Blacknall Memorial Presbyterian Church, Durham, to encumber their property to secure a loan of up to \$2,500,000 to renovate their facilities and for mission projects around the world.
6. That information regarding the Moratorium on the Death Penalty be posted on the web site.
7. That information regarding the NC Council of Churches Legislative Seminar be posted on the web site and encourage attendance.
8. That the Stated Clerk, Barbara Campbell Davis write to the NC Legislature to express New Hope Presbytery's opposition to the Lottery and encourage each church to write letters also.
9. Request of the session of Mt. Pisgah Presbyterian Church, Rocky Mount, to acquire a loan in the amount of \$15,000 for renovations in the sanctuary and fellowship hall.
10. Request from the Session of Young Memorial Presbyterian Church, Manson, to receive a grant for up to \$6,000 for improvements to the church property.
11. That the asking price for the property formerly known as the Trinity Presbyterian Church, Smithfield, be lowered in order to secure interested buyers. Accepted an offer to purchase the property in the amount of \$100,000 for a Lease/Option to buy contract.
12. Request from the Bethlehem Presbyterian Church, Mebane, for financial assistance. Assistance will consist of \$10,000 for 1st year; \$5,000 for 2nd year; \$2,500 for 3rd year with provision set by the council to be met by the church.
13. Request of the Session of Roanoke Island Presbyterian Church, Manteo, for permission to act on purchasing property or manse if the way be clear.
14. Request of the Session of Cotton Memorial Presbyterian Church, Henderson, to encumber its property in order to secure a loan for up to \$315,000 for improvements and land purchase.
15. Request from Cornerstone Presbyterian Church, Cary, to encumber their property in order to secure a loan of up to \$1.5 million dollars that will fund construction of new facilities and retire their existing indebtedness.
16. That the money received from the sale of Camp New Hope be placed under the management of the New Hope Presbytery Foundation with the invested principal to be restricted and the investment proceeds to be used to predominately fund outdoor ministry scholarships. And, furthermore, that the New Hope Presbytery Foundation set up guidelines for the disbursement of the funds.
17. That the Presbytery of New Hope invest a total of \$5,000 with the Self Help Credit Union in two \$2,500 certificates of deposit for a period of 2.5 years.
18. That a Restricted Fund in Memory of Mary Alston be set up with collection of funds limited to one year. Funds would be used for purchase of textbooks for persons enrolled in the Lay Pastor program.
19. Request of the Session of New Hope Presbyterian Church, Willow Springs, to encumber their property to secure a loan of up to \$1.5 million dollars to be used to build a new multipurpose building and day care and make additional needed repairs and improvements to the property and existing buildings pending action of the congregation and payoff of the loan to Presbyterian Loan and Investment Program.
20. The following persons serve on the Task Force to Study Emerging Issues before the church: Ministers; Drew Clark, Joe Harvard, Deborah Kirk, Ed McLeod, Jimmie Hawkins, David Pfleiderer, Brett Webb Mitchell, David Huffman, Thomas Wilson, David Keck, Juli Gicker Anderson, Leigh Gillis, Bert Moore, Ed Conner, Jim McKinnon, Mark Davidson and Elders: Robert Owens, Brenda Brown, Nancy Rozak, John Etheredge, Willem van Eck, Patti Pritchard, Douglas Hammer, John Thompson.
21. That the Presbytery of New Hope Mission Budget for 2005 be set at \$1,834,000.
22. The Proposed Challenge Budget for 2006 be set at \$1,962,745.
23. A salary increase for the Presbytery Staff of 4% (3% cost of living and 1% raise) for the year 2006.

24. The following persons serve on the Task Force for Camp Albemarle: Ministers:, William Neely, Jim McKinnon, John "Rocky" Stone, Christopher Edmonston and Elders: Jerry Johnson, Russell Proctor , Martha Strayhorn, Mary Ann Holderness.
25. The audit for 2004.

**REPORT OF COMMITTEE
ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY**

Reverend Drew Clark, Moderator

The following were received as Inquirers:

Esther Acolatse (Westminster, Durham); Jocelyn Cadwallader (Cary); Lindsay Wells Perry (Kirk of Kildaire); Joette Steiger (Western Boulevard)

The following were received as Candidates with reception:

Ryan Moore (Blacknall Memorial) was presented by Reverend Peter Hausman; Marian Draffin (Westminster, Durham) was presented by Reverend Paul Ransford; Alan Koeneke (Blacknall Memorial) was presented by Dr. June Van Bruggen and Johanna Nygard (Kirk of Kildaire) was presented by Elder Linda Bruggers. All applicants were examined and declared candidates by Reverend Mary Haris Todd. Reverend Allan Poole charged the applicants and gave the blessing for their candidacy.

The following Candidates were Certified ready to receive a call: Susan Edwards Lewis (White Memorial, Raleigh); Amanda Covington (White Memorial, Raleigh); Barry Chance (Smithfield, First)

Rebecca Hylander has been removed from the process at her request.

The following persons have been appointed as readers for Ordination Exams for 2005:

Reverend John Causey; Reverend Drew Clark; Reverend Conway Lanford; Elder Iris Olinger

The Committee has the following persons under care:

Inquirers - 30; Candidates - 13; Candidates ready to received a call - 3; Known applicants - 8

Elder Henderson Rourk gave a presentation from the March 5th group on Vocations in Ministry. He encouraged college graduates to consider attending seminary for one year to see if they feel called to be a Minister of Word and Sacrament.

**Report of Committee on Ministry
Reverend Lynn Stall, Moderator**

Report given by John Hawes, Vice-Moderator

Presbytery approved the following:

Interim Supply:

1. Thomas Wilson and Falkland Presbyterian Church effective January 5, 2005.
2. Paul Fulks and White Memorial Presbyterian Church, Willow Springs, through December 31, 2005.
3. Spottswood Graves and Hollywood Presbyterian Church, Greenville, effective January 1, 2005 through June 30, 2005.

Stated Supply:

1. Steven Braxton and Efland Presbyterian Church effective February 2005 through December 31, 2005.
2. Alexander McGeachy and Selma Presbyterian Church effective June 1, 2005 through May 31, 2006.

Temporary Supply:

1. Bruce Grady and Western Boulevard Presbyterian, Raleigh, effective June 1, 2005 through December 31, 2005.

Certified Lay Pastor:

1. Peggy Rodgers Leggett and Covenant Presbyterian Church, Wilson, effective April 16, 2005 through April 15, 2006.

Parish Associate:

1. Stacy Ikard and Hudson Memorial, Raleigh, effective January 1, 2005 through December 31, 2005.
2. Phyllis Koehline and University Presbyterian Church, Chapel Hill, effective April 1, 2005 through December 31, 2005.

Dissolution:

1. Jane Love and Edenton, First Presbyterian Church effective April 1, 2005.
2. Harriet Isbell and New Hope Presbyterian Church, Chapel Hill, effective June 30, 2005.
3. Karla Miller and Peace College effective May 31, 2005.
4. Ward Baggett and Trinity Presbyterian Church, Raleigh, effective April 30, 2005.
5. Jim Lawton and Pinetops Presbyterian Church effective June 30, 2005.
6. Corey Grabar and Hudson Memorial Presbyterian Church, Raleigh, effective August 15, 2005.

Dismissals:

1. David Welton to Tropical Florida Presbytery effective April 1, 2005.
2. Rose Mary Noga Welton to Tropical Florida Presbytery effective April 1, 2005.
3. Mark Scott to Coastal Carolina Presbytery effective April 30, 2005.

Moderators:

1. Boyd Memorial Presbyterian Church - Paul Lang: June 1, 2004 through June 30, 2006.
2. Pinetops Presbyterian Church - Gerry Niece: July 1, 2005 through December 31, 2005.

Approved the following:

1. Karla Miller to Labor Outside the Bounds of The Presbytery of New Hope to minister with youth and children at North Raleigh United Church of Christ, effective June 1, 2005.
2. Plainview Presbyterian Church will have no elder rotation until 2007.
3. Henry D. "Greg" Gregory is Honorably Retired effective March 1, 2005 with reception.
4. Harriet Isbell is Honorably Retired effective July 1, 2005 without reception.
5. Corey Grabar's relationship with Hudson Memorial will change to Part-Time service from June 1, 2005 through August 15, 2005.
6. David Wiseman, and wife Jeannine, to Labor Outside the Bounds of The Presbytery of New Hope to serve as Mission co-workers to Guatemala beginning July 1, 2005 for a three year appointment. (See Web Site)
7. Ministers terms of call for 2005.
8. The call to Janise Matyas Smith to serve as Associate Pastor for Triangle Presbyterian Church, Durham, effective July 18, 2005. Terms are: Salary \$15,000; Housing \$22,000; Medical Supplement \$1,000; Social Security \$2,907; Pension/Medical \$11,780; Accountable Reimbursement \$3,200. Total \$55,887. Four weeks vacation and two weeks continuing education.
9. The call to Dennis Sebesan as Pastor of Little River Presbyterian Church, Hurdle Mills effective September 1, 2005. Terms are: Salary \$30,000 Housing \$10,000; Utilities Allowance \$2,000; Pension/Medical \$13,020; Social Security \$3,213; Accountable Reimbursement \$3,000; Moving expenses \$3,000. Total \$64,233. Four weeks vacation and two weeks continuing education.
10. The call to Tara Woodard-Lehman to serve as Chaplain of Peace College. The effective date of this call is August 1, 2005. Terms are: Salary \$25,000; Housing \$15,000.
11. Judy Pidcock become a minister member of The Presbytery of New Hope effective July 19, 2005.

COMMISSION TO ORDAIN/INSTALL:

1. The Commission to install Dennis Sebesan as Pastor of Little River Presbyterian Church on September 18, 2005 at 11 AM. Members of the Commission: Ministers Debbie Osterhoudt, Mindy Douglas Adams, Bob Fields, and Elders Ann Montgomery, Stephanie Parker, Derek Lindsley and Butch Clark.
2. The Commission to install Janise Smith as Associate Pastor of Trinity Presbyterian Church, Durham, on September 25, 2005 at 4 PM. Members of the commission are Ministers: Ray Cobb, Peter Hausmann and Elders: Gene Brannon, Clint Ingram, and Jack Simonds.

Report of Examinations

Reverend Debbie Osterhoudt, Moderator

Report by Elder Robert Owens and Reverend David Huffman

The examinations of Janise Smith, Dennis Sebesan, Tara Woodard-Lehman, and Judy Pidcock were sustained.

Rite of Retirement

The Rite of Retirement was held for Reverend Henry "Greg" Gregory. Greg was introduced by Reverend Tom Murphy, declared honorably retired by Moderator Mary Harris Todd and his father, Elder Henry Gregory, III, gave the closing prayer.

Report of Outreach Ministries

Reverend Bonnie Pettijohn, Moderator

Reverend Sue Fricks presented the Certificate for Commitment to Peacemaking to the Church of Reconciliation. A report was received from the Self-Development of People Committee.

Pennies for Hunger

A presentation by Reverend Robert Jacobs was heard about the good use for the funds collected as Pennies for Hunger (two-cents a meal). Reverend Jacobs encouraged each congregation to continue this practice and collect funds for the hungry throughout the world.

Report of Leadership Division

Reverend Rick Brand, Moderator

Rick reminded the ministers, educators, and CLP's of the upcoming Retreat to be held on October 9-12, 2005 with Dr. Carol Schweitzer, at the Trinity Center, Salter Path, NC.

Report of Standing Committees

The reports of the standing committees were received and approved.

Adjourn

The 65th Stated Meeting was adjourned with prayer by Moderator Mary Harris Todd at 4:00 PM.

Next Meeting

October 15, 2005

**First Presbyterian Church
New Bern**

Special Note: A total of 84 pounds of non-perishable goods was collected for the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina. **Please remember to bring non-perishable goods to each Stated Meeting of The Presbytery of New Hope.**

Report for Task Force on Emerging Issues
Meeting of New Hope Presbytery
July 19, 2005

Some months ago, our Presbytery Executive issued a general invitation for persons who would like to serve on a "Task Force on Issues that Matter".

That's a fairly provocative title... issues that matter ...and so I responded, thinking I was joining a task force to discuss ACC basketball or the recent American Idol competition.

But, alas, this task force was being assembled to discuss other things...and, more than that, this task force was being assembled to help New Hope Presbytery carry on meaningful dialogue about matters of theological and ecclesiastical consequence.

Specifically, this voluntary task force was assembled to help the churches within the Presbytery and the Presbytery itself navigate some potentially turbulent and divisive waters, and to do so while continuing to maintain a unity of the spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3).

When we gathered for the first time in mid-May we spent some time getting to know one another, and in a moment of inspiration, we elected Jim McKinnon as our moderator. And with regard to the reason we were gathered together in the first place, as a starting point, we are asked to consider three general topics.

a. Presbyterian/Jewish relations, in light of the recent General Assembly actions regarding a congregation in Philadelphia that had a particular ministry of outreach to the Jewish community and the decision to *"initiate a process of phased, selective divestment in multinational corporations operating in Israel, in accordance with General Assembly policy on social investing."*

b. The impending report of the *Task Force on Peace, Purity and Unity*, which is scheduled to be issued in just a few weeks. As

you may know, they have been wrestling for years with matters of Scriptural authority and human sexuality. Unless the task force is able to issue a report that pleases everyone, it will be important for PresbYterians to speak honestly and lovingly about matters over which they might disagree, and so our group will consider how we might help facilitate that sort of healthy conversation.

c. Belhar Confession. If you have heard of the Belhar Confession, then you are a step ahead of where I was until I attended the first gathering of this committee. The Belhar Confession traces its history of the church's struggle against apartheid in South Africa. It is now one of the central documents of the new Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa. It deals with matters of unity and reconciliation and God's justice for the oppressed. It is being studied by Reformed bodies around the world, and was commended by the General Assembly for study in our churches, as a resource to help us reflect on the insidious nature of racism and its effect on the human community.

So, those were the initial matters before us ...matters of how Christians and Jews are to relate to one another, matters of Biblical authority and human sexuality and matters of racism and how to be God's people where such racism still is an affront to God's justice. And that was just the first meeting! Our plate is full.

This is one of those areas where its difficult to know where to begin. And so we decided our first step was to make sure we could talk openly and candidly and lovingly with each other, and so at a meeting in early June, we came together for Bible study, using a model for study that invites full participation by everyone at the table, a model that lends itself not to debate, but mutual upbuilding. Not everyone saw the same things in the text that was before us, but we listened to one another and we grew as a community. .

This is our vision for us as a Presbytery, and while we are not ready with a prescription for how this will be accomplished, we wanted you to know that

we are at work, and it will be our intention to use any mechanisms currently at work in the PresbYtery, such as regional cluster groups, to foster these conversations, or, if a mechanism is not in place in particular areas, we'll be looking for folks who understand the importance of candid, faithful dialogue in a community of mutual forbearance and love.

And actually, one concern I have is whether our task force is truly representative of our PresbYtery. Remember, we simply responded voluntarily to an invitation .. we were not handpicked because we were conservative or liberal or had any particular expertise in these areas. And so if you are interested in joining us, I assume there are still seats at the table

Some PresbYteries are ahead of us on this. Debbie Kirk, from Hudson Memorial in Raleigh, has come here from the PresbYtery of the James, where these dialogues have been going on for some time. But we are committed to helping our churches and our PresbYtery stay connected to one another as we move through these potentially choppy waters.

My personal goal is that we learn from the Task Force on Peace, Purity and Unity. Though they are an intentionally diverse group...they have come to love and respect each other, valuing the faith commitments they see in each other. And while they may differ on matters of great significance, they have come to see that they are united on matters of eternal significance...that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Unless there are questions, this concludes my report.

submitted by Ed McLeod
FPC, Raleigh