



STATED MEETING OF ALBANY PRESBYTERY

PRE-MEETING PACKET

Saturday, January 28, 2012

Registration and Fellowship begin at 8:30am

Call to Worship and Business Meeting begin at 9:30am

Meal Tickets for lunch are \$6 per person

Please make checks payable to: Westminster Presbyterian Church

Lunch will be served at 12:00pm

Presbyters with dietary restrictions are invited
to bring their own lunch

Hosted by Westminster Presbyterian Church

85 Chestnut Street, Albany, NY 12210

Telephone: 436-8544

website: www.wpcalbany.org

Disabled Access:



- Handicapped parking spaces near Chestnut Street & State Street
- Wheelchair accessible – ramp into the building
- Wheelchair space among the pews
- Handicapped accessible restroom
- Hearing assistance devices

Parking:

We have our own parking lot at 85 Chestnut St. just before the church building. The State Street entrance is the main entrance and opens directly into the back of the sanctuary. Offices are best accessed through the 85 Chestnut St. door, especially during the week. To access the sanctuary from this entrance, go up the stairs one level and follow the signs for the sanctuary.

CHILD CARE is provided without cost to you. It is, however, essential that you make a reservation for your child. Please call the Westminster Church office at 518-436-8544 or email them at: info@wpcalbany.org no later than Friday, January 20th, giving number of children, ages and any special needs. If your plans change after that date, please call to cancel the reservation or to ask if space is available. In the interest of the health of all children and their families who are brought for childcare during Presbytery meetings, please do not bring your child if he or she is showing signs of illness.

THE PRESBYTERY OF ALBANY Stated Meeting – January 28, 2012
Presbytery Telephone 273-4991
Westminster Presbyterian Church, Albany – Church Telephone 436-8544

DOCKET

Notes: New Business must be presented in writing to the Moderator prior to the meal.
Standing Rules & Basic Parliamentary Procedures are available at the Clerk's desk.

8:30 a.m. Gathering and Registration

We Gather in God's Name

9:30 a.m. **We Worship God Together** – Call to Worship, Opening Hymn and Prayer

9:40 a.m. Call to Order – Paul Randall, Moderator
Announcements
Greetings from Host Church – Jim Reisner

We Present our Offerings of Mission and Ministry

Report of the Stated Clerk [pp. 4-5] Dan Rogers
Compile Roll, Seat Corresponding Members, Welcome First Time Attenders
Approval of Meeting Docket as distributed
Approval of Minutes of November 12, 2011, stated meeting as distributed
Act on Consent Agenda – Consent items found in the following reports:
Committee on Ministry [pp.7-9]; and Council [pp.19-20].

10:00 a.m. Peacemaking Task Force Report – Statement of Support for the Occupy Movement
(See Council Report. Presentation only in morning; action to be taken in the afternoon.)

10:15 a.m. Committee on Ministry Report – Part 1 - Tom Gregg [pp.6-11]

Act on Contract for the Rev. Paul Ferenczy (RCA) to serve as Interim Pastor and Moderator at Johnstown and to become a Temporary Member of Presbytery

Overture to General Assembly to approve the Plan of Union of the Bethel Peniel Presbyterian Church and the Granville United Methodist Church.

Cohoes Per Capita
Gloversville Administrative Commission
Terms of Call SECA Adjustment

10:30 a.m. [Order of the Day] Joint Working Group Budget Presentation – David Moore

10:50 a.m. "Flipping the Presbytery" Task Force presentation

Open Space Discussions/Workshops:
Bible Study - Gen. 1:1-2:4a - Priestly Writer, Darwin, Hubble, Dawkins,
McKibben, Global Warming – led by Earl Johnson and Larry Deys

Response to Budget Presentation by Joint Working Group

Occupy Movement Resolution Discussion

Other Open Space discussion topics to be proposed by the body.

- 12:00 p.m. **We Share God’s Good Gifts** – Lunch
- We Continue our Offerings of Mission and Ministry**
- 1:00 p.m. **We Worship God Together**
 Hymn
 Scripture and Sermon – Kathy Gorman-Coombs
 Memorial moment for Leif Erickson
 Memorial moment for William Rambo
 Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper – Jim Reisner and Frances Wattman Rosenau
 Necrology Report
- 2:00 p.m. Speak Out (Opportunity to express views in 1 minute or less)
- 2:15 p.m. [Order of the Day] Nominating Committee Report – Diane Calvanese
 Election of GA Commissioners and YAAD [pp.16-18]
 Other committee elections
- 2:30 p.m. Presentation on Fellowship of Presbyterians – Harry Heintz
- 2:40 p.m. Recognition of Kirianne Riehl’s service as Moderator – Cass Shaw
- 2:45 p.m. General Presbyter’s Report - Cass Shaw
- 2:55 p.m. Committee on Ministry Report – Part 2
 Act on unfinished business from COM Report – Part 1
- 3:15 p.m. Council Report - Lois Hessberg [pp.19-20]
 Standing Rules Task Force
 Act on recommendations from Mission Review Committee
 Act on election to Nominating Committee
 Act on change in date and time of April Stated Meeting
 Act on recommendations from Peacemaking Task Force
- 3:25 p.m. [Order of the Day] Act on proposed Overtures to General Assembly
- On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation of G-2.0402 and G-3.0306 to Clarify the
 Appropriateness of Questions to Officers-elect submitted by Bethel Peniel PC
- On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation of W-4.9000 to Ensure Pastoral Discretion
 submitted by Westminster PC, Albany, and United Church of Greenwich
- 3:50 p.m. Joint CLP/CPM Recommendation concerning Commissioned Ruling Elders – second
 reading and action.
- 3:55 p.m. Unfinished Business / New Business / Miscellaneous Business
- 4:00 p.m. **We Go Out in Christ’s Name and Adjourn as the Church Sent Into the World**

Stated Clerk Report – Pre-Meeting Packet for January 28, 2012

The following is presented for information:

1. The United Presbyterian Church of Schoharie will host the next stated presbytery meeting on Saturday, April 21, 2012, beginning at 9:30 a.m. **Please note that this is a change from the date and time previously approved by Presbytery and this change needs to be approved by Presbytery. See related item of action under the Council Report.**
2. The following are the remaining **Presbytery Stated Meeting dates for 2012:**
 - Friday and Saturday - June 8 and 9 at Silver Bay
 - Tuesday – September 18 at 4:00 p.m. – host TBD
 - Saturday - November 17 at 9:30 a.m. at the Delmar Presbyterian Church
3. Attached are the **Membership Rolls** of Albany Presbytery effective December 31, 2011. Please note the addition of a Certified Christian Educator as required by the current Form of Government.
4. Moderator Paul Randall has appointed the following to serve on the **Administrative Commission for the Oakwood Church:** Teaching Elders Larry Deyss, Beth Illingworth, Alexandra Lusak, and Alfred Siegel; and Ruling Elders Linda O'Malley (Oakwood), Ruth Pierpont (Cornerstone, Lansingburgh), and Margaret Stoner (First United, Troy).
5. As required by the Standing Rules, the following were commissioners to the previous five General Assemblies:

	<u>Teaching Elder Commissioners</u>	<u>Ruling Elder Commissioners</u>
2003	Thomas Parsons Rockwell Falls PC, Lake Luzerne	Eugene Rowland Union PC, Schenectady
2004	John Aldrich First PC, Corinth	Lynn Brown St. Peter's PC, Spencertown
2006	Catherine Kotfila Brunswick PC	Dorothy Rice Hamilton Union PC, Guilderland
2008	Miriam Lawrence Leupold First PC, Albany	Chandlee Gill First United PC, Troy
	Kirianne Riehl Northville United PC	Dan Rogers First United PC, Troy
2010	Lucy Harris First PC, Warrensburg	Joyce Brewer First United PC, Hoosick Falls
	Stewart Pattison Hamilton Union PC, Guilderland	Tara Lindsley First PC, Albany

6. Attached is a report on receipt of **Mission Pledges** by member churches effective December 31, 2011. Additional pledge payments received after December 31, 2011, will be reported in the next quarterly report.

7. Attached is a report on receipt of payment of **Per Capita** by member churches effective December 31, 2011. Late payments received through January 17, 2012, are included.
8. **Membership Cards** have been signed by the Stated Clerk and are available for all Teaching Elder members of Presbytery to pick up at the registration table for the January 28, 2012, Stated Meeting.
9. A **Necrology Report** and **Memorials** for Teaching Elders Leif Erickson and William Rambo will be included in the Meeting Day Packet.

MEMBERSHIP ROLLS OF ALBANY PRESBYTERY (December 31, 2011)

Roll of Active Teaching Elder Members (67)

Rolf Ahlers John Aldridge John Barclay David Bennett Viki Brooks Michael Burkley Holly Cameron Kathleen Chesnut (UCC) Cheryl Colt Timothy Coombs James C. Davis Patricia Davies John Ekman Donna Elia Robert Foltz-Morrison Donna Frischknecht- Jackson	Christopher Garrison Susan Goodin Kathleen Gorman-Coombs Robin Greene Laurence Greenwold Thomas Gregg Lucy Harris Harry Heintz Richard Hoffman Beth Illingworth Kathi Jones Kate Kotfila Ruth E. J. Kuo Miriam Lawrence Leupold Glenn D. Leupold Linda Martin Herbert Mayne	John McAuley Roland MacDonald Jerry McKinney Shannon Meacham Martha Montovani David Moore Elizabeth Shen O'Connor Bonnie Orth Jeffrey Palmer David Park Andrew Paton Richard Patterson Stewart Pattison Cheryl Peaslee (ABC) Jackie Pinkowski Michael Plank Susan Rambo	James Reisner Kirianne Riehl Robert Rose Frances Wattman Rosenau Nadeem Sadiq Kathryn Shaffer Cass Shaw Allen Siebold (UMC) Kathryn Stenta Bebb Wheeler Stone Susan Strang Nicholas TeBordo Gregory Town (RCA) Rebecca Town (RCA) Mary Woodman Pamela Woodman Elaine Fogarty Woroby
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Roll of Honorably Retired Teaching Elder Members (51)

Alan Brokaw Theodore Brothers Fergus Cochran Robert Criswell Steven Cronn Marsha Cutting Larry Deyss Lois Dodge William Dodge Peter Durkee Leif Erickson Eric Fagans Barbara Floryshak	Robert Garvin Douglas Gray Rupert Harris Scott Hicks Earl Johnson, Jr. Stark Jones Vincent Kumjian Robert Lamar Alexandra Lusak Dennis Maher David McMillan Bruce Miller James Miller	Margaret C. Miller Edward Morren James Mosher Shirley Mosholder Hugh Nevin S. Albert Newman Harvey Noordsy Thomas Parsons Donald Pepper William Rambo Paul Randall Samuel Shinn Joseph Shook	Alfred Siegel David Simmons Robert Smith Donald Stake Charles Stratton Helenmarie Sunkenberg Richard Symes James Thompson Jane L.S. Watt Dan Wheeler Paul Wilson Lois Wolff
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Roll of Teaching Elder Members at Large (10)

Kenneth Applegate Lynne Hardy Richard Hill	Andrew Little Laura Mitchell Mary-Lynn Morrison	Richard Otty Mary Jo Pattison Hwa Sung Ryu	Alice Trowbridge
--------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------	------------------

Roll of Certified Christian Educators (I) Jan Harris

Roll of Those Teaching Elders Deleted from Other Rolls Since 1983

Stephen McLean, under G-11.0416 on September 21, 2010	(Ordained on 7/6/86 by Lehigh Presbytery)
Terry Mosholder, under G-6.0701 on January 4, 2007	(Ordained on 11/1/92 by Shenandoah Presbytery)
Marilyn K. Creel, under G-11.0406C on December 31, 2006	(Ordained on 9/15/74 by Albany Presbytery)
Charles L. Murn, under G-6.0501 on March 29, 2004	(Ordained 9/18/66 by Hudson River Presbytery)
Constance Ekback, under G-11.0416 on March 23, 2004	(Ordained 6/5/93 by Palisades Presbytery)
Robert Richardson, under G-6.0501 on 4 December 1996	(Ordained 6/13/76 by Susquehanna Presbytery)
David Jong Do, under G-6.0501 and D-3.0105 on 21 August 1996	(Ordained 4/5/79 by the Korean Church of Christianity Presbyterian Church. Received under G-11.0404b by Albany Presbytery on 3/26/94)
Dawkins Hodges, under G-11.0414 on 28 November 1995	(Ordained 10/24/82 by Shenandoah Presbytery)
Scott Munroe, under G-11.0413 on 10 December 1991	(Ordained 8/7/79 by Philadelphia Presbytery)
William A. Darling, under G-11.0414 on 2 May 1989	(Ordained on 6/24/78 by Lake Erie Presbytery)
Robert S. Magee, under G-11.0413 on 15 November 1988	(Ordained on 5/27/62 by Cincinnati Presbytery)
Edmond G. Dyett, under G-11.0500 on 16 March 1985	(Ordained 10/5/26 by Philadelphia Presbytery)

Committee on Ministry Report – Pre-Meeting Packet for January 28, 2012

The following items are presented to the Presbytery for information:

1. COM met on November 30, 2011, December 14, 2011, and January 11, 2012, at the Roessleville Presbyterian Church in Albany. A portion of the meeting on January 11 included members from the Triennial Task Force. A separate report on the Triennial Visits made in 2011 will be included in the Pre-Meeting Day Packet for the April stated meeting. COM will meet next on February 8 and February 29, 2012.
2. COM noted that Jeff Palmer has resigned from the Shushan Church as Stated Supply effective December 31, 2011. See related action below.
3. At its meeting on November 30, COM had an extended discussion on the process for presenting candidates for examination for membership in the Presbytery. See separate document related to this which follows this report.
4. COM has reorganized itself internally into two working subcommittees: Congregational Care Subcommittee (chaired by Bill Morris) including the Strategy Task Force (chaired by Chris Garrison) and the Transitions and Reviews Subcommittee (chaired by Rich Patterson) with a Clearance Track (chaired by Debbi Waggoner) and a Transitions Track (chaired by Chandlee Gill). Tasks performed by the former Pastoral Care Subcommittee have been distributed among the two current subcommittees and the office staff. COM's Triennial Visit Task Force is chaired by Donna Elia, and its Viability Task Force is chaired by Chris Garrison. Helen King will continue to support COM in securing Prayer Partners and/or helping those who want Prayer Partners to also be a Prayer Partner, as well as looking into the possibility of forming a Covenant Group for those participating in the Prayer Partner Ministry.

5. COM ACTED without objections to accept Teaching Elder Miriam Lawrence Leupold's resignation from the committee effective January 31, 2012.
6. Tom Gregg and Don Stake have met with the Session of the Gloversville Church on two occasions concerning eventual dissolution of the church. See recommended action related to this below.
7. Follow-up calls have been made by some committee members to churches which have made no Per Capita payments in 2011.
8. COM received a letter from the Session of the East Hebron Church concerning their desire to leave the PC(USA) and Albany Presbytery. Follow-up consultations have been scheduled to discuss Presbytery's Gracious Dismissal process.
9. Council referred to COM a letter from the Session of the United Church of Cohoes related to the issue of their ecclesiastical apportionment. See recommended action related to this below.
10. COM received a communication from Ruling Elder Bob Kendall at the Breakabeen-North Blenheim Church concerning diversion of over \$100,000 in church funds by its former church treasurer for personal use. The sheriff has been contacted and legal actions have been taken against the church treasurer. The sheriff is not requiring a forensic audit. COM has asked the Board of Trustees to obtain legal advice on how to deal with this and how to provide assistance to the church. The church has received \$22,000 from their insurance company. This is the maximum that they can receive under their policy.
11. COM noted that the sessions of the Rensselaer and West End Churches have voted to approve the yoke that was approved by Presbytery on November 12, 2011.
12. COM acted to approve the request from the session of the First United Presbyterian Church of Troy to call a congregational meeting for the purpose of electing a Pastor Nominating Committee after COM representatives Bill Morris and Jerry McKinney have reviewed with the session the product of the Appreciative Inquiry process being used by the congregation and have affirmed that the process has provided clear evidence that sufficient information has been developed to complete a Church Information Form.
13. COM acted to approve the Church Information Form prepared by the Hudson Presbyterian Church session.
14. COM acted to authorize the Rev. Hwa Sung Ryu to serve as Pulpit Supply at the Korean Presbyterian Church of Albany pending receipt of additional information (job description, proposed compensation, etc.) for a temporary position with the church.

The following recommendations are presented as part of the Consent Agenda for Presbytery action:

1. Recommend that Presbytery act to approve the following appointments of moderators: James Calvin Davis at Welsh Presbyterian Church in Poultney effective January 1,

2012; Alexandra Lusak at Rensselaerville effective November 13, 2011; and M.J. Pattison at Bethany, Menands effective February 15, 2012.

2. Recommend that Presbytery act to concur with the action of the congregation to accept the resignation of the Rev. David Park from the Korean Presbyterian Church of Albany. Details of the church in California to which the Rev. Park has been called have not been provided yet.
3. Recommend that Presbytery act to concur with the action of the congregation to accept the resignation of the Rev. Shannon Meacham from the Bethany Presbyterian Church in Menands effective February 5, 2012, and transfer her to Baltimore Presbytery effective February 15, 2012, so that she may accept the call of the Ashland Presbyterian Church in Cockeysville, Maryland, to be its pastor.
4. Recommend that Presbytery act to retroactively approve the transfer of the Rev. Rick Hill, Member At Large, to Baltimore Presbytery effective January 1, 2012, so that he may become the Designated Pastor of the Springfield Presbyterian Church in Sykesville, Maryland.
5. Recommend that Presbytery act to extend the Temporary Supply contract between the Rev. Elizabeth Shen O'Connor and the session of the Brunswick Presbyterian Church for 1 year from March 22, 2012, until March 21, 2013, at the following terms: cash salary \$22,000; housing allowance \$20,000; total compensation \$42,000; medical reimbursement up to \$1,500; pension and medical plan \$14,029; social security offset \$3,328; continuing education \$1,646; professional reimbursements \$648; travel \$1,200. Vacation – 4 weeks; continuing education time – 2 weeks.
6. Recommend that Presbytery act to extend the Stated Supply contract between the Rev. Donna Elia and the session of the First United Presbyterian Church of Hoosick Falls for 1 year from January 1, 2012, until December 31, 2012, at the following terms: ¼ time (12 hours per week); cash salary \$0; housing allowance \$10,355; medical deductible \$104; effective salary \$10,459; social security offset \$800; medical \$670; pension/death \$1,250; professional expense \$157; continuing education \$398; travel reimbursement \$1,500; total including travel \$15,234. Four weeks of vacation (included in schedule below). Participation in Albany Presbytery's Scholastic Leave, that is, 2 weeks of study leave. Preach three times per month (or in 2 of the 4 months where there are 5 Sundays, preach 4 times). Lead worship on special occasions, such as Maundy Thursday and Christmas Eve. Assist with obtaining supply preachers. Keep office hours in Hoosick Falls, usually on Wednesday. Work on the spiritual development of congregation, including youth and adults. Work with session to discern mission and ministry and assist with outreach and evangelism. Provide pastoral care as needed.
7. Recommend that Presbytery act to extend the Stated Supply contract between the Rev. Kate Kotfila and the session of the Cambridge United Presbyterian Church for 1 year from January 31, 2012, until January 30, 2013, at the following terms: 20 hours per week; cash salary \$0; housing allowance \$31,085; effective salary \$31,085; social

security offset \$2,378; professional expense \$400; continuing education \$881; total \$34,744. Study leave and vacation in accordance with Presbytery policy.

8. At the request of the session and following a successful Clearance Interview by COM members, COM recommends that Presbytery act to approve the agreement between the Rev. Richard E. Otty, Member At Large, and the Session of the First United Presbyterian Church of Troy, NY, to be its Interim Pastor and Moderator effective March 1, 2012, through February 28, 2013, with the following terms: full-time; salary \$33,800; housing allowance \$19,200; additional medical reimbursement \$2,000; total effective salary \$55,000; pension and medical dues \$17,737.50; social security offset \$4,207.50; expense reimbursement (vouchered) \$750; study allowance \$1,640; mileage reimbursement (vouchered) \$1,500; total financial benefits \$80,835. Moving expenses – none required. Study leave and vacation in accordance with Presbytery policy.
9. COM recommends that Presbytery act to approve extension of the agreement between the Rev. Allen Siebold, UMC, and the Session of the Cornerstone Community Church of Lansingburgh to serve as pastor and Moderator for 1 year effective January 1, 2012, with the following terms: full-time; salary \$42,500; other allowances \$1,584; total effective salary \$44,084; pension and medical dues \$20,166; expense reimbursement (vouchered) \$3,000; study allowance \$1,000; mileage reimbursement (vouchered) \$2,500; total financial benefits \$80,835. Moving expenses – none required. Two weeks of study leave and 5 weeks of vacation.
10. Recommend that Presbytery act to validate the ministry of the Rev. Jeff Palmer to serve as pastor of the Kingsbury Baptist Church at the following terms: 12 hours per week; annual cash salary \$5,200; housing allowance \$16,800; continuing education expenses \$500.
11. Recommends that Presbytery act to approve Corlin Bauhofer as a Commissioned Ruling Elder (formerly known as a CLP) to serve as a chaplain at Ellis Hospital for another year.
12. Upon written request from the Session of the Roessleville Presbyterian Church and following a successful Clearance Interview by COM members, COM recommends that Presbytery commission Ruling Elder Nancy Pierce for the purpose of allowing her to administer the Sacrament of Holy Communion when the pastor is not able to be present at the Roessleville Church and to take the Sacrament to the congregation's homebound members when appropriate.
13. Recommends that Presbytery grant Robin Greene permission to labor outside the bounds to perform a wedding in Connecticut on Memorial Day Weekend and to perform a wedding in Vermont on July 21, 2012.
14. Recommend that Presbytery retroactively grant permission for Ruling Elder Bill Henderson to administer communion at First Presbyterian Church of Watervliet on January 1, 2012.

The following recommendations are presented for Presbytery discussion and action:

PLEASE NOTE: The “appendix” of the presbytery policy on examinations, along with the statement of faith and biographical information for the Rev. Paul Ferenczy are included at the end of this Committee on Ministry report.

PLEASE ALSO NOTE: The Committee on Ministry strongly encourages all presbyters to read the minister’s statement of faith carefully as the statement WILL NOT BE READ aloud during the examinations. There will be questions posed by COM as well as an opportunity for questions from the floor.

The minister being examined for membership will answer these questions:

What have been the highlights of your ministry to date, and what are the particular challenges and joys you anticipate in your ministry in Albany Presbytery?

1. Following a successful Clearance Interview by COM members, COM recommends that Presbytery examine the Rev. Paul Ferenczy, Reformed Church in America and former Temporary Member of Albany Presbytery, for temporary membership in Albany Presbytery again so that he may enter into an agreement with the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Johnstown, NY, to be its Interim Pastor and moderator retroactively effective November 27, 2011, through November 26, 2012, with the following terms: full-time; salary \$34,000; housing allowance \$15,940; total effective salary \$49,940; health insurance \$4,800; long term insurance \$668; social security offset \$3,820; mileage reimbursement (vouchered) \$1,200; total financial benefits \$60,428. Moving expenses – none required. Study leave and vacation in accordance with Presbytery policy.
2. COM ACTED to recommend to Presbytery approval of the proposed Plan of Union of the Bethel Peniel Presbyterian Church and the Granville United Methodist Church and forwarding the requisite overture for action by the General Assembly in July. The Plan of Union is attached as a separate document.
3. Upon written request from the session of the United Church of Cohoes and after consultation with the session, COM ACTED to recommend that Presbytery approve recalculation of the Per Capita for the United Church of Cohoes based on an actual active membership of 125 (rather than the 200 that was inadvertently carried over from previous years) for 2010 and 2011. This would reduce their Per Capita from \$8,200 to \$5,125 for 2010. Since the United Church of Cohoes has paid \$5,000 toward its 2010 Per Capita, COM recommends that Presbytery act to waive payment of the remaining \$125 for 2010. Approval of this recalculation will result in a reduction in the 2011 Per Capita from \$8,900 to \$5,562.50 which the church is prepared to pay.
4. COM ACTED to recommend that Presbytery direct the Moderator to appoint an Administrative Commission as soon as practical after January 28, 2012, to assume the powers of the session (i.e. assume original jurisdiction) of the First Presbyterian Church of Gloversville for the purpose of closing the church and dissolving the congregation.

Rationale: This is standard operating procedure when a church requests dissolution. It is expected that the AC will communicate regularly with the former session members and will honor their desires to have appropriate closure celebrations and a final worship service on June 3, 2012. The AC will be responsible for the ongoing ministry and mission of the church until dissolution, but this will be done in careful consultation and coordination with the former session members and the wishes of the congregation. The AC will also be attentive to the session's desires to pay severance packages to staff if it

is deemed to be lawful for a not-for-profit organization to do so. The AC may also contract with the Rev. Kathleen Chesnut, UCC Stated Supply, to assist them by providing some services after dissolution with the understanding that she will continue to serve as pastor until the church is closed. The AC will also be attentive to the session's desires to give away some furnishings to other churches. The AC will also encourage active members to transfer their memberships. The AC will recommend to Presbytery a formal date for dissolution after which all records and membership rolls shall be transferred to the Presbytery. Once the church is dissolved the AC will work with the Presbytery trustees to dispose of all remaining real property. The trustees will also receive all financial assets of the church upon closure and will use them to further the ministry and mission of other churches in the Presbytery.

5. Terms of Call Adjustment:

For background, the following is an extract from the minutes of the January 29, 2011, stated meeting: *Noting that recent Federal tax legislation has reduced FICA (Social Security) withholdings by 2 percent for 2011 and that, in the past, Presbytery voted to share social security withholding costs with pastors, COM RECOMMENDED and Presbytery ACTED by a voice vote to require churches to continue to pay what they have been paying for pastors (7.65 percent of income) and to allow the entire 2 percent reduction in withholding (from 7.65 percent to 5.65 percent of income) to be passed to the pastors, since the legislation specifically targets individuals and not employers.*

COM recommends to Presbytery that going forward, the 2 percent reduction in SECA (Self-Employment Contributions Act) payments be split equally between the pastor and the church with each being responsible to pay 6.65 percent.

Rationale: The 2% reduction in SECA withholdings for self-employed pastors has been extended for the first 2 months of 2012. The employer's share of SECA is still 7.65 percent. This is a continuation of what was done by Congress in 2011. Last year Presbytery acted to give the entire 2 percent reduction to pastors. This recommendation will restore Presbytery's long-time practice of expecting churches to pay 1/2 of the total Social Security and Medicare taxes as part of the terms of call in order to offset part of the effect of pastors being classified as self-employed by tax law.

For information: Last year's 2 percent increase for pastors should have been added to their effective salary and been subject to Board of Pension dues. That was not reflected on the terms of call form for last year and the increase in income was not subject to Board of Pension dues. If a church chooses to continue to give the amount of the 2% SECA decrease to the pastor, it needs to be added to Other Allowances and will increase the effective salary. Another option that would not change effective salary and Board of Pension dues is to put the 1 percent of FICA as an increase in PROFESSIONAL EXPENSES NOT INCLUDED IN EFFECTIVE SALARY. The COM recognizes that there will be some inconvenience involved and we apologize for the timing of this recommended change.

Reflection on Examination Process

On November 30, the Committee on Ministry discussed the current status of the examination process in Albany Presbytery. The goal of such an examination is a responsible, transparent process for presenting candidates for examination for membership in the Presbytery. In the last 20 years, there have been perhaps over 100 examinations with only a few resulting in extended questioning or discussion. Several examples from the past were given including a review of what happened at Silver Bay in September 2011.

Several questions were considered.

What is the purpose of the exams? Presbytery has the right and responsibility to determine its membership. Exam provides an opportunity to meet and greet. There are differences between an examination for ordination and for transfer of membership. It is important to have theological discussions on the floor of Presbytery, and this provides one way for those to occur. Theological development and integrity are important, so for some this is a reason to require exams, even for HR pastors or pastors who have been in ministry for a long time. Diversity of COM might not represent the total diversity of Presbytery, so for some this is a reason to continue having Presbytery do exams rather than just COM. COM might consider creating a small, diverse group to start the examination process. It is important for COM to include concerns, if there are any, when introducing candidates. COM might consider including with its introduction a recommendation for conditions (work with a mentor, attend EMI, etc.) to be included in accepting a person, if that seems to make sense. If so, then recommendation needs to be shared with candidate first.

Could/should clearance interview and/or examination include directed questions such as included on PIFs rather than reading or even requiring a statement of faith?

What history of a candidate/teaching elder is relevant to the floor exam? What is confidential and what is not? What questions are relevant? What matters are out of bounds? Should there be a statute of limitations on issues? Need to brief moderator before examination if issues are expected.

Should Honorably Retired Teaching Elders be given a pass on a floor exam? See comments above.

What's behind the floor exam? Many presbyteries have COM as the sole clearance. There was some affirmation to returning to having person proclaim faith by reading the statement of faith to the body. Might consider dividing the Presbytery into small groups to examine them in more detail. Might consider changing the term from "examination" to "enrichment discussion" or something similar to that to remove adversarial sense from the discussion when considering transfer requests. Need to revisit and emphasize Presbytery's examination policy and "appendix" that is always included in packet with faith statements and bios.

Is there a difference in how the group exam goes if there is one person, two, or three? If so, should each examination happen separately? Not discussed.

How does the moderator control what is a proper question or comment? What education is needed for the moderator? Moderator needs to declare some questions are out of order if that seems to be the case. It is possible to have the person return for more questioning after the examination was arrested.

What education is needed for Presbytery? Review process & policy (attached)

EXAMINATION PROCESS: As we work to make Presbytery meetings more relevant, creative and helpful to commissioners as we report, debate and consider issues and decisions, the Committee on Ministry (COM) is experimenting with a different approach to the examination of candidates.

We encourage all commissioners to keep an open mind. Feedback is welcomed.

Our process for examining candidates for ordination and membership in the presbytery and candidates for membership will be as follows:

A member of COM will introduce each candidate and offer a very brief synopsis of the process up to this point and why COM is commending him or her to the presbytery for ordination and/or membership.

The candidates will each be asked to respond to the following questions (which they received beforehand):

What do you believe are your own specific gifts and talents and the specific calling of the congregation that will make you good partners in ministry?

What is your understanding of the minister's role as prophet and pastor today? How do you envision helping your people interpret the signs of the times?

Candidates will then respond to any significant questions or concerns from the floor

Candidates will then be excused and the presbytery will confer together for up to 10 minutes and then vote on each candidate separately.

At any point, if the presbytery needs more time it is always in order for a commissioner to move to extend the examination or debate for "X" minutes.

EXAMINATION GUIDELINES

The following guidelines govern examinations in Albany Presbytery:

1) Examinations are to be conducted respectfully and prayerfully. Examinations are intended to give the prospective member an opportunity to demonstrate the qualities of mind and spirit that qualify him or her for membership and service in the Presbytery. 2) It is the right and duty of the Presbytery to determine whether the prospective member adheres to basic Christian doctrines as interpreted by Reformed traditions in the Confessions and whether he or she has sufficient preparation and ability to carry out the functions of office in a particular setting. At the same time, the Presbytery values theological diversity within Reformed bounds among its members and does not apply theological litmus tests for membership.

3) Questions should focus on the prospective member's faith, as expressed in the statement of faith, and on the ways the prospective member lives out that faith.

4) Because the Church trusts the Holy Spirit to guide, form, inform and renew the body each time it meets, Presbyterians have no single written list of fundamental doctrines or essential tenets to which all ministers must subscribe. Key themes of Reformed theology, however, occur regularly in the Confessions and are noted in the Book of Order in G-2.0500. Central to this tradition is the affirmation of the majesty, holiness, and providence of God, who creates, sustains, rules, and redeems the world in the freedom of sovereign righteousness and love. Related to the central affirmation of God's sovereignty are other great themes of the Reformed tradition:

(1) The election of the people of God for service as well as for salvation; (2) Covenant life marked by a disciplined concern for order in the church according to the Word of God; (3) A faithful stewardship that shuns ostentation and seeks proper use of the gifts of God's creation; (4) The recognition of the human tendency to idolatry and tyranny, which calls the people of God to work for the transformation of society by seeking justice and living in obedience to the Word of God."

It is appropriate to question the prospective member on these themes if they are not adequately treated in the statement of faith.

5) By decision of Presbyterian church courts, probing personal questions about a prospective member's health, finances or life arrangements are appropriate only if: (1) the prospective member invites them by offering written or spoken comments on personal matters; (2) the same questions are asked of all prospective members; or (3) there is "plain, palpable and obvious" evidence available to the Presbytery that some element of a prospective member's manner of life may be an obstacle to ministry.

6) Both Minister Members and Elder Commissioners to Presbytery are strongly urged to participate in the questioning.

7) The 217th General Assembly (2006) affirmed the constitutional right of prospective members of presbytery to identify ways in which their conscience, as formed by Scripture, compels them to depart from one or more ordination standards. It is then the right and duty of the presbytery to decide whether the departure involves an essential of Reformed faith and practice. If a prospective member of Albany Presbytery declares such a departure, the Council will seek to prepare the Presbytery to discern whether an essential of faith or practice is involved. There is no list of essentials, though there are guides, such as the list of themes cited above, that may help the Presbytery to discern them on a case-by-case basis.

8) If a departure is declared for the first time on the floor of Presbytery, without prior notice to the Committee on Ministry and the Council, the Moderator will ask the body whether it wishes to postpone further discussion until Council has had an opportunity to prepare resources for the discussion.

9) The Presbytery has the right to say “Yes,” “No,” or “Wait” to any prospective member. This includes those whose departure from ordination standards is deemed not to involve Reformed essentials.

A Brief Biography
by Paul C. Ferenczy

I was born March 11, 1934, in Franklin, New Jersey. My father was pastor of Hungarian Presbyterian and Reformed congregations. I attended Bloomfield College, Shelton College, New Brunswick Theological Seminary and New York Theological Seminary. I have received special training in Alcoholism Counseling, Transactional Analysis Counseling, Parent Effectiveness Training, Mediation and in Specialized Interim Ministry. I spent a sabbatical doing research at Sarospatak Seminary in Hungary and was of assistance to the church in its transition from communist rule to democracy. I have served as a student pastor and as pastor in Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist and Reformed Churches. I have also worked as a Child Welfare case worker and I continue to serve as chaplain of a Correctional facility. I have completed seven Specialized Interim Ministries, including Reformed, Presbyterian and Lutheran congregations. I wish to devote the rest of my years of ministry to the task of Specialized Interim Minister. I am a widower and have four children, five grandchildren and three and a half great-grandchildren. I currently reside in Middleburgh, New York.

A Statement of Faith

I acknowledge and confess the Apostolic Faith as stated in the words of the Apostles' Creed. I believe in the gospel of the grace God in Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as the only way to eternal life and I accept the Scriptures as the only rule of faith and life.

I acknowledge that I am sinful by nature, but that I am forgiven of my sins by God's grace, and that in Christ, my old nature is being put to death, and my new nature is being brought to a newness of life in him. I believe it is my responsibility to pray for myself, for others, and for the church in which I can grow in my understanding of my faith. I believe that I am responding to God's will in my life by preaching and teaching the good news of salvation in Christ, by enabling and by equipping the church for mission in the world. I believe it is both my duty and a means of expressing my thankfulness to God for his salvation by walking in the Spirit of Christ, in love and fellowship within the church, seeking the things that make for unity, purity, and peace. I believe that the church is in a period of transition that has created both crisis and opportunity. As a Specialized Interim Pastor, I have opportunity to awaken church leaders to the nature of the crisis and to give them direction in discovering the opportunities God is providing whereby the gospel message can be communicated to the world.

(Submitted by Paul C. Ferenczy)

Committee on Nominations Report – Pre-Meeting Packet for January 28, 2012

Albany Presbytery may send one (1) teaching elder commissioner, one (1) ruling elder commissioner, and one (1) Young Adult Advisory Delegate (YAAD) to the 220th General Assembly in Pittsburgh, PA, from June 30, 2012, to July 7, 2012. **The Committee on Nominations presents the following nominees for election to these positions and biographies for each nominee follow:**

Teaching Elder Commissioner: Bonnie Orth, Tom Gregg, and Alexandra Lusak
Ruling Elder Commissioner: Kathleen Cleary, Sal Scechitano, and Irving Smith
Young Adult Advisory Delegate (YAAD): Patrick Nelson and Olivia Orth

The Committee on Nominations presents the following nominees for election to the committees noted:

Committee on Ministry: Teaching Elder Patricia Davies – Class of 2014
Committee on Representation: Teaching Elder Katy Stenta - Class of 2014
Council: Ruling Elder Terry Nieman - Class of 2014

GA COMMISSIONER AND YAAD NOMINEE BIOGRAPHIES

TEACHING ELDER NOMINEES:

BONNIE ORTH

I have served as Pastor of the Mayfield Central Presbyterian Church for the past ten years and as Pastoral Care Coordinator of Nathan Littauer Hospital and Nursing Home. I serve the national church in two capacities. I am on the Board of Directors of PHEWA (Presbyterian Health Education and Welfare Association) and serve on the leadership team of PADVN (Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence network).

I have never served as a delegate to General Assembly. I would welcome the opportunity to represent Albany Presbytery in this capacity.

TOM GREGG – no biography provided.

ALEXANDRA LUSAK

I am an honorably retired teaching elder, having most recently served as Pastor and Head of Staff of Troy's First United Presbyterian Church from August 2000 until October 2010. Prior to my call to First United, I served from October 1991 until July 2000 as Pastor of The Presbyterian Church in Pleasantville, New Jersey, and from November 1989 until September 1991 as part-time program administrator of Christian Education at Old First Presbyterian Church in San Francisco, California. I am a 1989 graduate of San Francisco Theological Seminary. I was ordained as a teaching elder on September 29, 1991, by San Francisco Presbytery (the presbytery of care) on behalf of the Presbytery of West Jersey (the presbytery of call).

Over the past 11 years, I have served Albany Presbytery in several capacities. I co-chaired the former Congregational Ministries and Evangelism Committee (CM&E) and then served for a number of years as chair of the Triennial Visit Task Force. I have been moderator of Council, vice moderator and moderator of Albany Presbytery, and chair of the nominating committee. At present, I co-chair the presbytery's Committee on Representation with Elder Donald Hyman of the New Covenant Presbyterian Church, moderate the sessions of the First Presbyterian Church of Watervliet and the Presbyterian Church of Rensselaerville, and am about to begin serving on the Administrative Commission working to facilitate the development of the Oakwood Community Center in Troy.

I take seriously and prayerfully my ordination vows to be governed by our church's polity, to be a friend among my colleagues in ministry, to share in the church's government and discipline, and to serve in councils of the church. In 1999, I was privileged to serve as a commissioner from the Presbytery of West Jersey to the 211th General Assembly in Fort Worth, Texas, when Elder Freda Gardner was elected Moderator. I would be honored to serve Albany Presbytery as a commissioner to the 220th General Assembly in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where my maternal grandparents were members of the East Liberty Presbyterian Church.

RULING ELDER NOMINEES:

KATHLEEN W. CLEARY

I am a lifelong Presbyterian. I was baptized at First Presbyterian Church in Ballston Spa. My formative years were spent in the First Presbyterian Church in Roanoke, VA, where I joined the church. I have been a member of the Presbyterian-New England Congregational Church in Saratoga Springs, for over 20 years, where I have served as a Deacon and Elder. For the past several years I have been actively involved in Presbyterian Rainbow within our Albany Presbytery, proudly advocating for legal change and social acceptance for our LGBT members and clergy within the church and community. Another aspect of my service to the church has been my commitment to the music program, especially as a choir member. Involvement in church youth programs had a strong influence on my own social and faith development and that of my son, Miles, now a social worker. I believe his experiences in the church youth program helped mold his values and commitment to social service. After 32 years of teaching special education at Ballston Spa Middle School, I am recently retired, and I look forward to traveling with my husband Robert.

SAL SCECCHITANO

I have been on staff at Brunswick for just over 17 years, currently as Chief Musician and Director of Audio-Visual and served as an Elder on Session for 6 years. I've been in church music for over 40 years and received all my training as an organist and conductor at The Juilliard School. My involvement with Albany Presbytery has spanned about a dozen years, serving as a regular elder delegate from Brunswick and working for several years with the Worship Committee, the Personnel Committee, and most currently on Council. I've also functioned as a worship leader and AV Tech for presbytery meetings over a number of years. Other areas of involvement include being a founding member of the Bialy Group and serving as Music Director for the Northeast Wee Kirk Conferences since they started at Jiminy Peak in 2003. I have been an alternate delegate to Synod and have also had some connection with transformation retreats of the "Fab 5" presbyteries. I will be a presenter at this year's worship conference sponsored by the Capital Region Theological Center. Additionally, I serve my community as EMS Captain of the Eagle Mills Volunteer Fire Co. and as a volunteer EMT with North Greenbush Ambulance one day a week. It would be a great privilege to represent Albany at the 2012 General Assembly and I would look forward to the careful study, prayer, and discernment it would require.

IRVING SMITH

Member of First Presbyterian Church of Albany since 1974, where I have served as an Elder and Deacon. Chaired the Mission Committee and Technology Committee. Served on the previous Mission Support Committee for Albany Presbytery. I have chaired Albany Presbytery's Guatemala Partnership Task Force since 2005; and I am thankful to have led/visited 6 trips to

Guatemala where I have been instrumental in strengthening our Partnership and relationship with the MAM Presbytery. Currently, I am Board President of the FOCUS churches of Albany(6 Full Participating Churches). I have served on this Board since 1985 as a representative from First Presbyterian Church.

Currently, I am employed at Keybank in Albany as an Engineer. I have over 25 years of experience as a Capacity Planner for several area Corporations, where I provide Capacity Planning and forecasting for Information Services. I live in Loudonville with my wife, Diane and have 2 grown children and 2 grandchildren.

YOUNG ADULT ADVISORY DELEGATE NOMINEES

PATRICK NELSON

Patrick Nelson is a senior at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute where he is majoring in Biochemistry and Biophysics. He has served Stillwater United Church as a ruling elder since 2007, serving on the board of session in '07, '08, '10, and '11. Patrick has also served as commissioner to Albany Presbytery in '10 and '11 and chairperson of the Music and Worship committee in '11. He currently is serving on the General Assembly Committee on Representation, as a member of the Planning and Strategy subcommittee.

OLIVIA ORTH

My name is Olivia Orth and I am interested in serving as a YAAD at General Assembly for this coming year. I am currently a senior in high school where I am a member of the National Honor Society at Mayfield High School. I have been on the honor roll every quarter of my high school career, and am an active member of the student body participating on many sports teams. Next year, my intentions are to attend Westminster College in New Wilmington Pennsylvania as an early education major with a minor in mathematics.

I am also very active in the community I live in, as well as outside the borders of my small town as well. I have served as a faithful member of the Mayfield Central Presbyterian Church Youth Group for the last five years, where we have done many services ranging from local food pantries and food baskets, to Midnight Runs in NYC to feed the homeless, all the way to going outside of the country to Guatemala to do service in a third world country. I was also blessed enough to be able to have the chance to go to Taize France where I was one of the leaders for my age group.

I became interested in becoming a YAAD through my mother Rev. Bonnie Orth, I would like this opportunity so I could learn more about the national church and its policy in action. I also believe that this chance will allow me to better display myself as a christian leader in society.

Council Report – Pre-Meeting Packet for January 28, 2012

The following are presented to the Presbytery for information:

1. The Council met on December 13, 2011, and January 10, 2012, at the West End PC in Albany. The Council will meet next on February 14, 2012, from 12:00 noon until 3:30 p.m. at the West End PC.
2. Council received an offer from Bob Lamar to donate \$250 to the Presbytery for the Presbytery to use to continue to provide financial support to Capital Region Ecumenical Organization. After much discussion, Council ACTED to not accept Bob Lamar's designated pass-through gift to CREO. Lois Hessberg reported this to Bob and suggested that he could make a donation directly to CREO if he wishes. Council ACTED to continue to not include CREO in the Mission Budget.
3. Upon recommendation from the Mission Review Committee, Council ACTED to elect Peg Schalit to serve on the MRC. It was noted that MRC has agreed to accept Donna Frischknecht-Jackson's resignation from MRC.
4. Council ACTED to approve a \$1,000 Rural Initiative Grant to Christ's Church of the Hills to help fund acquisition of wireless internet access for the church.
5. Council ACTED to approve a \$333 New Initiative Funding Request from the Hudson Falls Presbyterian Church to purchase and install three chin-up bars for use in the group exercises of their Functional Strength and Mobility Group.
6. Council ACTED to appoint Ruling Elder Elsie Rew to a 1-year term as Assistant Presbytery Treasurer.
7. Council received a progress report from the Mission Trip Scholarship Team as requested by Presbytery. Report is attached.
8. Council ACTED to create an Ecclesiastical Assessment Study Task Force to include representatives from COM, the Board of Trustees, Council, and the Budget and Finance Committee. The Financial Manager will staff this Task Force.
9. Council is pursuing an optional Thursday night program at Silver Bay on June 7, 2012, prior to the June Stated Meeting.

The following are presented for Presbytery action as part of the Consent Agenda:

1. Council recommends to Presbytery that about \$6,900 (all but \$2,000 of available funds) be folded from the James Miller Fund dedicated account for creative ministries (Line 9000) into the New Initiatives Fund (Line 9011). Rationale: The Council believes that the intent of the James H Miller Fund was to foster new activities in the Presbytery, which is

very similar to the New Initiatives Fund, and this action would simplify the accounting for such funds. The \$2,000 will be retained in Line 9000 to fund future creative worship initiatives.

2. Council recommends that Ruling Elder Shirley Simon be elected to a 3-year term as Presbytery Treasurer.

The following is presented for Presbytery action:

1. Council ACTED to recommend to Presbytery that the second reading of changes to the Standing Rules be postponed until at least the April 2012 stated meeting to give the Standing Rules Task Force time to meet and consider further changes. The following have agreed to serve on the Standing Rules Task Force: Paul Randall, Terry Nieman, Carolyn Snyder Lemmon, Carol Aldrich, Don Stake, David Moore, and Rick Otty. Dan Rogers will staff the task force.
2. Upon recommendation from the MRC, Council ACTED to recommend to Presbytery that surpluses from the 2011 and 2012 Mission Budgets, if any, be set aside to continue financial support for the Mission Trip Scholarship Program initiative, with the MRC to make a report on the initiative to Presbytery again in 2 years. Rationale: There is a growing level of participation in and enthusiasm for the program. Council ACTED to approve any applications from youth to fund attendance at Christmas Camp at Holmes Center as long as funds are available.
3. Council ACTED to nominate Ruling Elder Arden Leach to serve in the Class of 2013 on the Committee on Nominations.
4. Council ACTED to recommend that the date and time of the April Stated Meeting be changed from Tuesday, April 17, 2012, at 4:00 p.m. to Saturday, April 21, 2012, at 9:30 a.m. The meeting will be hosted by the United Presbyterian Church of Schoharie and will include work on flood-repair mission projects in Schoharie before lunch and business items after lunch.
5. Council received and docketed a request from the Peace Making Task Force to present the following Statement of Support for the Occupy Movement for discussion and action at the January 28, 2012, Stated Meeting. Presentation and discussion will be in the morning and action will be called for in the afternoon.

Statement of Support for the Occupy Movement

Albany Presbytery Peace-Making Task Force

1/07/2012

The Occupy Movement is a legitimate public airing of grievances. It highlights the ways in which the economy is not working for most Americans and calls to account those who have plunged our nation and the world into a desperate economic crisis.

Trillions of taxpayer dollars have bailed out the culpable rich while close to nothing has gone to cushion economic collapse for the innocent poor and middle class. Millions of Americans are unemployed or under-employed. The US is faced with a massive permanent underclass that may never work again.

As people of faith we acknowledge that we all bear a certain responsibility for the current economic condition, but all are not equally guilty. The grievances of the protesters include: lasting foreclosure relief, restoration of appropriate financial regulation, greater legal protection for workers' rights, and more progressive taxation. The country needs a shift in emphasis from protecting financial institutions, corporations and the wealthy to fostering equitable wages and lasting economic development.

The Occupy Movement illuminates the socio-economic inequality that fuels so much injustice. In a nation which proudly claims, "Liberty and Justice for all..." it's time to live up to our principles. We ask our elected leaders to give ear to the underlying messages of these protests and to find the courage to represent the interests of all Americans and not just those who, along with their business malfeasance, contribute generously to re-election campaigns.

We endorse the work of the teaching elders, ruling elders, church members and Presbyterian Church (USA) congregations that are working actively in the local and national Occupy Movement. We encourage our congregations to support the Occupy Movement actively with prayer, finances and participation.

6. In its capacity as Bills and Overtures Committee, Council received and ACTED to present the following Overture from the Bethel Peniel Presbyterian Church to Presbytery without recommendation for action:

The Presbytery of Albany respectfully overtures the 220th General Assembly (2012) to issue the following authoritative interpretation of G-2.0402 and G-3.0306:

“Because members of an examining council are to assess the fitness of officers-elect on a case-by-case basis, in light of each person’s faith, life and witness, and because such assessments are to be made in collective discernment under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, an elder-elect shall not be required to commit during examination as to how he or she might assess the fitness of other officers-elect in the future.”

Rationale:

Following recent amendment of the church’s ordination standards, some have expressed concern that they may be disqualified from service given their opposition to ordained service by persons who are in same-sex relationships. This Authoritative Interpretation is meant to defuse apparent tensions over the potential misuse of abstract questions about this in examination.

The Constitution vests sole authority for the election of church officers in congregations, and sole authority for assessing the fitness of officers-elect in sessions and presbyteries. When they gather together to examine officers-elect, sessions and presbyteries “are not simply to reflect the will of the people, but rather to seek together to find and represent the will of Christ” (F-3.0204).

As authoritatively interpreted by General Assembly, the Constitution (G-2.0105) also makes clear that all examinations must be conducted on a case-by-case basis, in light of each officer-elect’s faith, life and witness. Accordingly, it would be improper for any person to commit (or be asked to commit) to a particular view on matters relating to the fitness of other officers-elect outside the context of the actual examinations of such persons. Abstract questions about whom an incoming elder might or might not find fit for ordained service in the future are inconsistent with these basic principles, and may contribute to a climate of intimidation and mistrust. This Authoritative Interpretation is intended to make clear that such questioning during examination is improper.

7. In its capacity as Bills and Overtures Committee, Council received and ACTED to present the following Overture from the Westminster Presbyterian Church of Albany and the United Church of Greenwich to Presbytery without recommendation for action:

The Presbytery of Albany respectfully overtures the 220th General Assembly (2012) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to provide the following authoritative interpretation of W-4.9000:

“Teaching elders and commissioned ruling elders authorized to conduct services of marriage may, at their sole discretion, following the discussion required in W-4.9002a, officiate at a service of Christian marriage for two persons who meet the legal requirements of the state and whom the elder determines demonstrate sufficient commitment, responsibility, maturity, and Christian understanding. Sessions may permit the use of church property for such services. Teaching elders and commissioned ruling elders may decline to conduct such services, and sessions may decline to permit the use of church property for such purposes.”

On July 24, 2011, the State of New York extended the right to marry to couples of the same gender, joining Massachusetts, Connecticut, Iowa, Vermont, New Hampshire, and the District of Columbia. More states are expected to follow suit. Many Presbyterian churches, some in our presbytery, are receiving requests to celebrate their marriages in the Christian community from their lesbian and gay congregants, who expect to be afforded the pastoral care provided to other members.

The Directory for Worship acknowledges that marriage is a “civil contract” and therefore regulated by the state. It was written before the possibility of civil marriage between persons of the same sex was contemplated. Likewise, the 1991 GA Authoritative Interpretation that distinguished between a “same-sex ceremony” and a marriage, the 2000 Benton decision of the GAPJC, and the 2008 Spahr decision were all addressing ceremonies that were not legal civil marriages. In this interim, when the definition of civil marriage is changing, the Constitution requires interpretation to be applied to a variety of circumstances. One of the most pressing is the pastoral crisis that results when same sex couples ask the teaching and ruling elders of their congregation to permit and participate in their marriage services under Presbyterian church auspices, and those elders must hesitate for fear of challenge in church courts.

Worship is the central context of pastoral care for Christians:

The worship of God in the Christian community is the foundation and context for the ministry of pastoral care as well as for the ministry of nurture in the faith (Book of Order, W-6.4000; see also W-6.3002 and W-6.3010).

Lesbian and gay Presbyterians seeking the care of their church do not wish to provoke controversy, endanger their pastors, or embroil their congregations in judicial proceedings. Like heterosexual couples, they simply want the support of their faith community as they undertake the commitments and responsibilities of

marriage. When the possibility of prosecution looms over pastors who are endeavoring to fulfill their promise to “pray for and seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love” (W-4.4003h), anguish extends to the couple, the pastor, the congregation, and eventually the whole church.

Therefore we propose an Authoritative Interpretation of W. 4-9000 to clarify the ambiguities it contains. Much of the section is written in permissive or advisory language. The Preface to the Book of Order states that “SHALL and IS TO BE/ARE TO BE signify practice that is mandated” while “SHOULD signifies practice that is strongly recommended” and “MAY signifies practice that is permissible but not required.” The Preface to the Directory of Worship (section b) states: “In addition to the [above] terms defined in the Preface to the Book of Order, this [Worship] directory also uses language about worship which is simply descriptive.” For example, there is a logical conflict between the description of “Christian marriage” as an expression of “Christian commitment” and the allowance that one of the partners might not even be “a professing Christian.” (W-4.9002a1) The descriptions of Christian marriage, if prohibitive of ceremonies in which every detail does not conform to the descriptions, would forbid elders from officiating at interfaith marriages because they might, among other things, “diminish the Christian understanding of marriage.” If W-4.9000 was intended to set normative, mandatory, exclusive standards for what the PCUSA considers marriage, then those who conduct marriages would also be at risk for allowing music which fails to “direct attention to God and express the faith of the church” (W-4.9005) or for allowing “flowers, decorations, and other appointments” that do not “reflect the integrity and simplicity of Christian life.” There is nothing in the text of W-4.9000 that makes the “man and woman” description mandatory and the other details not mandatory. If officiating at the marriage of a same-gender couple is an offense, then any ceremony not conforming to every detail of W-4.9000, even a heterosexual marriage, is likewise an offense.

The comments of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution in 2008 and 2010 have affirmed the circumstances giving rise to the need for this Authoritative Interpretation, as in this passage from Minutes, 2010, p 887:

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution noted in 2008: “Changing civil understandings of marriage raise new questions of how pastors are to lead the church in exercising pastoral care to its members and compassionate witness and outreach to its neighbors... There is no question that the church is called to provide pastoral care to all individuals...” (Minutes, 2008, Part I, p. 254).

The enactment of laws which make it possible for same sex couples to enter into a civil contract raises the question then whether the key to the performance of marriage ceremonies, authorized by sessions, to be held in

a church, and conducted by ministers or Commissioned Lay Pastors, is the civil contract or the gender of the parties. The traditional distinctions held by the PC(USA) are no longer as clear.

Pastors and sessions need the General Assembly's assurance of their freedom and discretion to provide the pastoral care that their members require. This freedom is based on the same principle as W-4.9002b, which provides that pastors are free, as their judgment dictates, not to officiate at marriages their members and others are contracting.

In the absence of mandatory language in the Book of Order that would prohibit a service of Christian marriage for any couple that is legally permitted to marry, the assembly should reaffirm the principle of pastoral discretion in the form of the proposed authoritative interpretation. The authoritative interpretation will prevent deep grief to church members who might otherwise be denied the pastoral care of the church, and it will protect pastors and sessions from judicial challenge for exercising their pastoral responsibilities.

**ALBANY PRESBYTERY
MISSION TRIP SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED**

As a result of actions by Presbytery (and Presbytery Council), \$103,251 was made available to fund “scholarships” for youth and adults embarking on domestic or international mission trips. The source of these funds was the surplus in the Mission budget for the years ending 12-31-2008, 2009 and 2010 as follows:

Year	Total	Mission Scholarships	Mission Promotion and Itineration
Y/E 12-31-2008	\$ 44,000	\$ 39,600	\$ 4,400
Y/E 12-31-2009	\$ 35,814	\$ 32,233	\$ 3,581
Y/E 12-31-2010	\$ 34,909	\$ 31,418	\$ 3,491
Total	\$114,723	\$103,251	\$11,472

Each individual’s scholarship Application required the support of the Session of a church in Albany Presbytery.

The program started out slowly, in 2010, with five scholarships totaling \$4,800 being awarded for five different mission trips to five different international locations.

2011 saw intensified interest in the program. In the last twelve months, scholarships totaling \$55,450 were approved. These funds were granted to support 87 “mission trippers” (46 on six international trips and 41 on three domestic trips). Thus, we have seen a total of 92 scholarships (totaling \$60,250) awarded in the last 18 months.

At the current rate, available funding will not last through 2012. Presbytery Council, therefore, upon recommendation from the Mission Review Committee (MRC), has recommended to Presbytery that surpluses, if any, from the 2011 and 2012 Mission Budgets be set aside to continue financial support for the Mission Trip Scholarship Program initiative (with the MRC to report on the initiative to Presbytery again in two years).

We count it a privilege to be able to function, on behalf of Presbytery, in providing this assistance to those seeking to personally share the love of Jesus Christ with our sisters and brothers around the world.

Respectfully submitted,

Albany Presbytery’s Mission Trip Scholarship Team
Barbara Cervenka
Rev. Linda Martin
Peter McKinney