



STATED MEETING OF ALBANY PRESBYTERY

PRE-MEETING PACKET

Monday & Tuesday, September 19 and 20, 2011
Registration and Fellowship begin at 8:30am

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

Meal Tickets for Breakfast/Lunch are \$13 per person
for Dinner are \$18 per person. They can be purchased at the front desk.

Please make checks payable to: Silver Bay

Presbyters with dietary restrictions are invited to bring their own
lunch

Hosted by Silver Bay at Lake George

87 Silver Bay Road, Silver Bay, NY 12874

Telephone: 543-8833

website: www.silverbay.org

DIRECTIONS:

By Car from the South: Silver Bay is 90 minutes from Albany, NY. Take the Adirondack Northway (RT 87) to Exit 24 (Bolton Landing)*, drive east five miles to the road's end at Route 9N. Turn left and drive north approximately 13 miles to Silver Bay. Look for SILVER BAY ASSOCIATION with the YMCA logo sign on the right, two miles past Sabbath Day Point. Turn right onto Silver Bay Road and drive onto the campus. Register at the Silver Bay Inn. The Inn is located on the circular drive just north of the tennis courts. Registration is on the first floor on the South side of the porch. Angle park in the Inn circle while you are checking in. You will be given directions where to unload and park your vehicle

**Note that there is also an Exit 24 on the NYS Thruway you should follow if you are driving from New York City. Immediately after the toll booth at Exit 24, follow signs for Montreal/RT 87N/The Adirondack Northway.

By Car from the North: Silver Bay is 15 minutes from Ticonderoga, New York. Follow RT 9N to Hague, New York from the Monument in Ticonderoga. Silver Bay is 4 miles from the town of Hague. Look for the SILVER BAY ASSOCIATION signs and the YMCA logo on the left past the Silver Bay Post Office and Silver Bay General Store. Turn left onto Silver Bay Road and drive straight ahead until you arrive on campus. Register at the Silver Bay Inn. The Inn is located on the circular drive just north of the tennis courts. Registration is on the first floor on the South side of the porch. Angle park in the Inn circle while you are checking in. You will be directed where to unload and park your vehicle.

THE PRESBYTERY OF ALBANY Stated Meeting – September 19-20, 2011

Presbytery Telephone 273-4991

Silver Bay YMCA Conference Center, Lake George - Telephone (518) 543-8833

PRE-MEETING WORSHIP AND CONVERSATION

(Note: Separate registration required for those staying Sunday night.)

Sunday, September 18

5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Dinner only for those staying Sunday night.

Landon Whitsitt will lead a conversation following dinner in which folks may share what they see the landscape of their ministries looking like as they move forward. As they conceive of it, where is the church going? What do they wonder about? This will be a time to casually and safely explore.

Monday, September 19

7:30 to 8:30 a.m. Breakfast only for those staying Sunday night.

PRESBYTERY MEETING DOCKET (Draft 8/29)

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

Monday, September 19

8:30 a.m. Gathering and Registration. (Note: Room check-in may not be available until 3:00 p.m.)

9:30 a.m. Call to Order, Compile Roll, Seat Corresponding Members, and Act on Meeting Docket

Opening Emergent Worship Service to be led by Worship Task Force and Landon Whitsitt

10:30 a.m. Mission trip Story 1 – Taize trip

10:45 a.m. Landon Whitsitt Address to Presbytery

11:30 a.m. Begin consideration of Business Items (Fiduciary Business):

Recognize retirements of Larry Deyss and Earl Johnson
CRTC presentation on Congregational Resourcing – Martha Reisner
Introductions of afternoon discussion groups / workshops.

12:00 to 1:00 p.m. Lunch

1:15 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Open Space Discussion Groups or Workshops

Open Space Topics

Ideas for Spiritual Growth (Frances Rosenau host)
The Impact of Mission Trips (Guatemala/Ghana host)
The Jazz question (Flipping TF host)

Workshops

Peer Review of session minutes
The Impact of G-2.0104 (Amend. 10-A)
Presbytery Disaster Relief Task Force

3:00 to 6:00 p.m. Free Time activities including: pick-up choir rehearsal, boat rides (weather permitting), hiking, games... scrabble, scattegory, etc.

5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Dinner

7:00 p.m. Mission Trip Story 2 - Westminster trip to Ghana

7:15 p.m. Continue Business Items (Fiduciary Business):

COM Report (see pages 4 to 6):

Exam of Marti Montovani (transfer to become Interim Pastor at Stillwater)
Exam of Lynne Hardy (transfer to become At-Large member of Presbytery)
Action on Lois Wolff to become temporary supply pastor at Greenwich
Action on Rob Rose to become Interim Pastor for State Street in Schenectady

Council Report (see pages 12 to 15):

Corinth overture
Peace Making Task Force
2012 Mission and Ecclesiastical Budgets for first reading.

Nominating Committee Report (see bottom of page 6)

8:00 p.m. Outdoor Worship – to be led by Kirianne Riehl.

9:00 p.m. Adjourn. Ice Cream Social

Tuesday, September 20

7:00 a.m. Worship at Boathouse

7:30 – 8:30 a.m. Breakfast .

9:00 a.m. Continue with Business Items (Fiduciary Business):

Action on minutes of June 11, 2011, Stated Meeting
Action on Consent Agenda
Board of Trustees Report
Continue COM and Council Reports

9:45 a.m. Mission Trip Story 3 - Sam Jacking on Broadalbin trip to West Virginia

10:00 a.m. Open Space Discussion Groups or Workshops

Open Space Topics

How should the Presbytery engage in mission? (MRC)
What staffing pattern is most effective for our future?
(Personnel)

Workshops

Training on the nFOG
Recruitment of Pastors, Interns

12:00 – 1:00 p.m. Lunch

1:00 p.m. Healing Service – led by Laura Mitchell

1:45 p.m. Presentation by Brooke Newell, Advocacy Coordinator

2:05 p.m. Complete Business Items (Fiduciary Business) including New Business

2:45 p.m. Mission Trip Story 4 – First Albany trip to Lyons, NY.

3:00 p.m. Adjournment

Committee on Ministry Report – Pre-Meeting Packet for September 19-20, 2011

The following items are presented to the Presbytery for information:

1. COM met on June 29, 2011, with representatives from the Mission Review Committee to discuss common issues and concerns which include an evaluation of the CLP program as a mission project; allocation of mission funds for 2012; Presbytery's role in receiving and allocating funds to mission projects; funding of ecumenical mission projects by Presbytery and by congregations; use of undefined or surplus mission funds to resource congregations, perhaps as a "stimulus package"; and concerns with payment of Per Capita and the effect this may have on possible available mission funds. COM will docket time at its September meeting to consider proposed changes in the wording of the Standing Rules concerning payment of Pre Capita and what will happen if a church fails to pay its Per Capita in full.
2. COM will meet next on September 14, 2011, and then on October 12, 2011. Interim pastors serving within Albany Presbytery will be invited to meet with COM for dinner at the October meeting.
3. COM approved the following resolution: that the Strategy Task Force along with others be asked to come up with clear criteria by which congregations which meet these criteria would be eligible for various forms of support from Presbytery and to come to the October COM meeting with a draft report. It was suggested that representatives from the Board of Trustees and the Triennial Visit Task Force be recruited to assist the Strategy Task Force in this effort. It was also suggested that the task force might look at ways to partner with other churches. Said another way, this action is a challenge to the Strategy Task Force to identify criteria by which a healthy congregation may be judged.
4. COM discussed its current subcommittee workload and structure. The following suggestions were offered: combine membership of CPM with COM; create a small group of three to five members to be a transition task force to resource liaisons with consideration being given to co-opting experienced non-members of the committee to serve on the transition task force; ask Presbytery to increase the size of COM from 18 members to 21 members; and/or create a fourth COM subcommittee for transitions.
5. COM ACTED TO EMPOWER the Executive Committee to oversee the business of the committee over the summer which will include consideration of reorganization.
6. The following represented COM and Albany Presbytery at a PDA training workshop in Louisville on July 20-23: Tom Gregg, Jackie Pinkowski, and Eric Fagans.
7. COM noted that the Hudson Falls session has sent a letter to Council indicating that they are now willing to pay the remainder of their 2010 Per Capita and to pay their 2011 Per Capita.
8. COM approved the following to serve on the Administrative Commission to install the Rev. Pam Woodman as Pastor of the Malta Presbyterian Church: Teaching Elders Kirianne Riehl (Moderator), Mary Woodman, and Jerry McKinney; Ruling Elders Diane Calvanese (Lake Luzerne), Sarah Dodge (Stillwater), Sandy Hann (Malta), and Bill Morris (Hamilton Union); and guest Teaching Elder Lynne Hardy (Presbytery of Transylvania).

9. On September 19, 2011, COM will formally recognize the Honorable Retirements for the Rev. Dr. Earl S. Johnson and the Rev. Larry Deyss that became effective on July 1, 2011.

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. Marti Montovani and the Rev. Lynne Hardy are included at the end of this Committee on Ministry report.

PLEASE ALSO NOTE: The Committee on Ministry strongly encourages all presbyters to read each teaching elder’s statement of faith carefully as the statements WILL NOT BE READ aloud during the examinations. The candidates may appear together, and there will be questions posed by COM as well as an opportunity for questions from the floor.

The candidates 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. Martha Montovani, Presbytery of East Iowa, for transfer of membership so that she may enter into an agreement with the Session of the Stillwater Presbyterian Church of Lake George to be its Interim Pastor effective August 15, 2011, through August 15, 2012, and to be its Moderator upon transfer of membership with the following terms: full-time; salary \$31,860; housing allowance \$9,558; additional medical reimbursement \$414; total effective salary \$41,832; pension and medical dues \$13,177; social security offset \$3,200; books and journal reimbursement (vouchered) \$626; study reimbursement \$1,590; mileage reimbursement (vouchered) \$1,500; total financial benefits \$61,925. Moving expenses - \$5,000. Study leave and vacation in accordance with Presbytery policy. If the Rev. Montovani is accepted for membership in the Presbytery, COM RECOMMENDS that Presbytery extend thanks to the Rev. James Mosher and the Rev. Jerry McKinney for serving as moderators at the Stillwater Church.
2. Following a successful Clearance Interview by COM members, COM RECOMMENDS that Presbytery examine the Rev. Lynne Hardy for transfer of membership from the Presbytery of Northern New England to be a member at large.
3. Following a successful Clearance Interview by COM members, COM RECOMMENDS that Presbytery approve a contract between the Rev. Lois Wolff and the Session of the Greenwich Presbyterian Church to be its Temporary Supply and Moderator effective September 13, 2011, for 6 months through February 12, 2012, with the following annual terms (**subject to approval by COM on September 14, 2011**): 12 hours per week; salary - \$8,060; housing allowance - \$2,400; medical allowance - \$105; total effective salary - \$10,565; social security offset - \$808; medical dues of \$6,705 less deferred compensation to Retirement Savings Plan of \$5,000 = \$1,705 payable to pastor; continuing education allowance - \$400; professional expenses - \$157 plus mileage up to \$750 at \$0.555 per mile; total monthly to be paid to the Rev. Wolff - \$1,081.08 and total monthly to be paid to Retirement Savings Plan - \$416.67. Vacation for 6-month term: 2 weeks including two Sundays. COM RECOMMENDS that Presbytery extend thanks to the Rev. Pam Woodman for serving as moderator at the Greenwich church. The Board of Pensions does not require temporary positions to be part of the BOP program.
4. COM recommends that Presbytery concur with the action taken by the congregation of the West Hebron Presbyterian Church at a meeting held on June 13, 2011, and

moderated by the Rev. Cass Shaw to approve his request to dissolve his relationship there as pastor effective October 1, 2011.

5. Following a successful Clearance Interview by COM members and assuming approval of the preceding recommendation, COM RECOMMENDS that Presbytery approve a contract between the Rev. Rob Rose and the Session of the State Street Presbyterian Church, Schenectady to be its Interim Pastor and Moderator effective October 1, 2011, through January 31, 2012, at the terms to be provided by COM in the Meeting Day Packet. COM RECOMMENDS that Presbytery extend thanks to the Rev. Ken Applegate for serving as moderator at the State Street Church.

Committee on Nominations Report – Pre-Meeting Packet for September 19-20, 2011

The Committee on Nominations presents the following for election as committee chairs for 2012:

Committee on Ministry: Rev. Tom Gregg

Committee on Preparation for Ministry: Rev. Cheryl Colt

Committee on Representation: Ruling Elder Don Hyman

Self-Development of People: Rev. Jim Mosher

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.

Faith Journey and Call to Ministry

Martha R. Montovani

Growing up in an ecumenical family (Jewish and Catholic parents and Protestant siblings), I learned early in life to respect various traditions. I followed my older sister and brother and attended Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and church at the Southwick Congregational Church (United Church of Christ) in Southwick, MA. During my high school years I was on the debate team and practiced my communication skills not only in interscholastic speech tournaments but also while delivering sermons on Youth Sundays. The congregation affirmed my gifts in preaching and, I believe, planted a seed for me to ponder becoming a minister later in life.

While I was working on my Ph.D. degree at Ohio University, I became a member of the First Presbyterian Church in Athens and was elected and ordained an elder. Once again I had opportunities to preach and lead worship. This congregation not only affirmed my gifts for ministry but urged me to attend seminary. I jokingly say that I put God on “call waiting” for many years (wanting to pay off my graduate school debts before incurring seminary debts!) but knew in my heart that I had to leave the community and people I loved in Ohio and follow God’s call to prepare for a career change.

San Francisco Theological Seminary prefers that its students experience a full year’s internship between the second and third years of their academic preparation. I returned to Ohio and became the equivalent of an interim pastor for two yoked churches in Oak Hill that had been served for 42 years by the same pastor, a minister who would not leave town once he retired. Many times during the year I spoke with the former pastor in pastorally, sensitive ways and explained why his behavior was inappropriate and crossed ethical boundaries. I believe the challenging nature of my internship year only served to strengthen my call to ministry. There is something reassuring about having one’s call “tested” and being able to say it’s still valid.

Each of the churches I have served since ordination as a minister of the Word and Sacrament has had its own set of opportunities and challenges. In the summer and fall of 2008 I experienced what it is like leading a congregation through trauma. Following Cedar Rapids, Iowa’s flood, the Olivet Presbyterian Church was displaced from its building for five months. I could not live in the manse for over six months while repairs were being made. Throughout this difficult time I felt the prayer support of the Franciscan sisters who administer Prairiewoods Spirituality Center where I rented a small room.

Other grace notes during this time were that I got to know my clergy colleague from Calvin Sinclair Presbyterian Church better than I ever would have had the Olivet Church not nested at Calvin Sinclair during the flood displacement time. Kent Leydens is one of my references listed on my PIF! In the midst of ministry is God’s grace—the grace that calls us, the grace that equips us, the grace that keeps us going towards the task to which we are called.

After many years of employment in college teaching and ministry, I could consider retirement. However, I am following in my father’s footsteps. While I may not live to be 101 years old as my pop did, I hope to have the vim and vigor needed to work well into my 70s. I am a high-energy pastor who has too many ideas to share with others to go out to pasture! If the way be made clear, I look forward to serving as the interim pastor of the Stillwater United Church and working with the creative and dedicated people who are in this particular Body of Christ.

Statement of Faith

Martha R. Montovani

I believe in a **creating God**, the one Jesus called Abba, God beyond us, beyond all that is. The Creator made people and the world and called them good. Each of us is made in the image and likeness of God and each of us is a face of God in the world to be tenderly treasured. We were created to live in loving relationships with God and each other, to live responsibly and in harmony with the rest of God's creatures and with the earth. However, we live in a world where relationships are not always good and beautiful. Sin indicates a violation of relationships, resulting in a state of alienation from God, one another, and ourselves. While we ourselves have fallen short of God's intention and blurred God's gracious image, in such times we ask for forgiveness, we trust in God's mercy, and we rededicate ourselves to the vision of redemption upon which our faith is founded.

I believe in a **redeeming God**, Jesus Christ, God among us, the God who became flesh and dwelled among us. In merciful response to our sin, God became incarnate in Jesus Christ—fully human, fully divine. Throughout his life Jesus proclaimed God's love and demonstrated how to live in response to this good news. Jesus came into the world bearing a message of reconciliation, inviting us to discard our divisions and find new unity in a new society. Each of us has opportunities every day to share the love of Christ with someone else—within our family and friendships, within a community, within the church.

I believe in a **sustaining God**, the Holy Spirit, the God who is within us, the God intimately present in our lives. The indwelling God is a living, breathing, moving, energizing presence of boundless love and compassion. The Spirit binds us to one another and directs us toward the reconciling work of God.

I believe the Spirit was at work in the lives of those who first recorded the story of God's people. **Scripture** is the historical narrative and poetry that is the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ. Analysis, interpretation, and application of Scripture are both privilege and responsibility. I envision the sermon as shared story where a place is made for each of our stories to make contact with and to be integrated into the stories of the Bible and of other people. Faithful preaching connects the human story with The Story.

I believe the context of pastoral ministry is the ordinary. **Pastoral care** involves being attentive to, immersed in, and appreciative of the everyday texture of people's lives. The pastor's role in the spiritual nurture of the congregation guides my practice of ministry. By connecting my own questions, struggles, doubts, fears, and experiences in what faith is about I enter with others into the search for truth and meaning. By telling my own stories of faith I encourage others to share their own struggles and experiences of faith.

I believe the **church** is a baptized community called to respond to God's grace by distributing the necessities of life to others. The church's mission is to help create a community of reconciliation and the realm of God on earth as mandated by Jesus Christ. We are drawn together in the love of God and sent forth to be reconcilers to a world that is broken and oppressed by prejudices and injustice.

I believe the **sacraments**, the celebrations of the church, are visible signs of invisible grace. In **baptism**, children of believers and adult believers are brought into the nurture and community of the church. Baptism is God's blessing, a conferring of Christian identity, and entry into a covenant community. Baptized children are raised in the knowledge of Christ, that they may come to a decision of faith in maturity. Baptism acknowledges our intention to live as God's people and to be active members in Christ's body, the community of faith. Baptism calls us to care for others. In **communion** we are joined with the church universal through all ages as we experience the presence of Christ in the symbols of bread and wine. The Eucharist celebration recalls Christ's sacrifice, the wonder and promise of Christ's resurrection for our salvation and for the redemption of all humanity, and Christ's continuing presence. Believers are nurtured and empowered by communion with Christ and his body, the church. Communion shared within our faith community reminds us that in all of life, the Christ is with us to bring hope and healing to God's world.

LYNNE HARDY - BIO

About Lynne Hardy (revised 2011):

I was born in a local hospital in Troy, NY about 54 years ago. I was raised in Stillwater, a small town, about 40 miles north east of Albany, NY. I am the third of five children. I am a cradle Presbyterian who has served my home church in a multitude of capacities each informing my call and journey to ministry.

I have two children raised in a shared arrangement with their father. My son is married to a lovely young lady, Kristen. They have the dubious honor of having my delightful 4 year old granddaughter. They live in Fort Anne, NY and serve NY State as police officers. My daughter currently serves the National Park system in Yosemite California.

I have a BS degree in Nursing from Excelsior College of NY and earned my Masters in Divinity from Bangor Theological Seminary in 2006. My first career is as a nurse. Since 1974 I have worked in a variety of nursing capacities and have found tools in each to incorporate into my nursing practice and my pastoral care. I am currently a full time student with Walden University working on a Masters in Mental Health Care and Counseling. My goal is to eventually provide mental health counseling from a pastoral perspective.

I have lived in a variety of places, Stillwater being my home town. I lived and worked and attended seminary in Maine, centering in Brunswick area. I accepted a call to ministry in Harlan, KY in 2008 which began with my ordination by Albany Presbytery at my home church in Stillwater. I served for 2 years, leaving of my own accord because of their financial situation was not conducive to having a full time pastor any longer. I returned first to Maine where I had thought to settle, but was unable to find suitable employment, but did find such here in NY. I have chosen to settle here in the Albany area and work as a high risk case manager for a national insurance company as well as a part time nursing instructor when needed. I hope to serve the presbytery in a supply capacity.

I love worship, time in community, feeling the presence of the spirit swirling and the hand of God in motion. I know what being blessed feels like as well as being familiar with some difficult times. I know that there is light always at the end of tunnels. God's mercy is free for all.

I believe God created and is creating and all things created by God are good. God is in all things, present, past, and future. God and only God can judge us individually and as a community. Humanity cannot affect God's ultimate design, but humanity by choice can ignore God's design.

I believe Jesus, present with God before all things which were created, for whom all things were created, is the Christ; the Messiah for the World; bringer of salvation and grace. I believe he was seized and judged and crucified till dead because of the fear that his presence in human form generated. In his act of dying he bestowed for all humanity the payment to the world for its imperfections. As Christ resurrected, he appeared in his divinity to all the faithful to provide comfort and solace, guidance and assurance and proof of what he had foretold, becoming the doorway to eternal life, so that death has no sting, no victory. As Christ ascended, he is present to us in his gift of the Spirit. The Spirit is present as part of the three in one from before creation, creating with the Father and Son. Jesus is our evidence of God's eternal and unconditional love for us, and our source of grace and forgiveness and our salvation by faith in all that he is, has done, is doing and will do until he comes again.

I believe the Spirit, sent to us from God through Christ to the still broken world, is present today in the small quiet moments of our hearts and in the big winds of change that sweep over a people from time to time. This Spirit stirs in the world bringing with it the reminders of what is required of us; to love justice, to be mercy driven and to be humble before our God while simultaneously striving to love God with all that we are inside and outside in our day to day world and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

I believe Scripture is the written word of the works of God, holy and divine, scribed by humanity for all to read, discover anew and I believe Scripture brings us into community which is best known as the church; the bride of Christ; a holy gathering across time that provides and supports the community worship and embodies the living faith bathed in the presence of the Spirit helping to discern the work for the body of Christ. I believe through Scripture Christ asks us to physically repeat that which Christ himself experienced ; baptism to begin life in Christ and the breaking of bread and the supping from one cup lest we forget the eternal gifts of Christ our Lord. In my heart, soul, mind and body is the sure knowledge that God loves with unconditional love which ensures that there is nothing we can do to separate us from the love God has for us. God has asked us to worship in word and song, preserve and practice rituals for the good of the community, support and provide for those who cannot provide for themselves, and to listen with open hearts and minds to the movement of the Spirit in the world.

Council Report – Pre-Meeting Packet for September 19-20, 2011

The following are presented to the Presbytery for information:

1. The Council met on June 14 and August 16, 2011, at the West End PC in Albany. The Council will meet next on September 13, 2011, from 12:00 noon until 3:30 p.m. at the West End PC.
2. The Rev. Rob Rose has joined Council as the representative from the Budget and Finance Committee. **Council ACTED TO ELECT Rob Rose as chairperson of the Budget & Finance Committee.**
3. Council received the following request from Terry Diggory on behalf of Presbyterian Rainbow:

“... we request that Council develop a process for presbytery and sessions to study the report of the Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage. Following action by the 219th General Assembly (2010), the Stated Clerk transmitted the report (including a minority report) to the church, expressly stating that these documents were “commended for study and action as the church seeks ways to be more welcoming to covenanted same-gender couples and their families.”

Council ACTED TO CREATE and the following have agreed to serve on an ad hoc group that has been empowered to create a study process that will focus primarily on sessions rather than the Presbytery: Terry Diggory, Laura Rogers, Michael Burkley, and Nick TeBordo. The ad hoc group has begun work.

4. The following met with some of the applicants for the Peace Makers Task Force on August 20, 2011, to discuss Council concerns: Paul Randall, Cass Shaw, Tom Gregg, and David Moore. **A recommendation concerning this application will be prepared by Council at its September 13 meeting and will be included in the Meeting Day Packet.**
5. Council ACTED TO CREATE a Joint Working Group (JWG) with representatives from Budget & Finance, Mission Review, Council, COM, Personnel, and staff to review and assess strategies for possibly capping Per Capita. Paul will invite each entity to name someone to serve on the JWG and ask the Budget & Finance representative to serve as convener of the JWG. The JWG will be asked to prepare a report to Council by October 31, 2011, so it can be considered at the November 2011 Council meeting.
6. Council received a revised application for a Western Presbytery Rural Youth Ministry New Church Youth Leader Initiative. Council ACTED TO APPROVE the 3-year program in concept and APPROVE \$8,200 in funding for the first year (2011-2012) with the requirement that a report on the first year be submitted with the next grant request.
7. Upon nomination by the Presbytery Nominating Committee, Council ELECTED Elder Ted Eighmie (Charlton Freehold) to serve on the Budget & Finance Committee. However, Ted subsequently indicated that he is unable to serve on the B&F Committee.
8. Council received the following from the Budget and Finance Committee: In January the committee voted to inform the Council that the 2009 audit had been done, and ask Council to report this to the Presbytery for the minutes.

9. Bill Ramage reported that we can set up an account through Pay Pal. The fees per transaction would be 2.9% + 30 cents. (If we went with a “lock box” it would cost us \$100 per month.) We could use a Pay Pal account to provide an opportunity through the website for people to make donations to the Presbytery or any of our mission projects. The Budget and Finance Committee recommended this to the Council, along with introducing an automatic bill pay process for churches. Council ACTED to approve this recommendation with the provision that ITT review security and maintenance issues/concerns.
10. Council received and ACTED TO APPROVE funding under Item 5126 for the following proposal from COM:

*PROPOSAL FOR MENTORING TRAINING
Part of Flipping the Presbytery*

Purpose: To provide training for mentors who work with newly ordained Ministers of Word and Sacrament in Albany Presbytery.

Administration: The program will be under the supervision and direction of the Pastoral Care Subcommittee of the Committee on Ministry.

Structure and Procedures: The training would involve a one-time group meeting in which the theoretical frameworks would be described. The use of Appreciative Inquiry and Emotional Intelligence as they apply to mentoring/coaching will be described and practiced. Following the one-time group meeting, smaller groups of no more than eight would meet on a monthly basis for 2 hours for 12 months. During that time, the mentors would, through the use of current case studies, receive training and feedback based on what they share during their time in the group as a means of sharpening their own skills in the use of AI and EI.

Cost: Cost for one-time, 6-hour training: \$1000 (lunch expense/provision to be negotiated). Cost for 24 hours of training: \$1,200 per person. So the total cost per person would be \$1200 plus a part of the \$1000. For example, if we had a group of eight people participating, the total cost would be \$10,600.

11. Council received and ACTED TO POSTPONE consideration of a proposal from COM to fund COVENANT GROUPS.
12. Council received, discussed, and acted upon the following covenant applications from task forces for 2012 as noted (For the record, copies of these applications are on file at the Presbytery office):

The Commissioned Lay Pastor Program Task Force: Council ACTED to send back the application with a request that the task force complete the tasks they agreed to do previously. Cass and Barbara Cervenka will meet with the CLP Task Force. Further action by Council is on hold.

Guatemala Partnership Task Force: Council ACTED TO APPROVE the application which included \$8,000 in funding for 2012.

Mission Trip Scholarship Team: Council ACTED TO APPROVE without objection.

Youth of Albany Presbytery Task Force: Council ACTED TO APPROVE without objection. Approval included a proposed budget of \$38,500 for 2012.

PeaceMakers Task Force: Action is on hold. See above.

13. Council has received a proposal from the Bethel Peniel Presbyterian Church of Granville to unite with the Granville United Methodist Church of Granville. The proposal included a Plan of Union to create the United Church of Granville. Council asked the Stated Clerk to review the Plan of Union and report back to Council at a later time.
14. Now that nFOG has been approved by a majority of Presbytery, it will be necessary to amend the Standing Rules of the Presbytery and create a new Administrative Manual of Operations. The Stated Clerk is working on these.
15. Council received for information copies of the letter received from the Hudson Falls Church session concerning resumption of payment of per capita and the response sent by the Stated Clerk to their questions.
16. It has been determined that it is not feasible to obtain and manage a CCLI license for all churches in the Presbytery. A CCLI license could be gotten for Presbytery to use for meetings.
17. Council ACTED to dismiss the Jermain Task Force with gratitude and will include a minute of appreciation for the work of this task force at the September meeting.
18. Paul noted that Shannon Meacham has resigned from the “Flipping the Presbytery” Task Force and asked Council members to send ideas for her replacement to him.
19. Council received a New Initiatives Funding Request for \$795 from Trinity Presbyterian Church to help fund a summer program for students from violent and troubled backgrounds and recommended its approval. Upon recommendation from Tim Coombs, co-pastor of Trinity PC, Council ACTED to approve the use of Peace Making funds rather than New Initiative funds to support the program.

The following is presented for Presbytery action:

1. Council ACTED TO RECOMMEND that Presbytery approve the following overture from the session of the Corinth Church to pay presbytery and synod per capita and withhold GA per capita with the suggestion that the amount being withheld be designated to some PC(USA) mission project that the Corinth session does support. Implied within this recommendation is the understanding that presbytery will not pay this withheld per capita to GA on behalf of the Corinth Church.

The Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Corinth respectfully overtures Albany Presbytery Council with a possible solution to our Apportionment dilemma. At present Corinth is withholding and escrowing its Ecclesiastical Apportionment as a statement of conscience and protest concerning decisions by General Assembly which, we feel, seriously endanger the national and international witness of the PCUSA. In the past we have sent letters, signed petitions, submitted an Overture to GA and voted again and again. Both our Overture and our votes have been defeated by the presbytery. We are now withholding as the only way we feel we can be heard by General Assembly as a prophetic voice, deeply concerned for the future of our church. However, presbytery's policy of covering our withholding with other presbytery monies effectively nullifies our voice. It seems that a church in the minority cannot be heard beyond the borders of presbytery. We therefore propose and request that presbytery allow our small voice to

be heard by the higher levels by ceasing to “cover” our GA withholding with presbytery monies. We see this as a “Relief of Conscience” measure, similar to the relief offered us, and others, by the Board of Pensions/Major Medical regarding the funding of abortions. For our part, we would like to re-commence the payment of our presbytery and synod allotments of Ecclesiastical Apportionment. We are aware that other presbyteries have a policy consistent with our proposal in order to allow their churches’ voices to be heard. We would hope that Albany would consider a similar policy. Thank you for your consideration.

Council received the following endorsement from Brunswick related to this overture:

The Brunswick Session on April 5, 2011, voted unanimously to support the overture of the First Presbyterian Church of Corinth regarding apportionment. We believe it is important that Corinth's voice be heard and that presbytery not cover or make up from other funds what Corinth withholds from any governing body.

2. At its meeting on September 13, 2011, Council will review and prepare a recommendation on proposed Mission and Ecclesiastical Budgets for 2012. **To assist commissioners to prepare for receiving Council’s recommendation, draft Mission and Ecclesiastical Budgets for 2012 as prepared by the Budget and Finance Committee and Mission Review Committee are presented as an attachment to this report for information and review.**