

PRESBYTERY OF ALBANY
TWO HUNDRED SEVENTY-NINTH STATED MEETING

Brunswick Presbyterian Church, Brunswick, NY

January 29, 2011

WE GATHER IN GOD'S NAME / WE WORSHIP AND PREPARE TO SERVE GOD

The Presbytery of Albany met in stated session on Saturday, January 29, 2011, at the Brunswick Presbyterian Church, Brunswick, NY. The Rev. Kirianne Riehl, Moderator, called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. The meeting was held in the church Worship Center. The meeting began with a selection of music presented by the Brunswick Praise Band and an opening prayer by the Moderator.

The Presbytery paused for a Memorial Moment to remember the life and ministry of the Rev. Dr. Charles Woodman who had been a member of Albany Presbytery since 1994 and who died on December 27, 2010. The Rev. Eric Fagans shared his personal memories of Charlie. The following was included in the Meeting Packet:

The Rev. Dr. Charles E. Woodman, member of Albany Presbytery since 1994 and pastor of the Stillwater United Church died on December 27, 2010. Known to most in the Presbytery as Charlie, he was a wonderful pastor, colleague, friend, mentor, musician, and shepherd. He served on a variety of committees and task forces for Albany Presbytery in areas of visioning, evangelism, transformation, redevelopment, and pastoral care. He served on and chaired the Personnel Committee for a number of years. He, along with others, made presentations to help us understand the difference between adaptive and strategic thinking. Words that describe Charlie and his ministry include creativity, music, inclusion, flexibility, and sense of humor.

Many remember him for his upbeat way of speaking (whatever the topic), his guitar accompaniments, and the story he told of the sardines and the whale, which got people laughing and thinking.

The hope, grace, and dignity that Charlie showed in his difficult journey through the last several years as he battled liver cancer provide a courageous example for us all, including his colleagues within the Presbytery he considered part of his family. Many will remember and give thanks for his sharing in worship leadership at the Presbytery meeting in Valatie just weeks before his death. His wife Pam and his sister Mary continue as active members of Albany Presbytery and live on to do God's work in his memory.

GREETINGS FROM THE HOST CHURCH

Elder Niki Campbell Clark of the Brunswick Presbyterian Church greeted and welcomed the Presbytery and gave directions for the day.

WE PRESENT OUR OFFERINGS OF MISSION AND MINISTRY

The roll was compiled; the Stated Clerk announced a quorum was present and noted the number of those from whom he had received requests to be excused and those who need to arrive late or leave early. Voting delegates at the meeting included 56 ministers of Word and Sacrament, and 48 Elders: 43 Elders representing 37 Congregations, and 5 who are members of the Presbytery Council or chair committees or task forces. An additional 21 people signed in as visitors. Those attending their first Presbytery Meeting were introduced and welcomed.

MINISTERS ENROLLED

John Aldridge	Larry Greenwold	Laura Lovell Mitchell	Rob Rose
Michael Burkley	Tom Gregg	David Moore	Frances Wattman Rosenau
Holly Cameron	Harry Heintz	Jim Mosher, HR	Hwa Sung Ryu
Kathleen Chesnut	Doug Holmes	Hugh Nevin, HR	Nadeem Sadiq
Cheryl Colt	Beth Illingworth	Bonnie Orth	Cass Shaw
Timothy Coombs	Earl Johnson	Rick Otty	Sam Shinn, HR
Steven Cronn	Kate Kotfila	David Park	Al Siegel, HR
William Dodge, HR	Ruth Kuo	Mary Jo Pattison	Don Stake, HR
Donna Elia	Glenn Leupold	Stewart Pattison	Katy Stenta
Leif Erickson, HR	Alexandra Lusak, HR	Jackie Pinkowski	Bebb Wheeler Stone
Eric Fagans, HR	Dennis Maher, HR	Michael Plank	Susan Strang
Donna Frishknecht	Linda Martin	Paul Randall, HR	Danny Wheeler, HR
Chris Garrison	Roland "Mac" McDonald	Jim Reisner	Lois Wolff, HR
Robert Goodin	Jerry McKinney	Kirianne Riehl	Pam Woodman

MINISTERS EXCUSED AND HONORABLY RETIRED

Rolf Ahlers
Ken Applegate
John Barclay
David Bennett
Alan Brokaw, HR
Viki Brooks
Ted Brothers, HR
Bob Criswell, HR
Marsha Cutting, HR
Larry Deyss
Lois Dodge, HR
Peter Durkee, HR
Barbara Florysak, HR

Robert Garvin, HR
Doug Gray, HR
Robin Greene
Rupert Harris, HR
Scott Hicks, HR
Rich Hoffman
Paul Hopwood, HR
Kathi Jones
Stark Jones, HR
Vincent Kumjian, HR
Bob Lamar, HR
Miriam Lawrence Leupold
John McAuley

David McMillan, HR
Shannon Meacham
Bruce Miller, HR
Jim Miller, HR
Peg Miller, HR
Ed Morren, HR
Mary-Lynn Morrison
Shirley Mosholder, HR
Myron Nichols, HR
Harvey Noordsy, HR
Tom Parsons, HR
Rich Patterson
Don Pepper, HR

William Rambo, HR
Joe Shook, HR
Allen Siebold
David Simmons, HR
Robert Smith, HR
Charles Stratton, HR
Helenmarie Sunkenberg, HR
Dick Symes, HR
Nick TeBordo
Jim Thompson, HR

MINISTERS ABSENT

Patricia Davies
James C. Davis
John "Jay" Ekman
Kathy Gorman-Coombs

Lucy Harris
Andy Little
Bert Mayne
Jeff Palmer

Cheryl Peaslee
Susan Rambo
Kathryn Shaffer
Greg Town

Rebecca Town
Mary Woodman
Elaine Woroby

MINISTERS LIVING OUTSIDE THE BOUNDS (EXCUSED)

Fergus Cochran, HR
Rick Hill

Albert Newman, HR
Paul Wilson, HR

Jane Watt, HR

ELDERS ON COUNCIL OR CHAIRING COMMITTEES OR TASK FORCES

Corlin Bauhofer (Excused)
Gale Bury (Absent)
Diane Calvanese (Excused)
Barbara Cervenka

Gloria Ghirarduzzi (Glens Falls First)
Don Hyman (Excused)
Cara Molyneux
H. Daniel Rogers

Irving Smith, Jr. (Absent)
Sal Scicchitano

CONGREGATIONS REPRESENTED BY ELDER COMMISSIONERS

Albany, First
Albany, New Covenant
Albany, West End
Albany, Westminster
Amsterdam United
Broadalbin
Brunswick
Cambridge
Charlton Freehold
Corinth
Delmar
Glens Falls Chapel
Granville
Guilderland
Hoosick Falls
Hudson Falls
Hudson Falls
Johnstown
Lake George, Caldwell
Lake Luzerne
Lansingburgh
Loudonville

Sue Haney
Ethel Cooper
Susan Beale
Allan Tedrow
Laurie Bargstedt
Samuel Jackling
Niki Campbell Clark
Elizabeth Breault
Ted Eighmie
William Fuller
Lois B. Hessberg
Carol Henderson
Barbara Wheeler
Marian Nitsky
Joyce Brewer
Diane MacIntosh
Karen Northrup
Ruth Carey
John Boucher
Joyce McKnight
Mary Ann Whelden
Elsie Jean Rew

Mayfield
Mayfield
New Scotland
Northville
Rensselaer
Rensselaer
Schenectady, State Street
Schenectady, Union
Schenectady, Union
Schoharie
Shushan
Spencertown
Stillwater
Tribes Hill
Troy, FUPC
Troy, Oakwood
Troy, Third
West Charlton
West Charlton
West Hebron
West Hebron

Mary Lou Bryan
Nancy Frank
Christine Cameron
Clifford C. Wray
Howard Dickson
Ruth Dickson
Goldie Harald
Liz Mastrianni
Toni Masaitis
Donn Stanley
Carol Brownell
Lynn Brown
Patrick Nelson
Julie Robbins
Peggy Smith Savchik
Marlene Conlan
Jerry Whitman
Frederick Lachtrupp
John King
Don Campbell
Alice Caldwell

CHURCHES NOT REPRESENTED BY ELDERS

Albany, Roessleville
Ballston Spa
Breakabeen-North Blenheim
Carlisle
Cohoes
East Hebron
Esperance
Gloversville
Greenwich

Hudson
Jewett
Johnstown
Lake George, Bay Road
Malta
Mechanicville
Menands
Poultney
Putnam Station

Rensselaerville
Salem
Saratoga
Schaghticoke
Schenectady, Christ's Church
of the Hills
Schenectady, Korean
Scotia
Stephentown

Valatie
Warrensburg
Waterford
Watervliet, First
West Galway
Whitehall

STATED CLERK'S REPORT

1. Upon motion duly made and seconded, Presbytery **ACTED** by voice vote without objection to seat the following as Corresponding Members: The Rev. Susan Goodin (Susquehanna Valley Presbytery) and the Rev. Alice Trowbridge (Chicago Presbytery).
2. Upon motion duly made and seconded, Presbytery **ACTED** by voice vote without objection to approve the docket for the meeting as distributed with the pre-meeting packet.
3. Upon motion duly made and seconded, Presbytery **ACTED** by voice vote without objection to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2010, Stated Meeting as distributed.
4. The Clerk moved, and it was seconded, that the items on the consent agenda for the Committee on Ministry (COM) be approved. The Moderator asked if any presbyter requested any item on the consent agenda be removed. The Rev. Tom Gregg asked to remove one item related to FICA withholding so that it could be corrected. The Moderator indicated that this item will now be considered during the COM report. All items that remained on the consent agenda were **APPROVED** by a unanimous voice vote. These items are recorded under the COM section of these minutes.
5. Upon motion duly made and seconded, Presbytery **ACTED** by voice vote without objection to grant permission as required by G-8.0502 and as requested by the Session of the Oakwood Presbyterian Church to lease its Sanctuary to the Capital District Christian Church on Sunday mornings from 11:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. and on Thursday evenings from about 6:30 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.

The following were presented for information:

1. The Greenwich Presbyterian Church will host the next stated presbytery meeting on Tuesday, April 12, 2011, beginning at 4:00 p.m.
2. The following are the remaining Presbytery stated meeting dates for 2011:
Saturday - June 11 at 9:30 a.m. at the United Church of Cohoes
Tuesday - September 20 at 4:00 p.m.
Saturday - November 12 at 9:30 a.m.
Host churches with certain program-related facilities are being recruited by Council for meetings in 2011.
3. Attached are the Membership Rolls of Albany Presbytery effective December 31, 2010.
4. Attached is a report on payment of Mission Pledges by member churches effective December 31, 2010. The Clerk noted that additional pledge payments were received after December 31, 2010, and those payments will be reported in the next quarterly report.
5. Attached is a report on payment of Per Capita by member churches effective December 31, 2010. Late payments received through January 26, 2011, are included in the report.
6. The Stated Clerk has reviewed the 2009 minutes of five churches that were turned in following the November 16, 2010, Stated Meeting. This brings the total number of churches which have had their minutes reviewed for 2009 to 68 out of 72. The Session and Congregational Meeting Minutes of the following church were approved with exceptions as noted in parentheses: Hoosick Falls Church (16), Cornerstone Community Church (Lansingburgh) (7), Jermain Memorial Presbyterian Church, Westminster Presbyterian Church (Schenectady), and First Watervliet (15). The minutes of the following four churches have not been provided yet for review: Carlisle, Greenwich, Mechanicville, and Scotia.
7. Former Albany Presbytery Candidates Marjory Jean Roth and Russell W. Roth were ordained by Geneva Presbytery on December 5, 2010, and they have begun their ministry as pastors of the Wolcott and Huron Presbyterian Churches in Wolcott, New York.
8. Upon the request of the member's wife, a letter of transfer has been issued for Harold Beckert (an inactive member of the former Jermain Memorial Presbyterian Church) to the Palms West Presbyterian Church in Florida. Upon request from the pastor of the Bethany Presbyterian Church in Menands, a letter of transfer has been issued for Susan Pratt (an active member of the former Jermain Memorial Presbyterian Church) to the Bethany Presbyterian Church. Claire K. Finkelstein (an active member of the former Jermain Memorial Presbyterian Church) has been removed from the rolls due to her death on January 3, 2011.

GENERAL PRESBYTER'S REPORT

General Presbyter Cass Shaw began her report with a reading from Psalm 63:1-4 and then shared some reflections on the Beatitudes from Jesus' Sermon in the Mount in which Jesus still calls us to a radical hope and a radical way of life regardless of the values of our culture or of what is happening in the world at any given moment.

PRESENTATION ON PROPOSED AMENDMENT 10-1 (nFOG)

The Stated Clerk presented a Power Point presentation prepared by the PC(USA) concerning proposed Amendment 10-1 to adopt a new Form of Government including the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity. Elder Joyce Brewer, elder commissioner from Albany Presbytery to the 219th General Assembly and a member of the GA committee that recommended the new Form of Government to the General Assembly described the work of that committee and her experiences serving on that committee.

SMALL GROUP CONVERSATIONS

Commissioners broke up into the following four small groups for informal conversation for about 45 minutes:

Proposed Amendment 10-1 (nFOG) led by Dan Rogers and Joyce Brewer
Company of Elders and Pastors led by Kate Kotfila and Cass Shaw
Recruiting Pastors and Interns led by Kirianne Riehl
Mission Trip Opportunities led by Jim Reisner

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY REPORT

The following items were presented to the Presbytery for information:

1. COM met on November 10 and December 8, 2010, and on January 12, 2011.
2. Received a request from the Board of Trustees for an opportunity to partner with COM to consider options to make available funds from the sale of properties of dissolved congregations to ongoing congregations within the Presbytery for them to use for capital building improvements and invited the Board to meet with the committee to discuss this matter on Wednesday, March 30, 2011.
3. Received a report from the Triennial Visit Task Force on the visits they had made in 2010. Donna Elia presented this report to Presbytery at later during this meeting. Donna highlighted the need for more people to serve on the task force.
4. ACTED to excuse the Rev. Cass Shaw from required Boundary Awareness Training in November 2010 because she was out of the country on a mission trip. She is expected to participate in Boundary Awareness Training in 2011.
5. ACTED to adopt new Continuing Education and Sabbatical Guidelines developed by the Pastoral Care Subcommittee. The Guidelines have been posted to the Presbytery web site and copies were provided in the meeting packet for this Presbytery meeting. For the record, the Guidelines are appended to these minutes.
6. ACTED to approve placing the Rev. Bob Goodin and the Rev. Rick Otty on the Approved Preaching List.
7. ACTED to approve revised contract terms for the Rev. Larry Greenwold at Tribes Hill Presbyterian Church.
8. Received a report on recent activities at the Pakistani-American Fellowship including celebration of the sacraments of communion and baptism.
9. ACTED to provide partial financial sponsorship as has been done in the past for a luncheon sponsored by the Board of Pensions for retired clergy, wives, and survivors in the spring.
10. Received a report from Tom Gregg on his plans to resign from the committee and move to California this summer to join his family and the resulting need for a new committee chair to be elected. This need will be referred to the Committee on Nominations.
11. ACTED to approve a "Policy Regarding Minister Members Desiring to Seek a New Call Within the Bounds of Albany Presbytery". The Policy has been posted to the Presbytery web site and copies were provided in the meeting packet for this Presbytery meeting. For the record, the Policy is appended to these minutes.
12. ACTED to approve a request from Lauren Grogan (wife of Michael Plank, Pastor at the Hudson Falls Church) for \$300 in financial support to attend the PC(USA)'s "Next Church" Conference with Michael at the end of February 2011. Funds will be taken from the Restricted COM Training Funds account with the understanding that she will provide a report/training for COM after attending the conference.

The following recommendations were presented and APPROVED by Presbytery as part of the Consent Agenda:

1. RECOMMENDED Presbytery approval for renewal of the contract between the Rev. Donna Elia and the session of the Hoosick Falls church for another year at Presbytery minimum terms.
2. Due to the death of the Stillwater United church's pastor, the Rev. Dr. Charles Woodman, RECOMMENDED that the Rev. Jim Mosher be appointed to serve as moderator starting on February 1, 2011, until an interim pastor is in place. Cass Shaw will moderate session and congregational meetings at the church in January 2011.
3. RECOMMENDED that Presbytery approve the request of the New Covenant Presbyterian Church congregation to have a Small Church Nominating Committee for 1 year. The congregation meets the requirements of G-14.0226.b.
4. RECOMMENDED that Presbytery approve the request of the West Galway Presbyterian Church congregation to allow Elders Cindy Colby and Robert Eaton to serve an additional 3-year term having already served two consecutive 3-year terms. G-14.0226.c.
5. RECOMMENDED that Elder Bill Henderson be authorized to administer the Lord's Supper at the Brunswick Church during the month of February 2011 after receiving instruction from pastor Harry Heintz. Rationale: Bill is a member of the Brunswick Church and the Rev. Harry Heintz, Pastor, and the Rev. Rich Patterson, Parish Associate, will both be away during the month of February.
6. RECOMMENDED that Presbytery approve a contract between the Rev. Ken Applegate and the session of the State Street Church to serve as Temporary Supply and Moderator effective February 15, 2011, for up to 6 months at the following terms: 10 hours per week with compensation of \$800 per month. Study leave and vacation in accordance with Presbytery policy.

The following recommendations were presented for Presbytery discussions and action:

Elder Bill Morris, COM Member, introduced Candidate Elizabeth Shen O'Connor to be examined for ordination and membership. The Rev. Tom Gregg, COM Chair, introduced the Rev. Susan Goodin to be examined for transfer of membership. Elder Debbi Waggoner, COM Member, introduced the Rev. Alice Trowbridge to be examined for transfer of membership.

Tom directed the attention of Presbytery to the statements of faith and biographical information that had been provided for each of these women in the pre-meeting packet. He also reviewed the examination process that will be used which included the following question to be answered by Candidate O'Connor:

How did the process of inquiry and candidacy challenge and/or strengthen your sense of call to the pastoral ministry?

He also reviewed the following questions to be answered by the Rev. Goodin and the Rev. Trowbridge:

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?

Details of each contract for these three candidates follow:

- Following a satisfactory Clearance Interview with COM members, COM RECOMMENDED that Candidate **Elizabeth Shen O'Connor** (a candidate under care of Seattle Presbytery) be examined by Albany Presbytery (as Presbytery of Call) for ordination by Seattle Presbytery (as Presbytery of Care) as a Minister of Word and Sacrament to the Temporary Supply position at Brunswick Presbyterian Church, and pending her actual ordination by Seattle Presbytery, that she be approved to serve as Temporary Supply. It is noted that a Candidate may serve as a Temporary Supply without being ordained but may not administer the Sacraments until she is ordained.

COM has reviewed and found acceptable and therefore RECOMMENDED APPROVAL of the following terms for the proposed Temporary Supply agreement between Elizabeth Shen O'Connor and the Session of Brunswick PC: full-time for 1 year and renewable for additional 1-year terms; start date to be around mid-March 2011 once date of ordination is set by Seattle Presbytery; total effective salary - \$42,000 (including housing allowance); medical reimbursement - up to \$1,500; pension and medical dues - \$13,703; social security offset - \$3,328; continuing education - \$1,590; professional reimbursable expenses - \$545; travel (mileage) reimbursable expenses - \$1,400; total compensation - up to \$64,066. Payment of full moving / relocation expenses. Study leave - minimum 2 weeks. Vacation - minimum 4 weeks to include four Sundays. Participation in Albany Presbytery's Continuing Education/Scholastic Leave Program. Participation in Early Ministry Institute.

- Following a successful Clearance Interview by COM members, **RECOMMENDED** that Presbytery examine the **Rev. Susan M. Goodin**, Presbytery of Susquehanna Valley, for transfer of membership so that she may enter into an agreement with the Session of the Caldwell Presbyterian Church of Lake George to be its Interim Pastor effective January 1, 2011, through December 31, 2011, and to be its Moderator upon transfer of membership with the following terms: Full-time; salary \$22,609; housing allowance \$21,501; tax sheltered annuity \$500; pension and medical dues \$14,193; social security offset \$3,407; other medical benefits 1,144; continuing education allowance for travel \$1,590; professional development expenses \$1,626; regular travel reimbursement \$2,984; medical deductible reimbursement \$466; total compensation \$70,000. Study leave and vacation in accordance with Presbytery policy. If the Rev. Goodin is accepted for membership in the Presbytery, COM **RECOMMENDED** that Presbytery extend thanks to the Rev. Tom Parsons for serving as moderator at the Caldwell church since November 1, 2010.
- Following a successful Clearance Interview by COM members, **RECOMMENDED** that Presbytery examine the **Rev. Alice Trowbridge** for transfer of membership from Chicago Presbytery to be a Member At-Large.

Candidate O'Connor responded to the question prepared by COM. The floor was opened for questions and answers following the new examination process. A motion to arrest the examination for ordination and membership was made, seconded and **APPROVED** by a voice vote.

The Rev. Goodin and the Rev. Trowbridge then responded to the questions prepared by COM. The floor was opened to questions and answers by each candidate following the new examination process. A motion to arrest the examinations for transfer of membership was made, seconded and **APPROVED** by a voice vote.

The three candidates were excused.

After some discussion, by motion made and seconded, the examination for ordination was **SUSTAINED** and the transfer of membership and contract terms for Candidate Elizabeth Shen O'Connor were **APPROVED** by voice vote.

After some discussion, by motion made and seconded, the examination for transfer of membership was **SUSTAINED** and the contract terms for the Rev. Goodin were **APPROVED** by voice vote.

After some discussion, by motion made and seconded, the examination for transfer of membership was **SUSTAINED** for the Rev. Trowbridge by voice vote.

The three candidates were called back to the sanctuary and received congratulations from the Presbytery.

- ◆ Following a successful Clearance Interview by COM members, COM **RECOMMENDED** and Presbytery **ACTED TO APPROVE** by a voice vote the following contract between the **Rev. Catherine Kotfila and the Session of the Cambridge Presbyterian Church** to be its Stated Supply and Moderator effective January 30, 2011, through January 30, 2012, with the following terms: 20 hours per week; housing allowance - \$29,476; social security offset - \$2,255; continuing education allowance - \$795; professional expenses - \$313; total compensation \$32,839. Study leave (minimum 2 weeks) and vacation (30 days including four Sundays) in accordance with Presbytery policy. COM **RECOMMENDS** that Presbytery extend thanks to the Rev. Mary Woodman for serving as moderator at the Cambridge church. COM has counseled with the minister and the session about pension (403b Plan) possibilities as well as medical and travel reimbursement and recommends that the Presbytery approve the contract as presented. The Board of Pensions does not require temporary positions to be part of the BOP program.
- ◆ Upon motion duly made and seconded, Presbytery **ACTED** by voice vote to concur with the action of the congregation of the First Presbyterian Church of Glens Falls and to approve the dissolution of the Rev. Cheryl Colt's relationship there as Associate Pastor effective January 31, 2011.
- ◆ Following a successful Clearance Interview by COM members, COM **RECOMMENDED** and Presbytery **ACTED** by voice vote to approve the contract between the **Rev. Cheryl Colt and the Session of the Charlton Freehold Presbyterian Church** to be its Stated Supply and Moderator effective February 1, 2011, through January 31, 2012, with the following terms: 2/3-time (32 hours per week); salary \$17,020; housing allowance \$14,000; tax sheltered annuity \$1,980; medical allowance \$333; total effective salary \$33,333; pension and medical dues \$10,500; social security offset \$2,399; other benefits \$276; continuing education expense allowance \$1,060; professional reimbursable expenses \$417; travel reimbursement \$510; total compensation \$47,985. Study leave and vacation in accordance with Presbytery policy. If the contract is approved, COM **RECOMMENDED** that Presbytery extend thanks to the Rev. Joe Shook and the Rev. Tom Gregg for serving as moderators at the Charlton Freehold.

I. COM **RECOMMENDED** and Presbytery **ACTED** by voice vote to approve Honorable Retirement status for the Rev. Dr. Marsha Cutting effective January 31, 2011.

2. Following receipt of a request from the Session of the Warrensburg Presbyterian Church and in accordance with Appendix 3 of the Standing Rules, COM RECOMMENDED and Presbytery **ACTED** by a nearly unanimous (definitely more than 2/3 as required by the Standing Rule) voice vote to waive 50% of their per capita for 2010 and 50% of their per capita for 2011 with the condition that the session will keep its previous commitments to work with Tim Coombs and Lucy Harris on discernment for the future and that COM representatives will visit with them at mid-year for an update review of what discernment has taken place.

For the record, the following RATIONALE was provided by COM for its recommendation:

The Warrensburg request raises another of the pressing issues facing the Albany Presbytery. It is a legitimate request and yet one that does not yield to a simple response. We have a number of churches facing serious challenges with respect to keeping their ministry a viable force in the lives of the congregation and in their larger community. There are times when a temporary relief from financial pressures can make a difference. However, when we grant relief from ecclesiastical apportionment we are asking sister churches in the presbytery to bear that burden for the duration of the period of relief. This is understood as a part of our greater mission as a connectional denomination committed to supporting Christ's ministry to the best of our ability. However, sister churches have the right to ask if this is a meaningful act of support. It is with this balance in mind the Committee on Ministry reviewed this request and proposes to review any other such request that might come forward in the future.

In conducting our review we have not created a rigid template. We have attempted to ask a series of thoughtful questions that we believe useful in helping shape a recommendation to presbytery that is considerate of the needs of the requesting congregation and balanced in using our resources in a manner we believe can "make a difference" in the life of a ministry.

The questions we have examined are:

- Does careful review of the congregation's financial status reflect a legitimate need?
- Have reasonable measures been taken to carefully manage costs so as to maximize the impact of available resources?
- Has the congregation been in consultation with the COM in advance of making this request?
- Has that consultation explored alternative strategies that might be employed to address their concerns?
- Are there action steps currently underway that may reasonably be expected to make a difference in the time frames for which relief is requested?
- Should the action steps prove not to be sufficient to make a meaningful difference in the viability of the congregation as currently organized are the church and COM willing to return to consider other courses the congregation may pursue?

The request from the Warrensburg Session and COM reply provide some background that speaks to these issues. Neither does justice to the extent of past deliberations nor the commitment to continuing to work together, but we believe each of these questions can be answered in the affirmative and that the relief requested is an appropriate request for presbytery support.

3. 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.

4. The Rev. Donna Elia, chair of the Triennial Visit Task Force reviewed their report for 2010. For the record, a copy of the report is included as an appendix to these minutes.

LUNCH

Presbytery recessed from about 12:15 p.m. until 1:00 p.m. for a buffet lunch that had been prepared by the Pakistani-American Fellowship of Albany and that featured Pakistani dishes.

WORSHIP

Presbytery reconvened at 1:00 p.m. for worship led by the Rev. Nadeem Sadiq and members of the Pakistani-American Fellowship of Albany.

SPEAK OUT

Commissioners were given the opportunity to make announcements or express views in 1 minute or less.

Representatives from Camp Fowler (RCA), Holmes Camp (Presbyteries of Hudson River, New York City, and Long Island), and Skye Farm Camp (UMC) made presentations on their camps and invited churches to consider sending children and youth to these camps now that Hebron Camp and Conference Center has been closed. Tim Coombs reminded the Presbytery of scholarship funds that are available for children and youth to attend one of these camps. He indicated that an application process for camp scholarships will be forthcoming soon.

COUNCIL REPORT

The following were presented to the Presbytery for information:

1. The Council met on November 9 and December 14, 2010, and on January 11, 2011. The next meeting of Council will be at 2:00 p.m. on February 8, 2011, at the West End PC in Albany.
2. Council adopted the following procedure for consideration of the proposed new Form of Government (nFOG) (Amendment 10-1) by Presbytery in January:
 - Send a separate e-mail to all minister members and clerks of session with links to the many resources that are available on the internet. This will be done by Presbytery staff by the end of December. Links will include both pros and cons. Offer to send copies of the proposed amendment to those who want a copy, but also note that it is available on-line. Urge all ministers to inform themselves and their elder commissioners about nFOG prior to the January 29, 2011, meeting.
 - Include copies of some relevant documents on nFOG in the pre-meeting packet.
 - Show the PC(USA) power point presentation about nFOG and ask Joyce Brewer (Albany Presbytery elder commissioner to 219th GA who served on the nFOG committee) to make introductory remarks during the morning portion of the January 29 meeting. Follow this with one or two small groups to provide opportunities for conversation and questions and answers about nFOG. Other small group conversation opportunities will also be scheduled for the morning time on January 29; topics yet to be determined.
 - Docket vote on the proposed amendment for the afternoon portion of the meeting.
3. Council created a task force to introduce "Flipping the Presbytery" to congregations, sessions, and Presbytery commissioners and recruited the following to serve on the task force: Chris Urig, Frances Rosenau, Shannon Meacham, Peter McKinney, Kathy Gorman-Coombs, and Chris Garrison. Paul Randall, Council Moderator, convened the first meeting of the task force on January 17, 2011. Kirianne Riehl, Presbytery Moderator, also attended that meeting. The task force decided to rotate leadership among its members.
4. Council appointed the following to serve on a task force to review Presbytery's "Graceful Separation" process and bring recommendations to COM and then to a future Council meeting on how to proceed: Jerry McKinney, David Bennett, Rich Patterson, Chris Garrison, and Tom Gregg.
5. Upon invitation from Council, either Glenn Leupold or Corlin Bauhofer will serve as representatives from the Personnel Committee to Council with voice but no vote for a year. The effectiveness of this arrangement will be evaluated in 6 months to see if Council wants to seek approval for a change in the Standing Rules to make this arrangement permanent.
6. GA Vice-Moderator Landon Whitsitt will visit Albany Presbytery from September 17 to 21, 2011. He will be available to preach upon invitation from a church in the Presbytery on September 18 and will be present at the Presbytery meeting on September 20.
7. Several people will take digital photographs of minister members of Presbytery at the January 29 meeting in order to create a pictorial directory.
8. David Moore has agreed to serve as a representative from Albany Presbytery to participate in a discussion with the Middle Governing Body Commission of GA about the future existence of synods.

9. Council acted to refer to COM a request from Lauren Grogan (wife of minister member Michael Plank) for \$300 in financial assistance to attend the PC(USA)'s "Next Church" Conference with Michael in Indianapolis at the end of February 2011.

10. Council elected Donna Frischknecht to serve on the Mission Review Committee, Class of 2013.

11. Council approved a request from the Fair Trade Coalition of Ballston Spa to have display space at each stated meeting of Presbytery if the way be clear and there is space available at the host church.

12. Council approved a request from Bonnie Orth to display a quilt at the January stated meeting.

13. Council agreed by consensus that Presbyterian Women may pass out flyers on their activities and Tom Gregg may have a table to display books from his and other ministers' libraries for others to review and take if they wish at the January 29 meeting.

The following item was presented by Council for Presbytery action:

Council Moderator Paul Randall presented Council's recommendation for approval of the Proposed Amendment 10-1 to the Constitution – Part 1 of 3 to adopt new Foundations of Presbyterian Polity and Form of Government – commonly referred to as **nFOG** and offered the following RATIONALE: By specifying broad principles of governance as constitutions do, rather than specific rules and practices as procedures manuals do, the new Form of Government allows sessions, presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly to adapt practices, procedures, and structures to the particular needs of their mission contexts. The nFOG would allow for more flexibility and creativity in mission and governance.

After discussion and debate, Presbytery **ACTED TO APPROVE** the proposed Amendment 10-1 to the Book of Order by a nearly unanimous voice vote.

COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY

On behalf of CPM, Cheryl Colt introduced Elder Lynn Hasselbarth, a member of Hamilton Union Presbyterian Church, who was subsequently enrolled as an Inquirer by motion duly made, seconded, and approved by Presbytery. Lynn will be entering Louisville Seminary in the fall of 2011.

MISSION REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Rev. Jim Reisner made a report on unspent mission funds that have resulted from unexpected gifts in the past and encouraged churches to make known their annual pledges to the mission budget so that accurate expense projections can be made.

GOLDEN HAT AWARD

The Rev. Tim Coombs presented the Golden Hat Award (the "Hattie") to the pastor and representatives of the New Scotland Presbyterian Church in recognition of their commitment to the 40-Day Unbinding the Heart program.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT

Co-Chair Don Stake present the following resolution which was **APPROVED** by a voice vote without objection:

Whereas:

Mayor Brian Stratton of Schenectady has sent a letter to all the churches in town asking for contributions in lieu of taxes, at \$10 per curb foot;
and the advice from the General Assembly to churches has been to decline to make contributions in lieu of taxes;
and churches traditionally contribute to the well-being of the community through "in-kind" contributions of services, programs and facilities;
and tax-exemption for churches and religious bodies is part of the separation of church and state;

Therefore:

The Board of Trustees *recommends* that the Presbytery of Albany request of the sessions of its churches lists of those free services, programs or uses of facilities that contribute to the well-being of the community in which they are located; and that such lists be sent to the Board of Trustees at the Presbytery Office by March 1, 2011.

Don also reported on the status of negotiations with another religious organization for transfer of the former Jermain Memorial Presbyterian Church property. He indicated that the Board hopes to have a recommendation to bring to Presbytery for action at the April 2011 stated meeting, if not before at a Special Meeting if timing becomes critical.

ARGYLE ENABLING COMMISSION REPORT

On behalf of the commission, member Jerry McKinney reported that the commission has completed its work. The deeds to the property were transferred to the Argyle Presbyterian Church at a closing on January 21, 2011, upon payment of \$122,000 in full. The church and its pastor have been dismissed to and received by the Presbytery of the East of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The following two members of the former Argyle United Presbyterian Church who wish to remain members of the PC(USA) have been entered on the Rolls of Albany Presbytery: MacAvoy and Rosemary Pendergrass. Records of the former Argyle United Presbyterian Church have been turned over to the Stated Clerk. At the request of the commission and upon motion duly made and seconded, Presbytery **ACTED** by voice vote to dismiss the Argyle Enabling Commission with thanks. The final written report of the Commission is appended to these minutes.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Reporting for the committee, Elder Sue Haney presented the following nominees for approval:

Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)

Class of 2013: The Rev. Alice Trowbridge

Rural and Migrant Ministry Board

The Rev. Michael Plank

Board of Trustees:

Class of 2013: The Rev. Viki Brooks

Nominating Committee

Class of 2013: The Rev. Michael Burkley

The moderator asked for any nominations from the floor. There being none, the above-listed nominees were **ELECTED** by voice vote.

NECROLOGY REPORT

The Moderator read the appended Necrology Report for Elders and Deacons of churches in Albany Presbytery who died in 2010. Representative from churches were invited to read the names of elders and deacons from their churches at the appropriate times. The Moderator led the Presbytery in singing the Doxology and offered prayer.

Worship God Together, then adjourn to go out in Christ's Name as the Church Sent Into the World

The Presbytery acted to express appreciation to the Brunswick Presbyterian Church for hosting the meeting and to the Pakistani-American Fellowship for preparing lunch; to authorize payment of all bills of the Presbytery incidental to the meeting; and to adjourn at 4:00 p.m. following closing worship and the benediction, which included the Sacrament of Holy Communion administered by the Revs. Harry Heintz and Holly Cameron.

The Presbytery will meet next in stated session on Tuesday, April 12, 2011 at 4:00 p.m., at the Greenwich Presbyterian Church, Greenwich, NY, unless previously convened in a constitutional manner.

ATTEST: _____

H. Daniel Rogers
Stated Clerk

APPENDIX FOLLOWS

Report to Albany Presbytery: Enabling Commission for the Argyle Congregation Jan. 29, 2011

In an email on Sept. 24, 2010, from then-Moderator Terry Diggory, our commission was charged this way:

At its stated meeting on September 21, 2010, Albany Presbytery granted the Argyle Enabling Commission the following powers: To oversee the legal and ecclesiastical transfers of property and memberships; to secure church records; to monitor and oversee financial issues; and to provide pastoral care for any Argyle member who wishes to remain in the PC(USA).

We believe that we have now carried out our charge and completed our work.

We were notified by the Stated Clerk that the ecclesiastical transfer took place in the fall of 2010. The Stated Clerk also notified us that he has received the necessary church records from the Argyle congregation and approved of the transfer going forward. We believe that all financial issues directly pertaining to the transfer of the property to the Argyle congregation and the ecclesiastical transfer of the congregation to the EPC have been adequately monitored (especially by our Trustee member, the Rev. Donald Stake). We contacted the two members of the Argyle congregation who indicated a desire to remain in the PCUSA and determined that they desired no pastoral care at this time. The Stated Clerk has been notified that their membership should be transferred to the rolls of Presbytery.

With all this behind us, we met on Jan. 19 and voted that, if the way be clear, (that the Argyle congregation having paid in the full at that time the settlement agreed to), the scheduled closing on Jan. 21 be allowed to go forward and the property be transferred. The Rev. Donald Stake attended that closing and signed the appropriate papers as representative of the Trustees and our commission.

We understand that there are appropriate discussions underway as to how to improve this process and revisions to the process will be made (should it unfortunately be needed in the future) and we may, as individuals, contribute to that discussion and revision but that task was not part of our charge from the Moderator.

We have two requests of the Presbytery going forward:

- 1) To clarify how the money received from the Argyle congregation will be held and disbursed: in a Trustee fund or the General Fund of the Presbytery; in a lump sum or over some period of years.
- 2) To dismiss our commission effective immediately now that its work has been completed.

We thank the Presbytery for the privilege of serving in this way on its behalf.

The Rev. Richard Patterson, Jr., Commission Moderator
The Rev. Jerry McKinney, Commission Assoc. Moderator
The Rev. Donald Stake
The Rev. David Moore
Elder Helen Dickens
Elder Bonnie Donnan
Elder Ted Eighmie