

**November 2013**

# PRESBYTERY MEETING REFLECTION

**By Sheppards & Lapsley Moderator, Neil McCarter**

Though the day began perhaps with some of uncertainty about how the process for this meeting would ensue, the Commissioners enjoyed some relaxing time as they enjoyed the warm and gracious hospitality extended by the members of the host church, Shades Valley.

Moderator Neil McCarter convened the meeting at the appointed time and offered the opening prayer. In the worship service which followed the dispensation of the organizational aspects of the meeting, the Rev. Deb Mullen, Professor at Columbia Theological Seminary, challenged the body with her sermon, "To Pray No Less Boldly." The Scripture passage upon which she based her proclamation was Ephesians 1:15-21, with a focus on verses 15-19. She challenged the body to understand and embrace the reality that the tenor of the times in which

we live are "praying times."

Her sermon will be posted in the near future on the Presbytery's Web site.



Rev. Deb Mullen, Professor at Columbia Theological Seminary

Susan Clayton presented the highlights of the report from The Temporary Executive Board. This new entity has been meeting bi-weekly since its creation at the August meeting of the Presbytery. It has been charged with five primary tasks which bear repeating: 1. To work through May 2014 to fulfill the roles of Council outlined in the Presbytery's Standing Rules; 2. To explore and implement new ways of fulfilling the duties of Council, Divisions, and other entities of Presbytery as outlined in the Presbytery's Standing Rules; 3. To recommend changes to the Presbytery's Standing Rules by the February 2014 Stated Presbytery meeting; 4. To make recommendations to the Presbytery regarding the hiring of outside consultant(s); 5. To make recommendations to the Presbytery regarding partnerships and the sharing of resources with other presbyteries, and work with Nominating Committee to propose Presbytery leadership.

A result of the work of the TEB was the format for the first half of the meeting. After Susan's remarks, the commissioners divided themselves into six "Open Space Groups." From these groups the TEB desired to receive input on a number of questions which are a part of the TEB's discernment process. These groups were: Presbytery Priorities; Presbytery Missional Identity; Presbytery Meetings; Small Church Discussion; Living River Update; and Prayer Group. Members of the TEB facilitated the discussion in each group. There may have been some apprehension on the part of some of the commissioners about the effectiveness to give informative input to the TEB. Your Moderator participated in the Small Church Discussion. He felt that the group produced effective and pertinent input for the TEB as well as it would be useful for the Small Church Committee of the now-suspended Nurture Division in its efforts to serve the small churches in the Presbytery. For those who may want to know the questions being addressed in each group, the Moderator directs you to page 7 in the Presbytery packet.

After enjoying a delicious lunch, the body reconvened to conduct the remaining "business" on the agenda. Leeann Scarbrough presented the Commission on Ministry report. In it was a poignant celebration of the ministry of Harper Valley Church led by Cal Holt and Mary Porter. Harper Valley is being dissolved. The Presbytery also participated in the joyful commissioning service of George Wood to the Marion Junction Church and Ben Arellano to the Woods Church in Dadeville.

The Presbytery approved the retirement of four teaching elders: Dick Pyburn, Sid McCollum, Susan Laney, and Sid Burgess. Each of them and their years of service were acknowledged with remarks from Lucy Turner; James Truesdell; Patrick Laney (by video, a first!); and Joe Slane, respectively. The newly-retired (soon to be, officially) also gave brief remarks about their years of service.

Patti Winter offered a celebratory and moving memorial for the service of CRE Dusti Deaver. Frank Deaver, commissioner from the Covenant Church and husband to Dusti, responded with appreciative comments about Dusti and their life together.



Shades Valley Presbyterian Church

Other highlights of the day included adoption of reports from the Commission on Preparation for Ministry; the Nominating Committee; the Committee on Representative; a concise Finance Committee report which included a clear Treasurer's Report on the financial state of the Presbytery; and a report from the Trustees.

The Budget for 2014 was adopted. The body also approved the Moderator's nominations for the Nominating Committee: to fill vacancies in the Class of 2015, Jeff Bonner and Myra Jo Suttle; Class of 2016, James Goodlet, Rush Watson, and Janet Widell; Moderator for 2014, Dana Waters.

During the Stated Clerk's report, Elizabeth Goodrich yielded the floor to Keener Hudson, Moderator of the Living River Board. Keener excitedly revealed that the checking account for Living River now reflects a deposit of \$2.5 million dollars which came from the estate of Betty Wilson. Construction on some buildings can now begin!

The meeting closed with The Lord's Supper which was officiated by CRE Lin Veasey and the Rev. Ross Reddick. Jeff Bonner offered the closing prayer and benediction.

On a personal note, I believe that the Presbytery is moving in a positive direction as it seeks to discern how best to be a Presbytery. The members of the TEB are providing outstanding leadership. Also, I appreciate the honor and privilege accorded to me by you, my fellow servants, to serve as Moderator in 2013. Thank you!

*Grace and Peace,  
Neil McCarter, Moderator*