

Specially-called Congregational Meeting
First Presbyterian Church
Davenport, IA
July 26, 2020, 10:30 AM

A Congregational Meeting of First Presbyterian Church, Davenport, Iowa was held via video-conference (Zoom) on Sunday, July 26, 2020 at 10:30 AM. The agenda was to provide information from the Presbytery of East Iowa (PEIA) and the receive information about the upcoming staff changes at FPC. The meeting was informational only. No official votes were in order.

The meeting was opened at 10:30 AM by the Moderator, Rev. Pat Halverson with prayer and a reading from Romans 8. The Moderator explained the agenda for the meeting and introduced guests Dr. Rebecca Blair, Stated Clerk for PEIA and Rev. Jennifer Jennings, Moderator of the Ministers and Congregations Commission (MCC) of PEIA and PEIA Liaison to FPC.

At least seventy people attended (70 devices logged onto the conference call plus those attending with someone on the same device).

Information from the Presbytery of East Iowa (PEIA)

Dr. Rebecca Blair, Stated Clerk of PEIA, provided information in three areas: the Administrative Review being conducted by the Synod of the Lakes and Prairies, the Bridging Pastor, and the process of reconciliation.

Administrative Review by the Synod of the Lakes and Prairies

In April 2020, the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission published their Decision and Order on the Remedial Appeal, Harry Hoyt, Appellant v. The Presbytery of East Iowa, Appellee. The GAPJC order included that the Synod of Lakes and Prairies initiate special administrative review of the actions of the Presbytery of East Iowa and its Ministers and Congregations Commission in this case.

Dr. Blair read for the record an e-mail from Rev. Pam Prouty, Stated Clerk of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies and reviewed the contents. Copy of that e-mail is printed here in its entirety.

June 12, 2020

To: Rebecca Blair, Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of East Iowa, Mark Jones, Clerk of FPC, Davenport, Mark, Gailbraith, Moderator of FPC, Davenport and Harry Hoyt

The Synod at its May 4, 2020 meeting authorized the Synod Steering Committee to establish an Administrative Review Committee (G-3.0108b) as well as its duties and responsibilities. At the Special Steering Committee meeting on June 1, the Steering Committee approved the following:

Duties and Responsibilities of the Synod Administrative Review Committee

1. Facilitate reconciliation between all parties involved

2. Identify sources of conflict, distrust, and confusion, making sure all parties involved have an opportunity to speak
3. Facilitate conversations through an open forum, one on one and group interviews, review relevant Session and presbytery records
4. Report to each stated meeting of the Synod and Presbytery plenary through the Stated Clerk
5. Make recommendations to the Presbytery and the Session of FPC, Davenport and to the Synod

Members:

April Davis Campbell – Teaching Elder from the Presbytery of Twin Cities Area

David Feltman – Teaching Elder from the Presbytery of North Central Iowa

Matthew Sauer- Teaching Elder from the Presbytery of Winnebago

Pat Shipley – Ruling Elder from the Presbytery of Missouri River Valley

Kathy Terpstra – Ruling Elder from the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys

Candace Adams – Teaching Elder from the Presbytery of Northern Plains

Diane Wilson -Ruling Elder from the Presbytery of North Central Iowa

Kathy Terpstra and Matthew Sauer are co-chairs and Pat Shipley is the clerk

This committee met for the first time this morning. They are requesting the following documents and information which can be emailed to me, then I will forward to the Committee: (the committee agreed that this communication needs to happen through the respective clerks)

1. All Presbytery minutes from 2018 and 2019
2. Committee on Ministry (or its equivalent) excerpts having to do with the First Presbyterian Church, Davenport from 2018 and 2019 and the COM (or its equivalent) manual of operations and/or policies
3. Presbytery personnel committee excerpts having to do with the removal of Harry Hoyt from Presbytery staff
4. The charge (with member names and contact information) and minutes from the Administrative Commission which is working with the FPC, Davenport
5. A list of Presbytery officers and contact information
6. A list of Presbytery meeting dates for 2020 and locations
7. All Session minutes from 2018 and 2019
8. Session Personnel Committee minutes excerpts having to do with the dissolution of the pastoral relationship with the Rev. Richard Miller
9. A list of Session members and contact information from 2018-2020

I know that the next two weeks are busy with General Assembly business, but would hope that you can draw your attention to this business as soon as possible. We continue to be in prayer for all the parties involved in this process and hope that reconciliation can be found. Please let me know if you have questions/concerns.

In Christ,

Pamela Prouty
Stated Clerk
Synod of Lakes and Prairies

Some additional comments from Dr. Blair included:

- As a committee and not a commission, the Administrative Review Committee will not act on behalf of Synod but rather report their findings to the Presbytery and Synod through the Stated Clerks.
- Indicated that among documents PEIA forwarded to Synod were COM records from 2017 in addition to those requested from 2018 and 2019 and PCC minutes having to do with the removal of Harry Hoyt from Presbytery staff in addition to the Presbytery personnel committee excerpts requested on this topic.

Bridging Pastor

Dr. Blair provided information regarding the Bridging Pastor. This is a path forward for FPC that has been approved by the FPC Session and the Ministers and Congregations Commission of PEIA.

Highlights of this information are presented here:

- The Bridging Pastor process allows carefully selected pastors and churches to be matched through the partnership of the Ministers and Congregations Commission (MCC) and a special search committee working from the church.
- The Bridging Pastor is an experienced pastor with a particular skill set who serves in a complex or conflicted transitional ministry setting.
- The goal of the Bridging Pastor is to lead FPC in the later phase of this interim period and to assist in renewal and reconciliation and preparation for the next called and installed pastor.
- The Bridging Pastor works on a yearly contract, renewable for as long as is necessary.
- The Bridging Pastor has a yearly review.
- Process
 - This will be an experienced pastor with a specific skill set.
 - PEIA and FPC will work together to develop this list of special skills.
 - The MCC puts together a pool of candidates.
 - The MCC and a search committee from FPC will work to create a short list of candidates to interview.
 - The FPC search committee will make their recommendation on the Bridging Pastor.
- The Bridging Pastor is a form of Temporary Pastoral Relationship. These relationships are described in the PCUSA Book of Order, G 2.0504(b) and (c).

Reconciliation

The goal of Synod's review is to move everyone toward reconciliation to healthy relationships. The goal is restoration. The process will include evaluating what dynamics characterize the relationships, what assumptions underlie the relationships, what dynamics lead to conflict, and what processes are used to address conflict. Dr. Blair indicated that one consideration in this process is obtaining the services of Dr. Laurie J. Ferguson, a PC-USA pastor and clinical psychologist, who has experience in leading reconciliation processes.

Staff Changes at FPC

Rev. Jennifer Jennings, Chair of MCC and pastor at Wilton Presbyterian Church, reviewed briefly the process underway to change Pastor Katie Styrts' call with FPC. Rev. Jennings indicated the process for this change includes FPC and Pastor Styrts agreeing to the changes, congregational approval of the changes, and approval of the changes by MCC. She indicated that MCC is aware of this process and will present it to Presbytery favorably.

Moderator Halverson announced that the Session approved the renewal of Pastor's Mark Galbraith's contract with FPC.

Questions and Answers

Question: Does the contract renewal with Pastor Galbraith delay the ability to hire a Bridging Pastor.

Answer from the Moderator: No. The contract indicates that either Pastor Galbraith or FPC can terminate the contract with 30 days notice.

Question: The Session submitted questions to the Synod about the process that were followed in 2018. Those were never answered. Can we expect answers from the Administrative Review? Do we need to resubmit those questions?

Answer from Dr. Blair: When the judicial process began all parties were put in a time-out. The Synod Administrative Review Committee is now given the authority to act. It is expected that the Synod Administrative Review will address those questions.

Response from Mark Jones, Clerk of FPC: The questions from Session to Synod were among the documents forwarded to Synod at their request.

Question: Has PEIA made any changes in their processes as a result of the judicial appeals made.

Answer: No. As noted above, PEIA has been waiting for the judicial appeal process to be completed and will now await the completion of the Administrative Review.

Question: What will be the changes in call for Pastor Katie?

Answer from Pastor Styrts: Current title is Associate Pastor for Pastoral Care, Small Groups, and Spiritual Growth. The new title will be Associate Pastor of Christian Education although the official title is not yet approved.

Question: Please clarify the understanding that PEIA will lead the selection of the Bridging Pastor.

Answer from Dr. Blair: The MCC at PEIA and the search committee elected by FPC will work together on the process.

Question: The Moderator mentioned a document from Jeffrey Gomez would be sent to the congregation.

Answer from Moderator Halverson: No, that was a misunderstanding.

Response from Jeffrey Gomez, FPC Nominating Committee: On July 16, 2020, FPC received the go-ahead to form the Bridging Pastor search committee. They are in the process of asking members to participate in the committee of 5. Two persons have agreed at this point. The slate of search committee nominees will be presented to the congregation at a meeting on August 23, 2020 for approval.

Question: Wasn't the consultant, Dr. Ferguson, for reconciliation previously confirmed?

Answer from Dr. Blair: Not aware that a commitment was made. Asked Jeffrey Gomez if he thought FPC Session was supportive of her selection? Jeffrey responded he thought yes. The issue of cost was

addressed. Dr. Blair said the cost of a reconciliation consultant would be paid by agreement between Synod and Presbytery.

Response Pam Paulsen: Thought the initial discussion on Dr. Ferguson might have preceded the April GA-PJC report. Now that the Synod process is underway, Session might have a different view. Maybe a decision on Dr. Ferguson would depend on Synod's plan for the reconciliation process.

With the agenda completed and no further questions, Moderator Halverson closed the meeting by leading us in the Lord's Prayer. The meeting adjourned at 11:12 AM.

Rev. Pat Halverson, Moderator

Mark Jones, Clerk of the Congregation