

Report of Synod of the Rockies Assembly Meeting, November 13, 2017

Jim Tarr, RE, Synod Assembly Representative

Having participated in all the council gatherings we have in the PCUSA I have a perspective now on the value of God's order for His church. On the major issues we assemble and debate were God is leading and guiding us and at the General Assembly we get a sense of the whole body and how it perceives where we are willing to stand. At the Synod level, our Rocky Mountain Synod receive input from our presbyteries and decided to shift to a minimally functioning synod with no Executive, and to focus on networking, resourcing, and helping our presbyteries partner in various efforts. We help distribute resources of a group of presbyteries that has a sense of regional needs and can direct these resources where they are most needed. At Synod we hear from the General Presbyters about what has been happening and future hopes, dreams, and what their needs and struggles are that *cannot* be addressed at the presbytery level. At every council of our church we seek to care for leaders, select who will lead us, and put in place all the functions that sustain the body as a whole and the hope is always that decisions made will reflect God's will for his church.

Even though the functions of our Synod are being reduced there is the element of nurturing and fellowship the Assemblies can give in support of our General Presbyters that cannot be understated. Our leaders in this function need to gather, experience renewal, and get support from each other as they struggle to serve their presbytery members. At Assembly we listen to success stories that give us hope and we also try to counsel and advise solutions to the problems and issues each of our presbyteries are facing. The PCUSA is undergoing changes and it is being reformed from within and without. It is our hope that it is being done in a way that will insure our churches will continue to help the fellowship become better disciples for Christ and for His church to be a positive force in the world.

This all means we need to be involved and attentive to the work so that we do not neglect our responsibility to help each other and those that lead and guide us. One of the ways we do this is with our generosity and support of time and money which is necessary for practical reasons and to keep a minimum of leadership among us. The per-capita money is just a *minimum* of the support needed. Time and participation at council levels is also needed as there are many ways this can be done and vacancies all need to be filled.

At this meeting we decided to adopt a budget which will show a large reduction in the support of our presbytery and we also voted to send the presbyteries an equal share of a major gift from an estate of one of the long time members of a Synod church. Without this gift (which I think we should acknowledge in some way) we will need to make *major* adjustments to our presbytery budgets, as our Leadership Cabinet has been talking about for a while, and will be focusing on in more depth in 2018.

The gift to Yellowstone Presbytery from the estate of Shannel B. Lorance will be \$12,652. 10 This is a one-time only unrestricted gift. Our Leadership Cabinet discussed that we will treat it as we have the previous block grants from Synod.

The work of the presbytery budgeted by Synod will now be \$0.00 so this previous source towards our funding for administration/staff goes to zero. *Loss of this financial support will be a primary concern for this presbytery.*

I/Jim was elected to serve on the synod nominating committee.

In addition, we have been notified of the following:

Presbytery of Yellowstone Record reviews and information to be sent to Synod Clerk are:

Two Exceptions – No record of the review and approval of records of sessions

No record of the review of adequacy of property and liability insurance. UPDATE: Our Leadership Cabinet, supported by Debbie Blackburn, George Goodrich, with Jack Bell as point person, have been working diligently on this evaluation, and updated quotes for needed new/updated coverage in 2018 for *many* months, finding that it has taken more time than anticipated. They will be bringing our coverage in several areas up to what is needed in today's world and give an updated report to us.

Feel free to advise and guide me as one of our 2 the assembly representatives along with Kathy Goodrich as you see our needs. Please keep in mind to share your prayers and concerns with our Co-General Presbyters George and Kathy.

Draft Synod Assembly minutes will be available if anyone needs to have them.

The Synod Assembly will meet in person Sept 24, 2018 in Denver.

Jim Tarr, RE, Synod Commissioner