

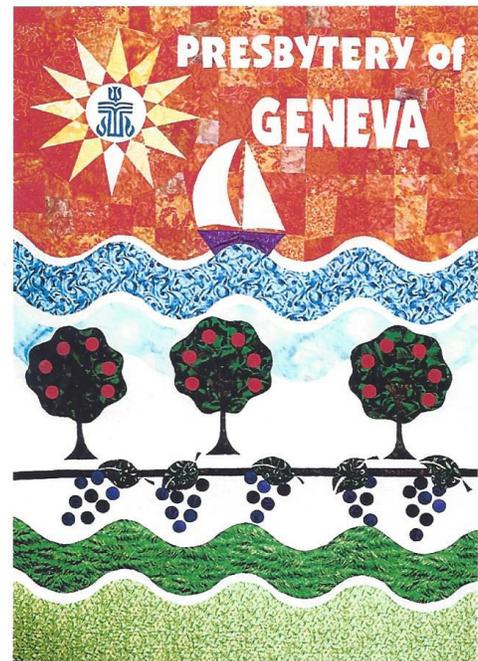
Moderator's letter

Grace to you and peace. I hope to see many of you at the upcoming Presbytery meeting in Lyons, NY on September 19. In this letter we have some "previews of coming attractions" or notes about things to expect at the meeting:

- The SARC report
- A search for a presbytery transition leader
- Closing of the Fairville Church
- Second reading and vote on the temporary standing rules
- The retirement of Rev. Beverly Karr-Lyon

Also in this moderator's letter is:

- A letter re: The Company of New Pastors
- More anniversary celebrations



-David Kilgore

The SARC Report

As noted in the last moderator's letter the Special Administrative Review Committee made its report to the Synod (the body that had created the SARC) in June. At the July General Council meeting that report was shared with Presbytery's General Council. It is finally up on the Presbytery website, and I urge you to read it and bring it with you to the Presbytery meeting. I apologize for the delay in getting the report on the website – it seems that no one on General Council had an electronic copy of the report – we all had paper copies. (how old-fashioned!).

General Council will share that report at the meeting and members of the SARC will be available to answer questions you may have. Then, after lunch we will have an opportunity to reflect on it (I was going to say "digest it," but that might not be a good term coming right after lunch) and discuss it around the tables. Each table will be assigned a part of the report. I will be asking each table to report: what's your initial response; how are we, or how can we, implement the recommendation of SARC; and are there other things we can be doing in this same area?

For those who need some background: back in March 2014 Presbytery's General Council asked the Synod for assistance as it struggled with the tumult in the Presbytery. Synod appointed this special committee in May 2014. In June Presbytery dissolved the relationship between itself and its executive presbyter Joelle Davis, so some of the focus of the SARC's task changed. But the committee has been very helpful in addressing the healing that needs to be done and the work of rebuilding the presbytery. The members of this special committee spent hours interviewing many people in Presbytery; they have met with General Council numerous times; and some members have been at our Presbytery meetings.

Please plan to join us for this time of response.

The search for a Transitional Leader for Presbytery

Many people have asked the logical question: are we going to look for another presbytery leader or executive? Now that we have a little bit better idea – from your responses at the retreat and the May Presbytery meeting – of what we want our presbytery to be like, we are in a better position to look for a new leader. The Personnel Committee will present a slate of names for a search committee. The consensus seems to be that we will be looking for someone to serve in a transitional capacity as we work to rebuild ourselves and continue to discern the directions in which God is pointing us.

In the meantime there has been growing frustration at General Council about the everyday business of running the presbytery. Rev. Jim Yao, the chair of our Budget and Finance Committee, has been in the office every Wednesday to keep track of the finances, but he keeps finding himself having to deal with issues that are not really his job. Council has decided to look for someone to be a temporary presbytery leader until we can elect a transitional leader. We expect this to be a job that lasts four or five months. You will hear more about that at the Presbytery meeting.

The closing of the Fairville Church

The Committee on Ministry will report on the situation at the Fairville Church, a very small congregation that has had a hard time with the upkeep of its building and paying for pastoral leadership. Minutes of the last session meeting of that church, as well as COM's report are on the website. The Presbytery will need to elect an Administrative Commission to handle the closing of the church.

Second Reading and Vote on the Temporary Standing Rules

As SARC did its work it noted that we did not have a commonly agreed upon set of standing rules or an administrative handbook to govern our work. General Council asked SARC for assistance in developing a set of standing rules. They presented that document to General Council in the spring, and the Council made some additions to better reflect the procedures we are presently using. That revised draft was put to the Presbytery for a first reading at the May meeting. At our September meeting we will look at the draft again and vote on it. The standing rules are called "temporary" because so much is in flux right now, but they will guide the presbytery until we either made them permanent or, after living with them awhile, decide on another overhaul.

Along with the old standing rules were numerous addenda – Addendums A through Z and Addendum AA. The new temporary standing rules do not address the guidelines in these addenda. It was decided that we needed to do that over again by proposing these addenda as a first reading, with the idea that we will vote on them at the November meeting and make them an official part of the new Temporary Standing Rules.

The Retirement of Beverly Karr-Lyon

After several years of service to the Watkins Glen Church, Rev. Beverly Karr-Lyon has announced her retirement and applied for the status of Honorably Retired. Please join us at the September meeting as we rejoice in her ministry and grant her this honor.



Greetings from the Office of Theology and Worship! I write today to offer an opportunity to support first call pastors in the critical early years of their ministry, through Company of New Pastors.

Company of New Pastors, a transition into ministry program of the Office of Theology and Worship, has been supporting new pastors as the move from seminary into pastoral leadership roles for more than 15 years. If you are unfamiliar with the program, I have attached some information about Company of New Pastors (CNP) that gives a very brief overview.

To summarize, CNP offers new pastors the opportunity to be part of a mentored clergy peer group for up to four years. Each group meets one to times a year for a three day retreat, and also takes part in two national gatherings – one at the beginning of the program and one at the end. The components of the program are simple: daily reading of scripture, daily prayer, and regular theological reflection in company with others.

Previously, the only way for a new pastor to be part of CNP was to attend a seminary where the program sponsored campus groups, and be chosen to be in the campus group. Because of catalyst grant from the Pastoral Excellence Network, we are able to offer the program to first call pastors who have not been part of a campus group.

The initial cost for the program is covered by program funds, including travel to and from group retreats and national gatherings. After the first group meeting, participants begin to assume the costs of the group retreats on a sliding scale.

The value of peer groups at any point in a life of ministry is documented by research as part of the Lilly Endowment's work on transitioning into ministry and sustaining pastoral excellence. This research has been published in a book available from Chalice Press – *So Much Better: How Thousands of Pastors Help Each Other Thrive*. Company of New Pastors was conceived and launched as part of Lilly's initiative to help new pastors navigate the early years of ministry and become better pastors who serve better congregations.

If you have new pastors that you would like to refer to us for CNP, I would love to hear from you. The criteria are these:

1. Be in a first call less than two years;
2. Be willing and able to participate in a covenant group for up to four years;

3. Be willing to embrace the disciplines of the program, including daily prayer, daily scripture reading and ordered theological reflection;
4. Be willing and able to attend the 2015 Launch Gathering in late October of this year (travel, lodging and meals are covered).

I look forward to hearing from you –

In Christ's service,

Karen Russell

More Church Anniversaries

In the last Moderator's Letter I announced the bicentennial celebrations of the First Presbyterian Church of Pulteney and the Howard Union Church. I have heard of two more celebrations.

The **Ovid Federated Church** is observing a Diamond Anniversary Celebration of working, worshiping, fellowshiping, and serving Christ together as a federated church. A buffet dinner celebration is planned for September 13 at 11:30 am. They extend an invitation to attend to the whole presbytery – call 607-869-2794 to RSVP. Though their Presbyterian and Methodist antecedents go back further they are happy to celebrate 60 years of working together as one congregation.

First Presbyterian Church of Ontario Center is celebrating the centennial of their church building. Pastor Deb Grohman writes: on September 27 we will have our big celebration with worship at 11:00, featuring stories from some of the families who have been instrumental over the years, special music, hymns that were sung and scriptures that were read at the original dedication, and an opportunity to hear God's call to us as disciples in 2015. This will be followed by a luncheon at 12:15 in our parish hall, and an open house of the church building. All the presbytery is invited to attend. 315-524-8561.