

2015 Winter Quarterly
Synod of the Northeast Mission and Ministry Commission
January 30 – 31
Albany, New York

- ◆ Leadership Team
 - Wrote a letter to PMA (Presbyterian Mission Agency) expressing concern about the “One Great Hour of Sharing” campaign publicity. The letter in its entirety can be found on the Synod Website and attached to this report on our Presbytery Website.

- ◆ Mission Working Group approved
 - Higher Education Grants - \$29,500 total
 - Long Island Presbytery
 - Long Island United Campus Ministry
 - Hofstra University
 - New Brunswick Presbytery
 - Stony Brook Union-Protestant Campus Ministry
 - Westminster Foundation at Princeton
 - Northern New England Presbytery
 - Vermont Cooperative Christian
 - Western New York Presbytery
 - ConneXion Campus Church (Campus Church Coalition)

We are hoping the Geneva Presbytery might have Higher Education applications in the future.
 - No innovation grants were approved at this meeting.

- ◆ Network Working Group approved
 - Mediation Network
 - Goal is to train a group of mediators that can be available to help congregations and presbyteries handle conflict and move towards reconciliation

- ◆ Administrative Working Group approved
 - Synod covers the benefits of a half-time associate position that Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) will place within the bounds of the synod. PDA covers the salary. The role is not only to manage response but also engage the synod in preparedness and long-term recovery.
 - The last weekend in October 2015 will be the Synod Missional Celebration and Conference “Come to the Table” [our Synod version of Big Tent] at Silver Bay on Lake George, New York. This is Open to anyone to attend.
 - The last weekend in October 2016 the next Synod Assembly

- ◆ Personnel Committee approved
 - A month sick/health leave for Synod Leader The Rev. Dr. Harold Delhagen. Harold is recovering from very long aggressive radiation treatments for stage 4 prostate cancer. These treatments were completed last week and Harold is resting and recovering until March 15. Harold, his family, and our synod staff all appreciate your love, support, and prayers.

Next Synod of the Northeast Mission and Ministry Commission meeting: March 27-28, 2015, Albany, New York.

Respectfully Submitted,

Virginia A. Champlin, Geneva Presbytery Mission & Ministry
Commissioner



*Letter to Presbyterian Mission Agency
From Synod of the Northeast*

As Presbyterians from the Northeast we affirm the gift of diversity in our life together. We support our denomination's participation in the good work of the One Great Hour of Sharing. We are therefore deeply concerned that the recent attempt by our Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to promote this year's One Great Hour of Sharing campaign perpetuates the sin of racism and whit privilege within this important and historic mission. We acknowledge the actions taken by PMA to revise the campaign, but remain concerned that this action was even necessary.

Many within our regional family, and throughout the Church, have been saddened and offended by the message of this campaign. Framing issues of alcoholism, drug addiction and anger with images of non—white persons is experienced as racist and offensive to many who struggle daily with many forms of discrimination in our society. This campaign bolstered the

narrative that of discrimination in our society. This campaign bolstered the narrative that “they” are the object of our charity. It devalues the struggle for self—determination and development of peoples of color in the United States and, indeed, throughout the world. We affirm that Non—white peoples, and person who struggle with addictions in the communities we serve, are actors and partners in ministry.

As ministry partners we are dismayed by the use of this imagery. The response from throughout the Synod of the Northeast and the Church has been of surprise, dismay, and deep concern for the mission led by the PMA. We join the many voices from within our Church family calling for a pastoral response that apologizes for the pain this campaign has caused, particularly in the areas of race and gender rights, and substance abuse awareness.

Furthermore, we call for an audit of the creation, development and financial implications of this campaign, and for transparency regarding who will be responsible to absorb the \$65,000 that retiring and redrafting this campaign will cost.

We affirm that as Presbyterians, in the Northeast we are called and have committed ourselves to live with, learn from, love, and work alongside the multiple diversities in our region. We call on the PMA and the whole church to respond and commit to this call in our joint witness and mission.

We further call on our presbyteries and congregations to encourage giving to the special offerings of our denomination as a way to bless the intercultural realities and opportunities for ministry in our midst, and as witness to our willingness to learn from and be transformed by others.

Perhaps this is our wake up call to embrace the new realities and gifts within our life together. We encourage all expression of our Presbyterian Church USA to join together in a season of deep reflection, repentance and hopeful imagination in discovering how we might live into God’s desire for us to become the Beloved Community where such missteps are corrected, and new deeper sensitivity may flourish.