

General Council Report to the Presbytery
November 18, 2017
Geneva Presbyterian Church, Geneva, NY

Items in this report are from the October 10 and October 31, 2017 meetings of the General Council.
The General Council will not meet in November 2017.

ITEMS FOR THE PRESBYTERY'S ACTION:

The Council VOTED to recommend that the presbytery:

(Presbytery Mission Statement)

1. **Approve** the following Mission Statement (to replace the current Mission Statement), effective immediately:

***The Presbytery of Geneva lives to support and equip congregations and leaders
to be Christ in the Finger Lakes and the world.***

(Presbytery Meeting Dates)

2. **Approve** the following dates for 2018 stated meetings:

January 27, 2018 (Saturday) – Penn Yan

March 20, 2018 (Tuesday) – Location to be confirmed

May 19, 2018 (Saturday) -- Wolcott

September 25, 2018 (Tuesday) – Watkins Glen

November 17, 2018 (Saturday) – Lake Street, Elmira / Fusion on Fire (location to be determined, in order to provide full accessibility)

(Nominees for the Presbytery Nominating Committee)

3. **Elect** the following persons to the Presbytery Nominating Committee:

Class of 2018 Sylvia Dorschel (Sodus)

Class of 2019 The Rev. David Kilgore (HR)

Class of 2020 Elder Phoebe Baker (Penn Yan)
The Rev. James Gerling (HR)
Elder Carleen Frost, CRE

With these elections, the status of the Presbytery Nominating Committee is as follows:

Class of 2018
Elder Paul Salisbury (Newark)
Sylvia Dorschel (Sodus)
(VACANCY)

Class of 2019
Elder Larry Bates (Bath)
Linda Kataskas (Phelps)
The Rev. Paul Malles (Penn Yan)
The Rev. David Kilgore (HR)

Class of 2020
Elder Phoebe Baker (Newark)
The Rev. James Gerling (HR)
Elder Carleen Frost, CRE

(Administrative Commission for Williamson)

4. **Appoint** Elder Joann Braun (Naples) to the Administrative Commission for Williamson.

(Presbytery Budget & Camp Whitman Budget)

5. **Approve** the 2018 Presbytery Budget and the 2018 Camp Whitman Budget, as presented respectively by the Budget & Finance Committee and the Camp Whitman Advisory Committee.

During the October 31, 2017 meeting of the General Council, the General Council VOTED to approve the following amendments to the two budgets:

- a. **Approve** the following recommendations regarding the 2018 Camp Whitman Budget:
- **Change** income Line 1550 (Presbytery of Geneva Mission Pledge) from \$100,000 to \$115,000.
 - **Change** income Line 1300 W (Camp Whitman Mission/Scholarship Income) from \$132,500 to \$117,500.
- b. **Approve** the following recommendations regarding the 2018 Presbytery Budget:
- **Amend** the 2018 Presbytery Budget Expense Line 5350 (Mission Allocation to Camp Whitman) from \$100,000 to \$115,000.
 - **Adjust** the Operating Budget so that there is no deficit; and the Mission Budget so that there is no surplus.
 - **Dedicate** any 2018 Budget Surplus to repayment of the designated fund accounts.

During the discussion it was noted that if the Operating Budget were fully funded by Per-Capita, the Per-Capita assessment would increase by at least \$6.00 per congregation member.

ITEMS FOR THE PRESBYTERY'S INFORMATION

The General Council VOTED to:

(Coordination of Presbytery Meetings)

1. **Determine** that it is the privilege and responsibility of the moderator to coordinate presbytery meetings during her/his year of service.

(January 2018 Stated Meeting)

2. **Authorize**, if the way be clear, that the January 27, 2018 stated meeting of the presbytery be held at First Presbyterian Church, Penn Yan; and that the November 17, 2018 stated meeting be hosted by Lake Street Presbyterian Church, Elmira and Fusion on Fire, at a location that is fully accessible.

Background

The General Council discussed at length the current invitation of Lake Street Presbyterian Church, Elmira and Fusion on Fire, to host the January 2018 stated meeting of the presbytery.

The stated clerk noted that the invitation likely arose from a suggestion made during a visit to the Lake Street session by him and COM co-chair Ellen Donnan over a year ago. At that time, neither the stated clerk nor the COM co-chair knew that the Lake Street church building is 100% inaccessible.

Elder Kirk Allen is the COM liaison to the Lake Street session; Jane Winters has been liaison and has been connected with the session. The clerk of session is Barbara Dove.

The following process was agreed:

The Moderator will make contact with Elmira, Lake Street regarding the building's inaccessibility, and the possibility of Elmira, Westminister being the location for Lake Street's hosting.

The back-up location for the meeting will be Penn Yan.

Another possibility to be suggested:

That Penn Yan be the location of the January 27, 2018 stated meeting; and that the November 17, 2018 meeting be hosted by Lake Street (with Westminister as the location).

NOTE: These items were followed up, and are reflected in Action Item 2, above: recommendations for the 2018 stated meetings of the Presbytery of Geneva.

(Presbytery Communications Work Group)

3. **Concur** with the following recommendations from the report of the Presbytery Communications Work Group:

(Website)

- That content for the website be prioritized to include information from or about Presbytery, its congregations, and its leaders. In addition, the website will provide information from and about the Synod and the General Assembly. The guiding question to ask is, "*How does this particular item benefit the work of the presbytery, the congregations, the Synod of the Northeast, and the General Assembly?*"
- That congregations be invited to announce their events on the website by providing links to their own websites and/or brief descriptions of their events. An events tab has been added on the home page to help facilitate this.
- That there be a space provided for good news from congregations, brief articles and pictures of congregational life.
- That the Presbytery website not be used to promote individual or corporate businesses or to sell products. [NOTE: There will be a means of tracking the statistics regarding the use of the website.]

(Facebook)

- That the purpose of the Presbytery Facebook page be primarily to promote and connect people to the common life of the Presbytery and to denominational concerns, events, and resources.. *The website may be used for announcing congregational events. Congregations will be encouraged to open their own Facebook pages.*

(Regular E-news Publication)

- That a regular general electronic email distribution be developed that will remind people of upcoming events and connect them timely information. This is definitely a development piece, which will debut early in 2018.

(Moderator's Newsletter)

- It is recommended that the Moderator's newsletter be published following each Presbytery meeting and that the purpose of the newsletter be to highlight what happened at the Presbytery meeting, to announce installations and ordinations, as well as any other activities of the Moderator. The Moderator's Letter will eventually be sent in the context of the e-news publication. The Moderator's Letter could even comprise one of the e-news editions.

(A related item)

The presbytery has received a proposal for providing wi-fi access at all presbytery meetings, incorporating those churches which are not wi-fi connected.

(Horseheads / Cell Tower Lease – action taken in General Council's role as Presbytery Trustees)

4. **Disapprove** the proposed lease with the rationale that it is not a good contract and that it would not be beneficial to the church or to the presbytery to engage in such 25 year lease agreement.
5. **Authorize** A.J. Tierson (co-chair, Committee on Ministry) to communicate this decision to the Horseheads session.

Background

The General Council discussed the issue of First Presbyterian Church, Horseheads, NY leasing a portion of their property for a Verizon cell tower.

- The lease is a 25 year lease for an initial payment of \$3,000 and \$100/month thereafter.

The General Council noted that:

- The amount offered by the company is very small, compared with industry standards.
- The lease will potentially inhibit the sale of the church property, if that ever is an issue.
- The rights and limitations are huge, given the 25 year lease.

(West Virginia Mission Trip – April 2018)

6. **Approve** the West Virginia Mission Trip, to be held in April 2018.