

Administrative Review Task Force on the Presbytery of Dakota

Presented at the May 2007 meeting of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies

This Task Force was created at the January 2007 meeting of the Synod (Action 11-96, Page 2444-6, Minutes, Fifty-ninth Meeting of the Synod, January 2007), with the task to determine if the Presbytery of Dakota “is or, in a reasonable amount of time, can become viable ...”, and to make recommendations based on these conclusions.

Moderator Kathleen Dooley appointed the following people to the Task Force: The Reverend Robert Bouton, Cedar Rapids, IA (EI), CLP Kevin Kaufmann, Devils Lake, ND, (NP), The Reverend Val Putnam, Sioux Falls, SD (SD), Elder JoAnn Simser, St Paul, MN (TCA), and Elder Betty Walker, Burnsville, MN (TCA). Each of these members has significant experience with the Presbytery of Dakota, Native American people, and/or the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. Staffing the Task Force are Synod Executive Phil Brown and Stated Clerk/Treasurer Jay Wilkinson.

The Task Force first met by conference call on February 26, 2007. This meeting was primarily for the purpose of getting to know a bit about each other, reviewing the purpose and assigned tasks of the Task Force, and beginning to set a course for action. The Task Force reviewed the deadline set by the Synod action (the January 2008 meeting of the Synod) and agreed among themselves that while this is a goal, the most important item is to accomplish the tasks.

The Task Force met face-to-face on March 29th and 30th at the Synod office. The group discussed much of the history of the relationship between the Synod (and one of its predecessors, the Synod of South Dakota) and the Presbytery, and the history of earlier reviews. They had a long discussion with Elona Street-Stewart, who was deployed Synod staff to Dakota for a number of years.

One of the tasks begun at this meeting is to define the term “viable” as it relates to presbyteries. What tasks for a presbytery are essential and which tasks are less important? The members reviewed the Book of Order, Chapters G-9 and G-11. The group discussed much of the history of the relationship between the Synod (and one of its predecessors, the Synod of South Dakota) and the Presbytery, and the history of earlier reviews.

The Task Force went through a large number of documents relating to Dakota Presbytery that have accumulated over the years. Each member agreed to study a particular part of the documents and discuss these during a conference call on April 30.

Two of the members, Kevin Kaufmann and Betty Walker, are planning to attend a portion of the May 4-6 meeting of the Presbytery. Jay Wilkinson plans to attend as well.

The next meeting of the Task Force is planned for June 7 & 8, 2007.