

Synod of Lakes and Prairies meeting summary



2115 Cliff Drive
Eagan, MN 55122
651.357.1140

May
Meeting -
Synod of
Lakes and
Prairies -
Mount
Olivet
Retreat
Center -
Farmington,
Minnesota -
May 6-8,
2007

Donna Steven elected moderator for remainder of 2007

Donna Steven, elder commissioner from North Central Iowa Presbytery, was elected and installed as moderator of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies for 2007, completing the remainder of the term of the Rev. Kathleen Dooley, Winnebago Presbytery, who resigned earlier this year.

Donna, a commissioned lay pastor, serves First Presbyterian Church, Lakota, Iowa, on a part-time basis. She is in her second term as a synod commissioner and serves on the Program Coordination Committee. She has also been a part of the worship team for the synod for three years, chairing that team in 2006 and 2007.

She served north Central Iowa as vice moderator of the presbytery in 2005, moderator in 2006, and is currently moderator of the presbytery council. She also serves on the presbytery's transition commission, which is charged with facilitating the presbytery's transformation process.

In addition to their family of three children and their spouses, Donna and her husband Wendell have eight grandchildren. They became great-grandparents for the first time in March 2007.

Synod approves small increase in per capita for 2008

The Synod of Lakes and prairies voted to increase per capita by 8 cents for 2008, raising the synod's share of per capita from \$4.61 to \$4.69. The 8 cents represent an increase of 1.7 percent, an increase that falls well below the current annual inflation rate.

Per capita payments generally cover governing and administrative costs. The per capita costs are apportioned on the basis of presbytery membership. Presbyteries and the General Assembly also have per capita apportionments and the synod's apportionment is the smallest of the three.

According to the background information filed by the synod's Program Coordination Committee, "With the decrease in membership and based on the budget requests for 2008 from the relevant committees and using the same percentages for those items not funded 100 percent by per capita, we can justify an increase in per capita."

The Synod Meeting Summary is published shortly after each meeting of the Synod of Lakes of Prairies. Comments regarding the publication or requests for copies should be addressed to dsweep@lakesandprairies.org.

Synod approves CPSS, CPMS

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies approved 2008 Comprehensive Presbytery Mission and Staff Support for the 16 presbyteries. Several years ago, Comprehensive Presbytery Staff Support was equalized for all presbyteries with staff at \$40,000 per presbytery.

Synod sends peacemaking funds to GA's peacemaking program

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies voted to send all currently accumulated peacemaking funds and subsequent receipts from peacemaking offerings to be sent to the General Assembly's Peacemaking Program.

Background information provided by the Program Coordination Committee stated, "Because we have not had a consistent programmatic structure to which these funds can regularly be assigned, funds have accumulated for the last seven years with no clear indication that those funds, whether currently designated to a particular committee or program at this time or not, will be expended."

It continued, "The committee determined, after reviewing the use of funds by presbyteries, that a more responsible use of those funds could be made by the General Assembly Peacemaking Program which continues to maintain an active program churchwide."

Synod creates task force to study role in campus ministry

A task force will look at the synod's involvement in campus ministry and provide a report to the Ecclesiastical Relations Committee and the synod by January.

The task force, recommended by the ERC, will include three members from ERC, two members from the Program Coordination Committee, two general or executive presbyters, two youth advisory delegates, and an "outside facilitator."

"ERC discussed the need to incorporate the conversation about the process [of determining] allocations for post-secondary education grants to a more comprehensive exploration of the synod's relationship to campus ministry," the committee wrote in support of the task force.

The synod also affirmed a preliminary allocation schedule for funding post-secondary education grants totaling \$233,850 for 19 programs in 2008. The grants fund congregational and campus-based programs and activities that demonstrate spiritual nurture and service to students at colleges and universities.

Synod writes off Bdecan loan

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies, following a recommendation of its Finance Committee, wrote off the synod loan made in 1985 to Bdecan Presbyterian Church, Tokio, N.D., Presbytery of Dakota. The loan had a remaining balance of \$22,385.42.

The committee recommended the action "in recognition of [Bdecan's] 23 years of payments. The payments already received will be acknowledged as payment in full of this loan."

The committee encouraged Bdecan "to use the money previously designated as loan payments to further the congregation's community outreach program for such a time period as seems appropriate to the congregation."

Synod approves Pres Homes, Pres House relationship change

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies approved amendments to the articles of Incorporation and bylaws for Presbyterian Homes and Services of Roseville, Minn., and the Presbyterian Student Center, Madison, Wis. The changes were made to remove the liability of the synod in the event of litigation. The synod also adopted a new covenant relationships between it and Presbyterian Homes and Services.

Mission Development Grants slated for Omaha, Des Moines programs

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies approved the applications for Synod Mission Development Grants for Iglesia Presbiteriana Castelar, Omaha, Neb., in the Presbytery of Missouri River Valley, and Cottage Grove Avenue Presbyterian Church, Des Moines, Iowa, in the Presbytery of Des Moines.

Iglesia Presbiteriana Castelar, a Hispanic new congregation development, will receive \$50,000 over five years with the stipulation that each year's distribution must be matched by local Presbyterian churches.

The grant to Cottage Grove Avenue Presbyterian, a total of \$47,500 distributed over seven years, is contingent on the approval of the Mission Development Resources Committee of the General Assembly. In addition to the grant, the synod approved the application of Cottage Grove for a General Assembly Mission Development Grant for \$95,000 over seven years.

Task force on Dakota Presbytery describes group relationship, tasks

The Administrative Review Task Force on the Presbytery of Dakota presented its first progress report, laying out the working relationship of its members and describing its initial tasks.

The Rev. Bob Bouton, commissioner from the Presbytery of East Iowa and task force member, described the task force's working relationship as a "partnership," noting the task force is working without a chairperson. "We're all in this equally," he said.

He said the task force will likely read up to 25,000 pages of documents before it completes its work, "trying to dig into reports of all things from the beginning of Dakota." He added, "We don't want to rubber stamp anything from the past."

In addition to Bouton, other task force members are Kevin Kaufmann, commissioned lay pastor, Devils Lake, N.D.; the Rev. Val Putnam, Sioux Falls, S.D.; Elder JoAnn Simser, St. Paul, Minn.; and Elder Betty Walker, Burnsville, Minn.

The task force first met by conference call Feb. 26 to get acquainted, review the task force's purpose and develop a course of action. The task force reviewed the deadline set by the synod for action - January 2008 - and agreed that "while this is a goal, the most important item is to accomplish the tasks," according to the task force's written report.

The task force met face-to-face March 29-30 at the synod office, discussing the history of the relationship between the synod - including one of its predecessors, the Synod of South Dakota - and the presbytery, and the history of earlier reviews. Each task force member agreed to study a particular part of the documents related to the presbytery.

Kaufmann, Walker and Jay Wilkinson, the synod's stated clerk and treasurer, attended a portion of Dakota Presbytery's meeting earlier this month.

Synod exec notes cancer return

The Rev. Phil Brown, synod executive, reported that his wife, Lynn Tucker Brown, has experienced a recurrence of cancer. He wrote, "Some of you are aware that since we met in January Lynn experienced a further recurrence of cancer, her third in about two years. While we hold out our hope in her treatment program, the prognosis is not very positive. Yes, we believe in miracles and we, along with countless friends and family members in all parts of the church, are praying for a miracle. Because the cancer has incapacitated her lower body, she is wheelchair bound when she is not in bed. To share lots of details will be of little value. Instead, I want you to know we are hoping to continue an aggressive treatment regimen for the next four to six weeks to determine her capacity to respond favorably. If she does not respond, or if her quality of life becomes further diminished, we will turn to hospice care."