

Branch of Congregational Life
January 11, 2017

Present: Susan Meier, Lynn Bova, David Montgomery, Pamela Short, Juliann Wade

Excused: Clint Tolbert, April Brown, David Bartley

Absent: Julie Fogle

Devotion led by Rev. Dr. Ann Marie Montgomery, “Jesus said, ‘I am the Light of the World.’”

Approval of **Minutes** by consensus

Reports

1.) Lynn Bova, Administrative Consultant for Transformation

Lynn reported that due to the **many vacancies** in churches of clergy she has invited reps from each congregation to read a book and discuss what new ways could we think of for group ministry. She will solicit responses of creative ideas to address pastoral vacancies. (What other groups with whom can we collaborate? Where are areas of cooperation?) We simply do not have enough preachers for pulpit supply. Majority of pastors are part-time (68 churches and less than 20 full-time installed). They will be looking for new models for ministry (quarterly session meetings, trained elders to preach, etc).

Lynn is gathering **new folks** to the Presbytery, as well as people who find themselves in new roles, for support.

2.) Rev. Susan Meier, Presbyter for Common Life- (in addition to written report, see appendix)

Susan met with the Session of **Grace Presbyterian**, at the invitation of Bob Butcher, where she found energy, enthusiasm, excitement and a willingness to join in vital witness in their space. There are two distinct groups in Grace: Those who are over 80 who have faithfully served Christ for decades and are no longer able to physically participate, but remain vital supporters through prayer and the witness of their lives; and those who are younger who have interest in new programs for their wider community. Susan assured the Session that the Presbytery would work with them to provide traditional worship and pastoral care, particularly as it relates to funeral services that will honor their lives with Christ and the church.

She encouraged the Session to envision the possibility for a mission center and/or new worshipping community. She affirmed that their space is the best in Toledo for new mission. Susan made it clear that currently the Presbytery does not have funds available for new projects and encouraged the Session to consider how programs might be funded.

3.) Patrick Harley, Toledo Urban Task Force (see appendix for written report)

Patrick originally committed to 6 months. He is not able to commit to another 6 months. Therefore, Pamela Short, in conjunction with Susan Meier is seeking his replacement.

4.) Lynn Bova , Spiritual Formation Team

The team has not yet had their organizational meeting for 2017. They are working on video that may be put on the website.

5.) **Susan Meier, Beers and Hymns**

Both “Beers and Hymns” and “Beers and Carols” were huge successes! Other similar events are being planned:

Columbus Grove in January

Blissfield in Feb

Devine in Findlay in March

-More reconciliation has been offered in these events than any conflict resolution

-Presbytery will meet there “If you can make it for beer you can make it for Presbytery.”

6.) **Break out groups from November Presbytery Meeting** (see written reports)

7.) **Susan Meier, Child Protection Seminar**- recounted that this seminar held in Tiffin by the Gentz Insurance Agency was well done and well attended. Pamela Short will schedule Gentz Insurance Agency to offer this in the spring of 2017.

8.) **Susan Meier, Professional Misconduct**- held in Adrian was not so helpful. We wish to address “what is relevant to us now?” Focus on dual relationships in the church. Also address financial misconduct, rather than only sexual misconduct. Doug Holmes has volunteered to organize or be part of a group that offers such a training. We suggest we use “Sacred Trust videos”- Marie Fortune’s group. Susan Meier will work with Doug on the 2017 presentation including, but not limited to: Professional Boundaries, Dating, Friendships in the Parish.

9.) **Pamela Short, Provocative Conversations in Stewardship, Tuesday, May 9, 2017**

The Event Flyer will be emailed out to the Presbytery and included in the meeting packet. There are two flyers, one suited for full color printing; the other that is easily printed in black and white

Speakers have agreed to be videotaped; DVD’s will be made available post event

Pamela suggested that we have two additional speakers (who will receive a \$300 honorarium, plus mileage)

Stewardship from a Place of Abundance, will check with Mr. Dan Sauder of Archbold, Ohio

Stewardship from a Place of Poverty- rep from Mt. Sinai church

Q&A submitted via writing

Speakers are to remain after the event to sign books and enter conversations

Pamela will check with the speakers to see if they would like to stay for dinner



10.) **500th Anniversary of the Reformation is Oct 31, 2017**

Ideas were shared: Celebrate that which was good about the Reformation, but also need confession for the brokenness. How can we tell the story accurately? Where is the reconciliation work needed?

The Branch of Congregational Life recommends to Council that we recognize and honor the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. The following may be considered:

Reconciliation conversations over the course of the first 8 months of 2017 with the following groups:

LGBTQA

Racial minorities

Other Christian groups: Roman Catholics, Lutheran, Mennonite, etc.

A Reformation Festival, Sunday, Oct. 29, 2017:

Include booths with ethnic food and such, followed by a worship service.

Possible speakers include Gradye Parsons and his daughter Rachel Parsons; Darcy Metcalf; others...)

Provide resources for congregations to recognize and celebrate Reformation.

Funds would come from the Peacemaking and Justice account.

11.) **Continued discussion on Communion** (see Appendix B, pages 13-14)

Motion: David M. moved and Juliann seconded- "Contributions received at Beers and Hymns will be counted by two unrelated individuals, deposited into Presbytery's account, and placed into a directed fund entitled 'Beers and Hymns'. The proceeds will be dispersed by the recommendation of the Branch of CL for expenses incurred."- *submitted to BCL for email vote.*

Motion: Juliann moved and Pamela seconded- "In 2017 the unmet expenses incurred by the 2017 Montreat College Conference be covered by the Youth Ministry/Camp fund and that in the future a detailed budget will be approved by the BCL through the yearly budgeting process." *submitted to BCL for email vote.*

Meeting adjourned with the LORD's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted by
Rev. David M. Montgomery

Appendix A Written Reports

From: Susan Meier

Sent: Thursday, December 1, 2016 11:10 AM

To: Pam Short (Pamelashort2002@gmail.com) <Pamelashort2002@gmail.com>; Patrick Harley <patrick.b.harley@gmail.com>

Cc: Bob Butcher (aereb@cros.net) <aereb@cros.net>

Subject: meeting with Grace on December 1st

At the request of Grace's moderator, Bob Butcher, I met with the Session of Grace Toledo last night. I called Patrick to see if he could go as well, but he was still on Thanksgiving break.

I shared with the four elders my delight in seeing how much they had accomplished in the draft of the visioning statement that I received. I affirmed the presbytery's desire to walk along side of the visioning process but not to take it over. I encouraged them to be strong spiritual leaders for their congregation and for the African American witness in Toledo.

I told them my own desires were for a vital, thriving Grace congregation in what ever form that could happen. I shared with them the story of First Tampa who engaged in transformation by promising the "old guard" that they would have the best possible traditional service and that their pastor would be available to do their funerals, if... they have free rein to develop a different expression of the church with young adults. (a 10-15 year process, but a successfully accomplished transition).

I acknowledged that past history and changing norms had caught us up before. I also shared my opinion that we will need partnerships of all kinds in the years ahead to continue a multicultural witness to the Gospel.

They shared that they hoped that Patrick would be the moderator of the Task Force.

I found them to be united, hopeful, wise and articulate.

Susan Meier, Presbyter for Common Life

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Update on the Task Force for Urban Ministry in Toledo

As many of us expected, there are many, many layers to the various dynamics and discernment of the hope of Collingwood Presbyterian Church and Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church joining together in urban ministry in Toledo. There has been, though, (big and small) glimpses of the Spirit at work in each congregation as they each seek to be faithful. The following points are some conversations and meetings that have been moving this effort and season of discernment forward. They're in chronological order, as best I can recall:

Mid November: Patrick speaks with Rev. Bob Butcher about the history of the two congregations and the vision for urban ministry as he (Bob) sees it. Very helpful, very positive, and a realization that a lot of work has to be done on crafting a common vision and cooperation before anything can really get off the ground.

November 30: Essentially through consensus over email, the Task Force expands to have 14 total members. 5 from Collingwood + David Aber, pastor; 5 from Grace + Bob Butcher (moderator of Session); 2 from MVP Branch of Congregational Life.

November 30: Covenant for Mission & Ministry (below) is approved by the Session of Grace. It is sent to the Session of Collingwood.

December 1: Rev. Susan Meier meets with the Session of Grace. Her report seemed positive and hopeful.

December 19: The Session of Collingwood adopts the Covenant for Mission & Ministry. Submitted by Rev. Patrick Harley, January 7, 2017

A COVENANT FOR MISSION AND MINISTRY BETWEEN
COLLINGWOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
BOTH IN THE CITY OF TOLEDO

“Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord guards the city, the guards watch in vain. *Psalm 127:1*

We, the congregations of Collingwood Presbyterian Church and Grace Presbyterian Church, prayerfully and with discernment, enter into a covenant together, in the name of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to be together in mission and ministry in the old West End and Englewood neighborhoods of the City of Toledo.

“How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity! It is like the precious oil on the head, running down upon the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down over the collar of his robes.

It is like the dew of Hermon which falls on the mountains of Zion. For there the Lord ordained his blessing, life forevermore.” *Psalm 133*

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

We enter this covenant aware of the ways in which we are alike:

We are all made in the image of God, fallen into sin, and redeemed by Christ.

We are Presbyterians

Our worship forms are similar.

We are urban congregations with declining, older memberships and financial limitations.

We are of comparable educational and social levels.

We are family oriented.

We have under-utilized facilities.

We desire to have a stronger community outreach.

We desire to work together.

We are listening to God speaking to our hearts.

We enter this covenant aware of the ways in which we are different:

Grace is a predominately an African-American congregation.

Collingwood is a predominately white congregation.

Our histories are unique.

Collingwood has a pastor; Grace does not.

Collingwood has a strong music ministry; Grace does not.

Collingwood has two Sunday services. Grace has one Sunday service.

Grace has more experience with grant writing.

Grace has been more successful reaching into the African-American community.

Grace has a newer facility than Collingwood.

Collingwood is on “church row” in the “Old West End”, bordering on Warren-Sherman. Grace is in a central city residential neighborhood.

We are divided by I-75 – but there are bridges!

First and foremost, we recognize that we are one in Christ, made members of His Body by our baptism into Him. (1 Corinthians 12). For in Christ there is neither “Greek, nor Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, Scythian, slave, or free, but Christ is all and is in all.” (Colossians 4:11). No difference of race, education or social class can outweigh the unity we know in Jesus Christ, for we are all one in Him.

SHAPE OF OUR RELATIONSHIP

We pray and work for a relationship between our congregations that is characterized by:

Peace;

Love;

Harmony;

Unity;

Toleration;

Hope;

Trust in God’s goodness;

Rely on God for direction and guidance;

Look for the good in all;

Offer and accepting help in a way that honors all;

Hold on to what is good;

Promote a spirit of hospitality;

The rebuild what has been lost in the life of both churches;

Pray for our unity;

Evangelize our neighborhood;

Feed Christ's sheep; tend Christ's lambs;

Gratitude.

We vow to live into a relationship characterized by these virtues, God being our helper.

GIFTS

Together in Christ we have gifts to carry out our common ministry:

Ample facilities;

An established relationship with Martin Luther King School;

A functioning Community Garden program in both churches;

Experience in grant writing;

A gifted Christian educator;

A heart for mission: As we have been illuminated, let us now carry the Light of Christ into our community;

Good, functioning kitchens and well- appointed assembly halls;

Gymnasiums;

Successful Christian Education programs;

An established relationship with the Toledo University Campus ministry;

People who are eager to build on what we will share with one another.

Participation in the Scott High School task force.

Engagement Opportunities

Mindful of our similarities and our differences, our intention to work together as brother and sisters in Christ, and the gifts we have to share with one another, we hope to explore these following opportunities for mission and ministry:

1. To work to overcome racial barriers in our neighborhood.
2. To expand our outreach to Scott High School, Sherman School, OWE Junior High, and Glenwood Elementary School, in addition to Martin Luther King School.
3. To provide young people in our neighborhood opportunities to be exposed to music, drama, art, and videography. To encourage in them civic literacy and foundational skills for living. To witness to them the saving faith of Jesus Christ.
4. Offer medical aid to both youth and adults who are part of the Scott High School community.
5. To work with existing organizations to promote the Grace-Collingwood Gardens programs, providing food and nutrition education.

6. To employ a pastor who will lead Sunday worship and do pastoral care for Grace, and will also be the community outreach leader and coordinator in both the Collingwood and Grace congregations.
7. To actively participate with the Maumee Valley Presbytery Task Force on urban outreach and the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, to explore these opportunities.

CONCLUSION

“It is because one antelope will blow the dust from the other’s eye that the two antelopes walk together.”

African proverb

The congregations of Grace and Collingwood are aware increasingly that dust has been accumulating in the eyes of both congregations for a long time. We pray that with the help and guidance of God we may begin to blow the dust from each other’s eyes and begin to see the glory, goodness, and beauty in each of the congregations, and thus, with clearer eyes, see a path that will lead us in the way of the Lord, for the good of our neighborhood and to the glory of God.

To: Branch of Congregational Life

From: Pamela Short

Re: Breakout Session on Pastoring People with Mental Health Issues

Date: January 4, 2017

Approximately 12 people gathered at the November 2016 Presbytery meeting to discuss pastoring people with mental health issues. Because of car difficulties, Juliann Pond was unable to lead this group, so I proceeded to act as facilitator.

Key resources:

Mental Health First Aid

· <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/>. This organization offers local trainings.

Gene McEvoy

Mental health counselor. ggmcevoy@yahoo.com

2419 Couth Main Street, Findlay, Ohio 45840

419-422-4151

National Suicide Prevention Life Line

800-273-8255 or text 838255

Crisis Text Line

741741

Some tidbits from the discussion:

- ✚ Always act on a “threat”.
 - Ask about if the person has a plan
 - Take them to the Emergency Room
 - When being released, be sure you know what they have in their home that could be lethal
 - —guns, knives, ropes, medications, etc.
- ✚ Some Clues that may be masking symptoms
 - Wearing long sleeves all the time may be trying to hide cutting
- ✚ One in five people have mental illness
- ✚ Average time from onset of symptoms until treatment: 10 years
- ✚ Know personally the therapists in your area
 - Do not handle this alone, but always include mental health therapists

My own personal recommendation is that the Branch of Congregational Life follow up with a training in the fall of 2017 asking Gene McEvoy to lead and coordinate this event.

Future of the Church Breakout Group
Report to Branch of Congregational Life

We had standing room only. As each person came in they were given a marker and asked to respond to the 5 questions that were posted around the room. 1) What do you think of when you hear the word “Christian”? 2) What are your hopes for the Church in the future? 3) What are your fears for the Church in the future? 4) What will the Church look like in 2050? 5) What questions do you have?

As we went through each sheet Becca Snedeker-Meier, a member of the PCUSA’s Vision 2020 Project, recorded their responses. Below are her notes.

- Fears:
 - Will we continue to be blinded?
 - Try to differentiate between the institution and the church
 - More hands-on mission
 - Keep the boards filled, buildings,
 - We are waiting on people to walk in the door
 - Why is the church not important anymore?
 - Does it matter to be part of a Christian community?
 - Fear of commitment
 - On the other hand, they want relationships not membership
 - The institution as we know it will die (fear and grief)
 - There cannot be resurrection without death
 - Continue to fight in the church that no outsider sees anything else
 - Do I follow God or feed my family?
 - Church is growing faster in every other section of the world except here
- 18-25 year old’s difference between what we believe Christian is (We quoted David Kinnanan from his book, unchristian, , “we found the three most common perceptions of present-day Christianity are antihomosexual, judgmental, and hypocritical.” pg 27)
 - How do we turn this around?
 - Concerned to talk about being Christian
 - Everyone has a different definition
 - Give up the notion we own that term
 - Are we going to live into their definition?
 - Christian has become a political term
 - Why is it not important to ‘the young people’?
 - And their parents
- Hopes:
 - It will change and it needs to be so many different things (radically different)
 - Grass roots instead of top down
 - Love, grace, understanding, relevancy, growth, healthy, revival, move outside walls, mission, reach others, open, longevity
 - Bright future if we are willing to walk through the valley
 - Being authentic Christian
 - Elders step up and take on some responsibility because they are called to do so
 - Church buildings that are used for the mission and community as opposed to for themselves

Then quoting Beth Ann Estock and Paul Nixon in their book, Weird Church, “We believe the good news for this era is rooted in the story of Pentecost. It is good news for the whole world. But the church leaders need it as much as anyone these days!...(At Pentecost) to say the band of followers were *afraid* some fifty days after Easter would be a gross understatement. *Numb* would probably more accurately describe the mood...And it was in this moment and in this place where the Weird Thing happened...In the wake of this Weird Thing, the Jesus movement began to spread and to innovate on the fly; creativity came to life...Even as many twentieth-century churches fall into ruins, something wonderful is coming. If God is in it, it is going to be good. Much of what is coming is going to stretch our current imagination.” (pp7-9).

- What the future will look like:
 - Number one answer: smaller
 - Busy, smaller but vibrant, thriving, more focused, home churches, YMCA + Red Cross, striving, faithful, stronger, gone, spiritual, present in the world, insignificant
- Questions:
 - What’s my role?
 - How can I help?
 - How can we help today?
 - What will happen when I’m gone?
 - How does the small church redefine itself?
 - How do we address the young and the old member’s needs?
 - How is God working in the world?
 - How do we keep the message alive in the world?
 - How to keep/renew/explore theological foundations?
 - How do we connect to the recent outcry of love and hope and so against hate? Are we going to live into their definition?
 - Jessie thinks there needs to be major changes if not revolution.

Submitted by David Montgomery and Becca Stenecker-Meier
December 7, 2016

To: Branch of Congregational Life
 From: Pamela Short
 Re: Provocative Conversations in Stewardship, part II
 Date: January 4, 2017

Provocative Conversations in Stewardship, part II will be held on Tuesday, May 9 at Christ Presbyterian Church, Toledo, Ohio. Tom Schwartz and his people have agreed to host this event. There are adequate funds in the budget to reimburse his congregation for any cost incurred, such as food, custodial services, child care and videography.

Dr. Mark Allen Powell and Rev. Lynn Miller have agreed to present, have spoken with one another and are prepared to work together before and during the event to see that their materials are complimentary without being redundant. Each speaker will be paid \$1,000.00 plus mileage.

In addition to these two main speakers, I would like to propose that we secure two other speakers to participate in breakout sessions. I have in mind:

- Mr. Dan Sauder of Sauder Manufacturing of Archbold, Ohio. Dan is the third generation of Sauder's who have sought to live as faithful stewards in a business environment. He knows the weight of being given "more than enough" and seeking God in order to live faithfully into that responsibility.
- For the other extreme, we may want to secure a speaker who has lived on the edge of poverty and/or worked with folks who live in poverty. What does it look like to live as a faithful steward when financial resources are constantly challenged?

I would anticipate offering each of these speakers a \$300.00 honorarium, plus mileage.

I propose:

- That we charge \$10.00 per person for this event
- That the event be marketed to a variety of denominations, chiefly through electronic communications and social media.

Should you agree with the additional speakers, the budget would look something like this:

\$6000.00	
-1075.00	Rev. Lynn Miller
-1155.00	Dr. Mark Allen Powell
-0350.00	Mr. Dan Sauder
-0350.00	other speaker (guessing on mileage)
-0100.00	custodial (I am guessing here)
-0300.00	videography (again a guess. Tom will tape the main sessions, but we would need to secure cameras for the breakout session and also pay someone to put it all into one DVD)
-0150.00	food (This may all be covered with the \$10.00 admission fee, but I am subtracting some in case it is not all covered. Based on 50 participants.)
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\$2820.00	remaining

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Appendix B Recommendations of Presiding at the LORD's Supper

To: Council of the Maumee Valley Presbytery
From: The Branch of Congregational Life
Re: Policy and Practices for Presiding at the LORD's Supper
Date: January 13, 2017

In November of 2015 the Council asked the Branch of Congregational Life (BCL) to address the quandary surrounding who may preside at the LORD's Supper and where they may do so within the context of the Maumee Valley Presbytery. The issue was addressed at five meetings—four in 2016 and one in 2017. The Scriptures, *The Confessions* and *The Book of Order* were used as a basis for our discussions. We sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit, considered past and current practices and envisioned God's grace moving through the Sacrament in future celebrations. While we did not reach consensus, we remain at peace with one another and put forward to you our recommendations.

There are two streams of thought present in the Branch of Congregational Life as it relates to those who may preside at the LORD's Table.

- 1.) The majority opinion is that *The Book of Order* calls Presbyteries to limit who may preside, unless the Mission of God is in danger of being stifled. The Session of a particular congregation is responsible for authorizing the celebration of the sacrament of the LORD's Supper therefore our recommendation is as follows:
 - a. Teaching elders may preside at the LORD's Supper at the congregations where they serve and at the invitation of any other Session.
 - b. Commissioned Lay Pastors may preside at the LORD's Supper only in the congregations to which they have been commissioned.
 - c. Ruling elders who have completed Session approved training led by a teaching elder or a consultant/educator trained in the Reformed Tradition may preside at the LORD's Supper in that particular congregation only. Sessions who approve such training of Ruling Elders shall report to the Branch of Congregational Life the process by which their Ruling Elders were trained.
 - i. Another option besides training is for the Session to approve a Ruling Elder to use a liturgy verbatim as found in the *Presbyterian Book of Common Worship*.
 - d. Chaplains and Campus Ministers may preside at the LORD's Supper in their particular and unique settings with the approval of the Committee on Ministry.
 - e. Candidates for Teaching Elders may not preside unless previously ordained as a Ruling Elder and approved by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM). If so ordained as a Ruling Elder and approved by CPM, they may preside at the LORD's Supper only in the congregations in which they are serving as a candidate and in the congregation of which they are a member.

- 2.) The minority opinion is that *The Book of Order* allows for a much broader interpretation and the faithful witness of hospitality and welcoming within the Beloved Community of Christ would be enhanced by a more open approach. Because the grace received from God via the Sacraments is not subject to the qualifications of the presider—for indeed who is worthy to preside?!—no harm is done to the Sacrament, and great good may be accomplished in the way of spiritual fellowship across churches. Therefore, the minority recommendation includes the following:

- a. Teaching Elders may preside at the LORD's Supper both in the congregations where they serve and by the invitation of any Session within Maumee Valley Presbytery.
- b. Commissioned Lay Pastors may preside at the LORD's Supper in the congregation where they have been commissioned and by the invitation of any Session within Maumee Valley Presbytery.
- c. Ruling elders who have completed Session approved training led by a teaching elder or a consultant/educator trained in the Reformed Tradition may preside at the LORD's Supper in that particular congregation and by the invitation of any Session within Maumee Valley Presbytery.
 - i. If it is a hardship for the Ruling Elder to receive training, the Session may approve a Ruling Elder to use a liturgy verbatim as found in the *Presbyterian Book of Common Worship*.
- d. Chaplains and Campus Ministers may preside at the LORD's Supper in their particular and unique settings with the approval of the Committee on Ministry. Once approved, the privilege for presiding extends to any other congregation within Maumee Valley Presbytery who offers an invitation via their Session.
- e. Candidates for Teaching elders remain the most complicated. Here are two possible approaches:
 - i. Each candidate be encouraged to request the opportunity to serve on the Session of the church where they are a member. If approved, they would be ordained as a Ruling Elder through that congregation. After this ordination, the candidate would participate in training approved by either the Session of the congregation where they were ordained or by the Session of the congregation where they are serving as a Candidate. Once so trained, the Candidate may preside at the LORD's Supper in the congregation where they function as a candidate, in the congregation where they hold membership, and by the invitation of any Session within Maumee Valley Presbytery. Of note: Such an arrangement would mean cooperation from the congregation where the candidate is a member and the congregation where the candidate is serving. Ideally, the ordaining congregation could see the ministry carried out in the candidating congregation as an extension of their own service to the Beloved Community of Christ.
 - ii. The Presbytery ordain the candidate as a Ruling Elder and then train them so that they may preside at the LORD's Supper in the congregation where they function as a candidate and by the invitation of any Session within Maumee Valley Presbytery. It is understood that in order to properly proceed with this practice, an overture should be made to PCUSA's General Assembly.

Both the majority and the minority agree on these two points:

- 1.) Any PCUSA Teaching Elder has the authority to train ruling elders to preside at the table.
- 2.) The Presbytery shall make available a syllabus and resources for those Teaching Elders who wish to provide this training. In addition, the Branch of Congregational Life shall see to it that a class under the instruction of a Teaching Elder be made available no less than once a year. Sessions shall report to the Branch of Congregational Life the process for which the ruling elders are trained.
- 3.) The responsibility for proper administration of the Sacraments lies in the hands of the Session of each congregation. Therefore, before inviting anyone to preside, the Session should take seriously its responsibility to examine the person who is being invited to preside.