

Presbytery Highlights

Highlights from the last stated meeting of the Presbytery of South Dakota held at Emmanuel Presbyterian Church in Marion on October 27th, 2017.



We as Presbytery are connected to something very old but also are a part of something very new. Both of these parts of our identity were made very clear at the Presbytery of South Dakota's most recent Presbytery meeting. The structure of the meeting itself was organized in the form of worship. In this way worship wasn't something we did separate from the meeting but our very meeting was seen as an act of worship. This is a new way of doing things but grounded us to our deep tradition of worship liturgy.

This meeting included two very large actions by the Presbytery. First, the Presbytery of South Dakota approved the hiring of Kevin Veldhuisen as the Clerk and Transitional Mission Coordinator. This is a full time position and the Presbytery committed to benefits for him. Kevin will be a tremendous resource for congregations and will help our large presbytery stay connected. He will oversee our new committee structure to ensure we are living out our mission as a Presbytery. The second major action the Presbytery made was to approve the 2018 budget. The budget included a cut in our mission dollars to Synod and General Assembly, but under the condition that within three years the Presbytery will seek to return to the 2017 giving amounts. God's Spirit is doing something new and exciting through this new position in our presbytery, but Commitment to supporting the regional and national church also keeps us grounded to our strong value of remaining a connectional church.

Furthermore, God is definitely doing something new in our New Church Development, Table of Grace and our Camping Ministry. Table of Grace moved from a task force to a steering committee which includes representatives from the Presbytery, representatives from the Evangelical Lutheran church, and active participants in Table of Grace. Rev. Kristi Berglund, co-organizing pastor, shared that while Table of Grace is moving forward and sharing the love of God in the Harrisburg community it is and will probably look very different than what we traditionally think a church should look like. Similarly our camping ministry is considering new ways to engage in Christian formation. They had a good summer with high numbers in their elementary camps, and high energy levels from the staff. The Camping program is currently going through a visioning process to seek ways they can be more faithful with the resources they have and reach people that need it's ministry. One thing they are considering is doing off location day camps around the Presbytery. As both Table of Grace and our Camping Ministry enter new uncharted territory of God's leading, they covet your prayers.

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The Presbytery of South Dakota also recognized that God's activity goes beyond our state and beyond our moment in history. Vera White, Director of the 1001 New Worshiping Communities Initiative shared her work for General Assembly. 1001 New Worshiping Communities is a movement in the PC USA of creating 1001 New Worshiping Communities by 2022. Now these churches or worshiping communities look very different



than what we are doing here today. She showed images of people in lawn chairs lined up in the open air of a trailer park worshipping God. She showed images of a whole church in rocking chairs listening to gospel blue grass music. She showed a church that handed out food and clothing as part of their worship service and worshiped in a hotel conference room. But the most powerful thing that she shared was that people who have been alienated from the church were coming to know God. The power of God was unleashed in their lives. We also had a presentation from Rev. Denzel Nonhoff of Sturgis who gave a beautifully nuanced look into the life and theology of John Calvin. In doing so, he reminded us that what John Calvin wrote and believed was indeed new for his time yet calls us to be grounded in something old—scripture. God is indeed at work in our presbytery calling us to new ways of being but we can only do so because we are grounded in the beautiful traditions of our faith. ●



Presbytery of South Dakota
100 South Spring Ave Ste. 175
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
(605) 339-1912
www.presbyteryofsd.org