



# THE PRESBYTERY OF LONG ISLAND

42 Hauppauge Road • Commack, New York 11725-4499  
(631) 499-7171 • FAX (631) 499-7063

July 20, 2020

Greetings all,

Our June meeting, once again on Zoom, was one-of-a-kind, held in the midst of an upswelling of nationwide protests against racism and victimization of people of color, calling us to a season of soul-searching, both individually and collectively, to identify and root out the systemic oppression and injustice in our midst and in our nation.

Rev. Scott Williams, whose Christ First Presbyterian Church in Hempstead had been scheduled to host this meeting, welcomed us, noting the diversity of his congregation and how they incorporate the many cultures represented into their worship and mission. We share their pride and humility in sharing the Good News on Long Island guided by MICAH 6:8 for 375 years, since their founding in 1644.

A statement prepared by the Shepherding Council was read. It has been attached to this letter, along with a new Prayer of Confession by Elder Susan M.G.Dingle, which was included in worship.

By omnibus resolution, the minutes of March 31, 2020, Stated Meeting were approved, the report of the Committee on Representation was adopted, the 2019 Statistical Summary of our Presbytery was received as revised. Two other motions were approved, 4a) to defer action until the October 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting on the 2021 staff compensation recommendations, and 4b) to set aside the standing rules and receive the annual compilation of all ministerial compensation and benefits also at that time.

The Committee on Ministry reported on renewals, extensions and changes of terms of call for several congregations, and dissolved the relationship of Rev. Dan Darrow with West Islip, dismissing him to the West Brunswick Presbytery (NJ). The Personnel Committee, after its yearly Presbytery staff evaluations, recommends a 2 percent increase in compensation for 2021.

The Committee on Ministry's Task Force on Reopening, comprised of individuals with medical or health backgrounds, prepared a two-page fact sheet of guidelines on safe reopening for our Long Island churches, incorporating the latest State and Federal guidelines, to assist congregations and leaders as they make their individual decisions.

Elder Barbara Messier, chair of the Committee on Nominations, encouraged all to bring forward names of ordained elders - not necessarily actively serving on a session - who would

be an asset to one of the many committees or councils of Presbytery. Geographical representation is desirable, as well as reflecting the diversity of the members of our Presbytery.

We heard the report of our Commissioners to the 224<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, Rev. Joshua Jong (New Hyde Park), and Elder Ellen Gove (Shelter Island), as well as YAD Aiseosa Irowa. Ellen highlighted the emphasis on ending "the pandemic of racism", which also affects black and Native American women and girls, and the need to reclaim and restore native lands. Joshua described the working of the spirit at this GA, apparent even in the selection of the new Co-Moderators on a first ballot. Our YAD, Aiseosa, described her appreciation of her new role of delegate, having served at previous national youth events in roles as staff and as an advisor. They met the new GA Co-Moderators, Rev. Gregory Bentley of Huntsville, Alabama, and Elona Street-Stewart, a Native American ruling elder who is Executive of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, as well as being a long time friend and colleague of several of our Long Island members, who plan to invite her to visit Long Island.

Mark Tammen noted the anticipated receipt of funding (\$60,000) through a GA initiative, Vital Congregations, intended to help struggling churches, provided the Presbytery can raise a matching amount. He noted that perhaps 12 of Long Island's 55 churches might be considered struggling. Rev. Kymberly Clemons-Jones will be hired half time to work with those churches in Western Long Island, along with someone else for those on the East End.

In his Treasurer's Report, Patrick Knight noted that nearly halfway through the year, churches have been slow in submitting their Per Capita and Mission Pledges, so a deficit is anticipated. A Proposed Budget for 2021 has been prepared. The annual financial review has begun and will be available for the October 3 meeting.

As explained as the meeting convened, the worship was led by the Shepherding Council, with the powerful theme of Repent and Lamentations. The worship service was recorded and can be accessed via the Presbytery website (YouTube) for those who missed it or would like to experience it again.

With thanks to all who continue to contribute in so many ways to the life of this Presbytery and our entire Presbytery staff who have managed so many details and been creatively responsive during this time of shutdown, let us look forward to the next stated meeting of Presbytery, scheduled for Saturday, October 3, 2020, in Smithtown. Announcements will be coming with details of that October meeting, as well as for the Fall Presbytery Day planned for Saturday, October 24, on the topic of addressing racism.

In the meantime, may we hold each other in prayer and love, reaching outward in all ways possible to support and care for ourselves and for loved ones - those we know and those we have yet to meet, but whom we are also called by Jesus Christ to love and serve!

Peace and Blessings,

Moderator, Elder Janet Allen-Spencer  
Bethany Presbyterian Church, Huntington Station