

Presbytery Commission Report to the Presbytery Assembly March 24, 2018

Tina Blair, Moderator

The Presbytery Commission met for its regular meeting on February 13, 2018. It also met for a specially called meeting on February 24, 2018, to receive church requests to bring an overture on gun violence to the Presbytery Assembly.

For Information

1. Timm High and Melodee Kistner briefed the Commission regarding the decision of the Synod Permanent Judicial Commission regarding the Idyllwild dismissal in the Remedial Case of Spitzer v. Riverside Presbytery. There was discussion as to whether the Presbytery should appeal the case to the General Assembly PJC in order to determine if the GAPJC agrees that the Presbytery of Riverside followed its policy as written and did so with due diligence and sought to do so with all its requirements. After discussion, there was no motion brought forward to appeal the case. It was determined, however, that our current Gracious Discernment and Dismissal Policy must be revised in light of the Synod PJC decision. A task force is being formed – anyone interested in participating on that Task Force is invited to contact Stated Clerk Timm High.
2. The Commission was informed that Mountain View Church of Wildomar sent a request to the Stated Clerk to enter into the Gracious Discernment and Dismissal process, but later withdrew its request.
3. Creation of Discernment Task Force: the Presbytery Leader shared the need to work with members of the Presbytery to develop vision for the next few years for the Presbytery. The central question is “What is God wanting this Presbytery to be and become?” The Commission voted to endorse the creation of a process to discern where God is leading us as a Presbytery, and to create a Task Force to facilitate that process, to be called the Discernment Team. The Discernment Team continues to welcome persons who feel called by the Spirit to participate. The next meeting is Sunday, April 25, 3 p.m., at the Presbytery office.

For Action

1. In light of the decision regarding the Idyllwild dismissal, **the Presbytery Commission recommends to the Presbytery Assembly that the Big Bear dismissal decision on November 18, 2017 be rescinded.**

The motion passed by the Assembly on 11/18/17 was:

That the motion postponed from the Sept. 9, 2017 meeting in regards to the Gracious Dismissal of Big Bear Presbyterian Church be considered, and that it be amended as follows:

- 1) Affirm the amount of \$37,500 (\$24,328.80 property, \$8,261.40 one-time mission, \$4,909.80 per capita for 2017-2019) due from Big Bear PC; 2) ~~to set aside the provisions~~

of the **Gracious Dismissal & Transfer Policy (GDP) III.D.1** to bring the proposal to the Presbytery Assembly before a final vote by the Big Bear PC congregation is held; and 3) to set aside the provisions of the **GDP III.A.9** to allow Big Bear PC an additional congregational vote at their earliest convenience to approve the agreement with the modified terms; *and 3) accept the results of the congregation's October 23, 2016 meeting in which 91.4% of those attending voted to approve the Sept 6, 2016 Dismissal & Transfer Agreement, and the letter from Session and Dismissal Team members of the congregation dated 07/18/2017 affirming their request for dismissal, as validation of their desire to be dismissed using a modified Agreement in which final settlement dates are properly adjusted and the removal of the provision in which the Presbytery would hold the deed of trust. The desire to be dismissed is hereby validated under GDP III.D.1.a, and, Big Bear PC is not required to hold additional congregational meetings to vote on this dismissal, however, the GDP requirement of III.D.3 in which the effective date of dismissal and transfer of property shall be at the completion of required actions as listed in the terms of the Dismissal Agreement, but in any case, no more than ninety (90) days after the vote of the Presbytery remains in effect.*

2. A motion was moved, seconded and passed that the Presbytery Commission accept endorsements from the Sessions of First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino, the First Presbyterian Church of Redlands, and Bethany Presbyterian Church, as well as the Spirit of the Desert Fellowship, for a proposed overture for the 223rd General Assembly "On Praying for a Movement of the Spirit to Engage Presbyterian Congregations in Nation-Wide Action to Prevent Gun Violence" and accompanying Rationale. **The Commission recommends the Presbytery Assembly concur with these endorsements and direct the Stated Clerk to forward the Presbytery of Riverside Assembly's endorsement to the Office of the General Assembly within the time limits specified by rule A.3 in the General Assembly Standing Rules (2A)**