



Stated Clerk (Temporary) Report to the Assembly

September 14, 2019

1. Since we last met it has been the proverbial “fire hose” of learning and activity. The staff and your Moderator, Jeff Mague have been most helpful in learning the technology (we’re trying to put far more in the Cloud) and navigating my way through the Manual of Administrative Operations and to a lesser extend the Book of Order. I am definitely looking forward to new stated clerk’s training which will happen in Louisville just before this meeting.
2. In the way of an “inspection” or “audit”, the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii sponsored a records review on August 29th on the campus where the Presbytery of San Gabriel is officed. Both our 2017 and 2018 minutes were reviewed. There were exceptions in both sets of minutes and I failed to provide the Child Protection Policy and Sexual Misconduct Abuse Prevention policy *of the presbytery*. We were reminded that when our adults go with “kids” to Triennium there must be a reminder to all of our Child Protection policies. In all, there needs to be far more attention to detail and a steady eye on what the Synod expects from the presbytery in the way of record keeping.
3. Speaking of records, there are currently 6 large boxes of unfiled records from the January 2109 move from San Bernardino to Redlands. Lee and I are scheduled to go through them later this month. It all made me think “Paperless by 2021!” It’s a daunting task because first a Document Retention Policy needs to be formulated. With three closed churches alone (Fontana, Crestline and Yucaipa), let alone over 125 minister records (with no statute of limitations on sexual misconduct for the ministers) there are a lot of records to keep. I am “kicking the tires” at the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia next month because there must be some best practices for retention of records and histories.
4. A real focus on my ministry needs to be coming alongside Clerks of Sessions in their annual records review. Last year only 13 of 26 Sessions reviewed someone else’s “books.” I’ve set a goal of 75% for 2019. We’ve started with a Doodle Poll to what I call the Southwest Riverside County cluster of churches. We’ll see how people respond to a peer review approach. Somehow it needs to be communicated that records review is not a “gotcha exercise” but a way to take what a mentor called “moral inventory” of the ministry we’re all involved in.
5. On the good news front, we appear to have one church which thinks God is leading them to re-engage in the Presbyterian Church USA and an inheritance coming from a closed church (a modest sum) through a trust that is being settled.
6. Finally, what a joy it is to work with the staff under Lee’s leadership and with the many minister and lay volunteers in the work of the Church. We are spread thin and wide.