

Transformational General Presbyter and Stated Clerk Report to Presbytery

September 8, 2020

Transformational General Presbyter Report

By the grace of God, I was elected to serve as your Transformational General Presbyter and Stated Clerk at the June assembly. It's been a busy 5 weeks since I began that role on August 1. In more normal times I would have moved into my office, visited congregations for Sunday worship, and traveled to meet sessions and presbytery committees. These odd pandemic days have allowed me to do much of that, just in different ways. I've called many pastors to check in and talk about life in their congregations. I've watched worship services at nearly half of our congregations – more than I could have visited in person. I've joined countless meetings via Zoom from my home office. It's a new way to start a new position.

There is a wonderful book called *The First 90 Days* by Michael Watkins that I'm referring to regularly and commend to anyone changing jobs. Watkins suggests people in new roles develop a written plan for their first 90 days and share it so they can be held accountable. I've done that with the TPNC and my personal coach. My first 30 days were a time of intentional listening and learning. The next 30 days are looking at small changes and early wins while digesting what I have learned. The final 30 days are to start casting a longer plan and put ideas into motion.

Here are several quick observations from those first 30 days.

- These are incredibly challenging times in the life of our churches, our families, our communities, and our world. Pastors and congregations are working hard and being creative to find bold new ways to be church. Congregations are meeting online, in parking lots, under tents, and indoors with virus precautions.
- Worship is happening but pastoral care, programs, and mission activities have been difficult or on hold. Pastors are exhausted. Members really miss in person fellowship. Responses to the virus and tension in our country has caused increased divisiveness in our congregations.
- This is also a time of exciting new opportunity. Leaders and congregations have been creative in finding new ways to serve each other and their communities. Online worship is here to stay and provides new methods of outreach. Member giving, at least to this point, has remained steady. Pastors have connected with one another for mutual support.

None of these notes are surprising but it's helpful to document them and share them. If you have other observations or disagree with my assessment, please let me know. We're in this for the long haul and we are in this together.

My plan for the next 30 days is to include more conversations with presbytery leaders and partners. I will also be looking for and recommending small changes that will position us for longer term transformation. I would love to hear from you and welcome invitations to meet with sessions. Please call me any time. I'm here to provide leadership and connections and I'm here to serve you as we journey together as Christ's disciples in a changing world.

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Stated Clerk Report

Presbytery Stated meeting in 2020

The final presbytery for 2020 was scheduled for November 10 at Ridgefield Crystal Lake. I am recommending we move this meeting to the Zoom meeting platform.

Presbytery Stated Meeting Dates in 2021

We will finalize plans at the November 2020 meeting. Tentative dates are:
February 9, April 13, June 8, September 14, November 9

Session Minute Review

This is a reminder that we will not be doing session minute reading and review this year. We will resume this in 2021.

Other Items

Please remember to submit your Employer Agreement to the Board of Pensions by October 9. There are several important changes to the benefits program so please start this now.

It is not too early to begin thinking about the annual statistical report. Please consider how you might report average worship attendance and any changes to membership.