

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PRESBYTERY COUNCIL
MAY 3, 2008

“... I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you...” I
Corinthians 11:17

The work of the Council this year has been to try and mediate the differences among the members of our Presbytery. The Council, composed of members with diverse theological beliefs, has attempted to keep this section of Christ's Church united; united to fulfill Christ's Great Commission. Issues of the departure of churches or possible departure from PC USA have occupied most of Council's time. The Simsbury Review Team spent months listening to the Covenant Church and attempting to preserve their membership in our Presbytery. When it became clear that Simsbury would depart, the Review Team looked for ways to support our brothers in Christ in their new endeavor. It appeared that dignity and respect were benchmarks of these discussions. It is obvious that the actions of Simsbury were perceived by many to be hurtful. The action of that church was not hurried or without careful and prayerful consideration trying to discern God's will for their members. The Presbytery owes an enormous debt of gratitude to the members of the Review Team who labored so diligently on our behalf and who are now serving as the Implementation Team in the dismissal process.

In addition to the issue of Simsbury's decision to leave, the Council reviewed and dealt with many of the regular operational issues of the Presbytery. Review of the terms of call for our executive presbyter, reviewing requests for communion services at special events, planning for Presbytery meetings and encouraging the various committees in their work are but a few of the ongoing tasks of the Council. After each Presbytery meeting the Council evaluates the meeting looking for ways to foster our union and more effectively achieve our mission. The Council began the process of reviewing the Vision and Mission of this Presbytery in an ever-changing church. While this is an essential activity to keep our connected church viable, the planning has not yet been completed and will continue during the coming year.

In preparation for the February Presbytery meeting four overtures were submitted to be considered for presentation to the 218th General Assembly. Two of these overtures clearly demonstrated the division within our boundaries. We need to find a way to examine these differences and to sort through them so that we can concentrate our efforts on Christ's Good News, a message that our world so desperately needs.

As usual, the staff of the Presbytery did yeoman's service in supporting the work of the Council and the efforts of a new Council Chair.

To all members of the Council who will be leaving this body in May, our thanks for your diligence and counsel over the past year. To those who will be continuing or will be new members, we have much to do.

Yours in Christ,

Bill Schimpf, Council Chair