

Commissioners Report on the Synod of the Covenant Assembly November 2 – 3, 2018.

The Synod of the Covenant met in assembly on Friday and Saturday, November 2 – 3, 2018, at Christ Presbyterian Church in Toledo, OH.

Friday afternoon was devoted to a seminar entitled “Muslims and Christians: Partners or Enemies?” Guest speakers were Bernie Adeney- Risakotta, Professor of Religion, Ethics and Social science, Indonesesian Consortium for Religious Studies Yogyakarta, Indonesia; Farsajana Adeney- Risakotta, anthropologist, theologian and faculty member at Duta Wacana Christian University in Indonesia; Rev. John Hira from Bangladesh; Rev. Dr. Nosheen Khan from Pakistan; and Rev. Saman Perera from Sri Lanka. These mission partners spoke to the cultural and religious makeup and Muslim/Christian relationships in their particular countries.

The assembly elected officers and committee chairs and members for 2019. The Rev. Aaron Meadows, of Eastminster Presbytery was elected Moderator, and The Rev. Pat Megregian of Mackinac Presbytery was elected Vice-moderator.

Self Development of People The Synod committee for SDOP needs members from the presbyteries of the Synod of the Covenant to carry out its work. “Self-Development of People (SDOP) enters into partnerships with community groups of low-income people that want to change their lives and communities.” (From the PC(USA) Mission webpage on SDOP) To learn more about SDOP, follow this link: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/sdop/> If you are interested in serving in this significant way, please speak to one of the commissioners to Synod, Deb Uchtman or Becky Lindsay.

Welcome All Refugees “Welcome All Refugees” is a Synod program managed by the Peacemaking and Justice Committee. In 2015, the Synod Assembly earmarked \$100,000 to help congregations to host refugee families from Iraq and Syria and other neighboring countries in the Middle East. Because of the limited number of refugees from Iraq and Syria that are being allowed into the USA, at its August meeting the P&J committee expanded the program to all who seek asylum in the United States.

At its October meeting, the Peacemaking and Justice Committee approved two grants to churches who are working with refugees.

- A grant to the Grosse Pointe Memorial Presbyterian Church, Grosse Point Farms, Michigan for \$5,000 with the possibility of additional support to help defray the costs of support for a single mother from the Ivory Coast with two children, the grant to be split between rent and a professional tutor to teach the mother English language and reading so that she can become self-supporting.
- A grant of \$5,000 to the First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, Michigan, in conjunction with Samaritas, to support six unaccompanied refugee teenagers from Somalia and Guatemala who have aged out of foster care, but who have not yet received their documentation to remain in the US. Otherwise, they may be incarcerated by the government or become homeless. The committee will entertain granting additional funds, based on a report in six months.

To learn more about the “Welcome All Refugees” program, follow this link to the Synod Webpage: <http://synodofthecovenant.org/synod-ministries/welcome-refugees/> If there are congregations, councils or individuals within the bounds of the Synod of the Covenant who are

working with refugees and need funds, Peacemaking and Justice encourages them to contact one of the presbytery's Synod commissioners, Deb Uchtman or Becky Lindsay.

Mission to the USA (MUSA) The Rev. Steve Gorman, former pastor at Westwood First Presbyterian Church and former Moderator of Cincinnati Presbytery, has recently become coordinator for MUSA. "The Mission to the USA program links churches in the Synod of the Covenant (Michigan and Ohio) with international church leaders, both clergy and lay leaders. Each Mission Partner is hosted by a congregation in the synod, joining in the life of church... The focus of the Synod's Mission to the USA program for the years 2017-2019 is Christian-Muslim relations." (From SOC webpage on MUSA) In October 2019, MUSA will welcome mission partners from the continent of Africa. It would be a great opportunity for Cincinnati Presbytery to host a mission partner. To learn more about MUSA, visit Synod of the Covenant webpage: <http://synodofthecovenant.org/synod-ministries/musa/>

The Synod continues to work on improving the functioning of its various entities and relationships among its members. Some relationships and situations that led to filing the overture to General Assembly in June 2018 have improved; but problems persist. As of yet, the administrative commission approved by General Assembly has not been appointed.

Per Capita of Synod The Synod assembly voted to keep the 2019 Synod portion of per capita at \$3.25, the same as it has been since 2011. The Synod is working to make wise use of the funds that are provided to the assembly through per capita.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Dr. Deborah Uchtman, TE Commissioner for the Presbytery of Cincinnati
Rebecca Lindsay, RE Commissioner for the Presbytery of Cincinnati