



901 Allegheny Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15233-1701
Phone: 412-323-1400
Fax: 412-323-2256
www.pghpresbytery.org

September 2018

Dear Friends in Christ,

As we come together in our annual gathering at our Crestfield home, we have so much for which to give thanks: The beauty of our surroundings. The joy of renewed fellowship around the table. Opportunity to do important work together. And, as always at our September meetings, we give special thanks for the lives of our colleague ministers and elders whose journeys on earth ended over the past year. "For all the saints who from their labors rest... Alleluia!" Each year I am with you this thanksgiving grows more personal for me, as I know more and more of those whose names we list in our annual necrology.

It is fitting that this celebration of the saints who have gone before us is done around the Table of our Lord, where we are present in spirit with the saints from all times and places who feast at heaven's banquet. I wish we celebrated the Lord's Supper each time we gather, but I am mindful that many of us already find presbytery meetings longer than they can manage. Table fellowship was inseparable from the gathering of the church in its early days, and I fear we lose something important when we make it merely occasional and optional.

When I was installed as your General Minister, Professor John Burgess charged me to dine regularly with members of presbytery. I have tried to fulfill that charge, though I need to do better. I can testify that I feel tangibly closer to people with whom I have been privileged to break bread. Any table at which Christ's followers sit together can and should be recognized as the Lord's table. It is sacramental, a place of impartation of invisible grace as we share very visible food and drink.

Earlier this month, one of my long-time treasured friends, the Rev. Dr. Chip Andrus, was taken by our Lord into the company of saints in glory. Chip was my next-door colleague when I worked in the national PCUSA Office of Theology and Worship, an especially passionate advocate for strengthening our communion practices. Some of you will remember Chip as the guy with the guitar who led the praise band at General Assembly for many years (in which I was privileged to play piano). Presbyterian News Service [ran a story](#) of thanksgiving and celebration of his life and ministry.

Our presbytery service of remembrance names only members of our own presbytery, but each of us has others from elsewhere, like Chip, whose passing leaves a void in our earthly lives. We mourn their loss, yet not as those without hope. For the One who is Resurrection and Life has assured us, "Because I live, you also will live." (John 14:19) Every time we gather at His table, we strengthen ourselves in receiving this promise. Thanks be to God!

Yours in Christ's living fellowship,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Sheldon W. Sorge".

Sheldon W. Sorge
General Minister

Seeking to be Faithful Together

Guidelines for Presbyterians During Times of Disagreement

In a spirit of trust and love, we promise we will . . .

Give them a hearing . . . listen before we answer.

Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus before, and who was one of them, asked, "Our law does not judge people without first giving them a hearing to find out what they are doing, does it?" (John 7:50-51) If one gives answer before hearing, it is folly and shame. (Proverbs 18:13)

1. Treat each other respectfully so as to build trust, believing that we all desire to be faithful to Jesus the Christ:
 - we will keep our conversations and communications open for candid and forthright exchange;
 - we will not ask questions or make statements in a way which will intimidate or judge others.
2. Learn about various positions on a topic of disagreement.
3. State what we think we heard and ask for clarification before responding, in an effort to be sure we understand each other.

Speak the truth in love.

But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love. (Ephesians 4:15-16)

4. Study the Bible together to better understand what God's Word says to us in our disagreement.
5. Share our concerns directly with individuals or groups with whom we have disagreements in a spirit of love and respect in keeping with Jesus' teaching.
6. Focus on ideas and suggestions instead of questioning people's motives, intelligence or integrity;
 - we will not engage in name-calling or labeling of others prior to, during, or following the discussion.
7. Share our personal experiences about the subject of disagreement so that others may fully understand our concerns.

Maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:1-3)

8. Indicate where we agree with those of other viewpoints as well as where we disagree.
9. Seek to stay in community with each other though the discussion may be vigorous and full of tension;
 - we will be ready to forgive and be forgiven.
10. Follow these additional Guidelines when we meet in decision-making bodies:
 - urge persons of various points to speak and promise to listen seriously;
 - seek conclusions informed by our points of agreement;
 - be sensitive to the feelings and concerns of those who do not agree with the majority and respect their rights of conscience;
 - abide by the decision of the majority, and if we disagree with it and wish to change it, work for that change in ways which are consistent with the Guidelines.
11. Include our disagreements in our prayers, not praying for the triumph of our viewpoints, but seeking God's grace to listen attentively, to speak clearly, and to remain open to the vision God holds for us all.

STATED MEETING OF THE PITTSBURGH PRESBYTERY

September 20, 2018 – 10:00 a.m.

Crestfield Camp and Conference Center

Rev. Dr. Trent Hancock (Moderator); Rev. Steven Werth (Sr. Vice-Moderator)

Pittsburgh Presbytery is a covenant community

† *formed by the triune God;*

† *called to share together in the ongoing life & ministry of Jesus Christ*

† *proclaiming & demonstrating the Gospel publicly in word & deed in the power of the Holy Spirit.*

PRESBYTERY MEETING DOCKET – 10:00 a.m.

I. Gathering for Worship and Work of the Presbytery.

Welcome, Moderator's Greetings & Introductions. Visitors and first-time commissioners will be introduced, and corresponding members will be accepted. Pastors in new calls will be announced and those new to the presbytery will be welcomed.

Adoption of the Docket and Consent Agenda and Announcement of the Intention to Introduce New Business

Worship, Service of Remembrance, and Tribute to Rev. Fred Rogers. Rev. Dr. Sheldon Sorge will preach and the Lord's Supper will be celebrated.

II. Renewing Our Community

Board of Pensions Report on New Plan Options

Commission on Ministry Report

Approval of 2019 Budget and Presentation of 2019 Staffing Plan

Fellowship Time & Lunch

Special Order of the Day 12:30 p.m.

Reservations and prepayment are required.

III. Visioning as a Community

Commission on Preparation for Ministry Report

Executive Committee Report

Generosity Subcommittee Report

International Partnership Report

Freedom Rising Grant Award Report

New Worshipping Communities Commission Report

IV. Going Forth by God's Grace

General Minister's Report

Report from General Assembly

Congregational Summer Mission Activity Reports

Committee on Nominations Report

Stated Clerk's Report

Natrona Heights Presbyterian Church Dismissal

New Business

Report from the Roll Clerk, Words of Thanks and Closing Prayer