Georgetown Presbyterian Church hosted the Eighty-Second Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of New Harmony on Saturday, February 28, 2015. Worship featured the leadership of Ruling Elder Lossie Matthews (Friendship Presbyterian Church), and Teaching Elder and outgoing Moderator Steve Wilkins (Georgetown Presbyterian Church), who delivered the sermon entitled, “We Are the Church Together.” Worship also included celebration of the Lord’s Supper, remembering ruling elders who had died in 2014, and a memorial for Teaching Elder, Ashby Dick.

The Moderator, Steve Wilkins, opened the meeting with prayer. Ruling Elder Margaret Cooper (Presbyterian Church at Manning) was installed as Moderator for 2015.

During the meeting the Presbytery accepted reports and took positive action on recommendations from:

The Stated Clerk, including communications from the session of McDowell Presbyterian Church, Greeleyville and the session of Rocky Creek Presbyterian Church, Jefferson; admitting the minutes of the Commission to install Teaching Elder Jill Isola as associate pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Hartsville; information that the 2013 minutes of the Presbytery of New Harmony had been approved by the Synod of South Atlantic; thanks to the Presbytery of New Harmony and to Ruling Elder Barbara Ragin for her service as recording clerk for the Presbytery; that the Presbytery had met the requirements for numerical parity; and statistical information concerning membership in congregations.

The Administrative Council, including recommendations to approve, for 2015, the position of Program Director of Camp Pee Dee Retreat Center; to approve the 2015 Operating Budget of $1,281,498 on second reading; to set aside the Presbytery’s standing rule concerning the Fall Stated Meeting and move the meeting to October 20, at First Presbyterian Church, Hartsville; to elect Vikki Brogdon (Presbyterian Church at Manning) to the Nominating Committee; to communicate to the Synod Boundaries Consultations Team that the boundaries of the Synod of South Atlantic remain the same; and to designate Sunday, March 15, 2015, as P.A.D.D. Sunday.

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry, including information that current inquirers are Hannah Gordon (First Presbyterian Church, Myrtle Beach) and Anna Owens (First Presbyterian Church, Sumter) and current candidates are Vikki Brogdon (Presbyterian Church at Manning) and Neeley Rentz Lane (First Presbyterian Church, Hartsville); and that the members of the Committee participated in a retreat at Camp Pee Dee Retreat Center, focusing on the role and responsibilities of committee members and of those under the care of the committee, and began developing updated guidelines and policies for the care process. Teaching Elder Bruce Ford led the Friday evening session and Ruling Elder Julie Cox facilitated the Saturday morning session. The Committee seeks the wisdom and participation of all members of congregations in encouraging, identifying, and prayerfully discerning his or her own vocation and in others as well.
The Committee on Ministry, including information that Teaching Elder Beth Muse (Providence Presbytery) was granted permission to labor within the bounds of Presbytery to serve as temporary supply at Ruby Presbyterian Church; approval had been given to temporary supplies to continue in other churches; review of session minutes will be held March 24, at First Presbyterian Church, Cheraw, Kingston Presbyterian Church, Conway, First Presbyterian Church, Sumter, and on March 26 at the Presbytery office; and recommendations that the Rev. Tom Dendy be changed from designated pastor to installed pastor of Celebration Presbyterian Church with presented terms of call and installing commission; terms of call changes for teaching elders be approved for 2015; Teaching Elder David Ruth be dismissed to Coastal Carolina Presbytery; and Presbytery concur with the request of Teaching Elders Tae Su Cheong (Korean American Presbyterian Church, Sumter) and John Parks (Chaplain, Presbyterian Communities, Florence) to be honorably retired.

The Nominating Committee, including recommendations to fill vacancies on Committees, Councils, and Divisions of the Presbytery.

The Program Council, including a verbal report from the Camping Division by Ruling Elder Mary Jane Evans and Program Director Kelly Boone Sloan.

The Committee on Representation, including information on the membership of divisions, committees, councils.

The Administrative Commissions for Westminster Presbyterian Church, Celebration Presbyterian Church, and White Oak Presbyterian Church reports with no action required. The Presbytery Response Team for First Presbyterian Church, Loris, with no action required

As a Special Order the Presbytery voted on the proposed amendments to the PCUSA Constitution from the 2014 General Assembly. Presbytery voted as follows:

- 14-1 Confession of Belhar (adding it to the Book of Confessions) - 70 affirmative, 31 negative, 3 abstain.
- 14-A Renunciation of Jurisdiction - 23 affirmative, 71 negative, 2 abstain.
- 14-B1 Final Assessment – 78 affirmative, 23 negative, 3 abstain.
- 14-B2 Accommodations – 65 affirmative, 36 negative, 3 abstain.
- 14-C Child Protection Policy – 90 affirmative, 12 negative, 2 abstain.
- 14-D Minimum Composition of Presbytery – 90 affirmative, 11 negative, 3 abstain.
- 14-E Interreligious Stance – 39 affirmative, 62 negative, 3 abstain.
- 14-F Marriage – 21 affirmative, 82 negative, 0 abstain.

The Confession of Belhar requires 114 presbyteries to vote in favor. The amendments to the Book of Order require 86 presbyteries to vote in favor.

Reports of Program Divisions

The Camping Division reported information relating to facilities upgrades and group usage; staff members have received Safe Serv Certifications from the Department of Health; 47 attended the Middle School Retreat and 50 attended the Senior High Retreat; 23 attended the first Summer Camp Reunion; the “Traveling Camp” is available to come to your church for a one-day event; summer camp brochures are available; the Division is working on the master plan, cost analysis, and alternative methods for funding its ministries. The Division appreciates all support and volunteer work.

The Congregational Development Division presented the following for Aid to Field: “a guideline of up to $15,000.00-$18,000.00 or whichever is less than 1/3 of total compensation may be authorized for disbursement to a congregation for salary support assistance, upon completion of necessary application and request process.”

The Education & Nurture Division partnered with the Camping Division to plan and facilitate the Middle School and Senior High Retreats. They are searching for ways to better serve older adults of the Presbytery. The Ephesians Event, held at First Presbyterian Church, Myrtle Beach, was well received by the more than 150 persons who attended.

The Mission Division has approved partial assistance for funding of a Living Water for the World Project in the Dominican Republic, which was requested by First Presbyterian Church, Hartsville. Unspent funds from the 2014 budget were given to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance for the Ebola crisis.

The Worship & Spiritual Formation Division continues to plan worship for Presbytery meetings; is raising up the need for ministers and lay persons to participate in leading vespers at the Florence campus of Presbyterian Communities; and is funding scholarships to attend Music and Worship Conferences/Workshops.