

Missouri Union Presbytery

Church and Society Mission Team

Organizational Meeting: 2/11/07

Trinity Presbyterian -- Columbia, Missouri

Members Present:

Team Moderator, Debby Howland, Jefferson City

Nancy Copenhaver, Moberly

Pam Sebastian, Slater

Jackie Guthrey, Marshall

Ruth Thompson, Harrisburg

Ray Schneider, Jefferson City

Jerry Simon, Jefferson City

Brian Long, Jefferson City

Pastor Rudy Beard, Jefferson City

Moderator Howland opened the meeting with a prayer and welcomed the attendees to the Mission Team.

During introductions it became clear that each member of the team is concerned about the increase in need for basic assistance in our society and the diminished role of the state in the provision of these services. Several members indicated that their home churches are experiencing increases in the number of individuals and families seeking basic assistance.

Moderator Howland reviewed that the purpose of the Mission Team is to:

“Identify and report to Presbyterians on critical ethical issues before Missourians, particularly those issues that are related to our Christian faith and state government including the issues of: poverty, the dependent, children, and pornography.”

Pastor Beard gave the team a brief history of Presbyterians’ declining involvement in social awareness and described how the Missouri Council of Churches was formed and subsequently disbanded.

The team agreed that there is a strong need for accurate and unbiased information on social issues. There was a general consensus that much of the information available today is slanted toward one perspective or another. The team decided that the best way to gather and interpret relevant information is to engage a Coordinator. The Coordinator would act at the direction of the Mission Team to identify topics of interest and to implement strategies to communicate information to the Presbytery.

The members present voted to approve a budget of \$6,500 for 2007 and offered the Coordinator position to Brian Long of First Presbyterian Church in Jefferson City. Mr. Long is a former state budget director and is very familiar with the workings of government and the legislature. Mr. Long accepted the position.

Mr. Long indicated that he will immediately develop and circulate a list of topics that fit with the charge of the team. The team will subsequently be asked to identify no more than three topics for initial focus and study. The team unanimously agreed that the planned reauthorization and revision of the state's MEDICAID program will be the major issue for 2007.

Mr. Long suggested that he should approach the General Presbyter about using the Presbytery website as a primary tool for communicating with the members of the Missouri Union Presbytery. Pastor Beard suggested that members of the team should also develop opportunities to present information at session meetings throughout the Presbytery. Both of these ideas were endorsed.

Moderator Howland asked the churches that have joined the mission team to consider contributing funds to the team budget (the current budget of \$6,500 is funded entirely by First Presbyterian in Jefferson City). She indicated that even a limited financial contribution would be a strong and public endorsement of the mission team's work. Pastor Beard indicated that churches could consider dedicating a portion of their current Presbytery general mission budget to the Church and Society Mission Team.

The team agreed to schedule the next meeting for April 29th at a location to be determined in Columbia.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian K. Long