



Stone Chippings Newsletter

August 2022

Many Reasons to Celebrate:

Today's society often focuses on all the ways that the world is falling apart. I wonder...what do we do well these days? There is a process within the consulting world called Appreciative Inquiry, and the basic premise begins with a simple question: "What's good about Old Stone?"

Think back through Old Stone's history; what should we celebrate about our past?

Think about our congregation today. What is something that we do really well these days?

Think about your own life, as a member or friend of Old Stone. What gifts do you share with the church and this community?

There are numerous reasons to celebrate Old Stone. We have a celebrated history as one of the foundations of the Lewisburg community.

Today we have ministries and programs that are worth sharing with others in our neighborhoods.

And you and me? God has given us numerous blessings to share with this church community and the world. Our church has accomplished professionals and academics from throughout the county and the region. Many of us have been financially blessed in our lives. Our children and youth are gifted and passionate for a bright future ahead. God has placed desires and interests, talents and skills, on each of our hearts, calling us to share them with the world.

So with all of this wonderful history, and many gifts to be thankful and grateful for, how do we share them with the world? In a sense, this is what Stewardship is all about. When we identify our blessings and gifts in our lives, God invites us to further the kingdom by sharing ourselves: our time, our talents, and our treasure.

Each year in the fall we have a stewardship campaign where we make pledges for the upcoming annual operating budget—this is essential for us to be able to plan for the bright future ahead. But today, let's take an opportunity to remind ourselves of how much God blesses us each and every day. Today we appreciate all of the gifts that make up Old Stone for who and what we are as a faith community. Today we celebrate as we envision a bright future ahead.

How would you like to share in this celebration of God's many gifts for Old Stone and our lives?

In Christ,

Pastor Jeff



Session Highlights June Stated Session Meeting Wednesday, June 22, 2022

The Session met for their monthly meeting on Wednesday, June 22, 2022. Ten elders were in

attendance. Rev. Jeff Binder called the meeting to order with Stuart Brown offering the devotions and opening prayer.

Rev. Binder clarified the Manual of Operations approval history. The portion of the manual the Session needs to approve was included in the meeting packet for a first reading and will be approved at the July Stated meeting.

Minutes were presented for approval, including:

- March Stated meeting
- April Stated meeting
- May Called meeting

These minutes were approved as presented.

Session reviewed, or heard, reports from the following committees:

- Christian Education
- Worship and Music
- Outreach
- P.N.C. (Pastor Nominating Committee)
- Property
- Finance and Stewardship
- Fellowship

The following action items, requiring Session approval, were presented and approved:

- The Christian Education committee recommended that John Bicksler be selected to serve on the Presbytery Youth Council.
- Worship and Music committee presented the revised Funeral and Wedding policies for approval. These are “living” documents and can be amended as needed.
- Outreach committee requested approval for three special offerings, including: Pentecost offering on June 15; United Way 211 offering on July 3; and the offering on Christmas Eve to go to Davis Stuart.
- P.N.C. – Moderator, Jim Rowe, reported that the committee has been meeting and has completed the M.I.F. (Ministry Information Form) which has been submitted to the Presbytery’s Committee on Ministry for approval. Once approved by C.O.M., the Session will review and approve the document prior to it being posted on the PC(USA) C.L.C. (Church Leadership Connection).
- The Property committee presented the revised Room Reservation policy for the first reading and will submit the policy for approval at the July Stated meeting. The committee also requested approval to open the sanctuary to the public during regular business hours.
- Finance and Stewardship – approve the final 2020 Financial Review, performed by Suttle and Stalnaker; requested approval for Suttle and Stalnaker to conduct the 2021 Financial Review. The committee is also in the process of finding a new insurance provider to handle the necessary insurance for OSPC.
- Fellowship committee – Upcoming events include: July 3, After Worship Fellowship time with special music offered by the Old Stone choir along with guest musicians; on Sunday, August 28, “More than Mortar” is scheduled; and the Church Picnic has been scheduled for Sunday, September 11, with more information to be announced.

Pastor Jeff presented his report, which included:

- Pastoral care updates
- Transitional conversation on Vision for Old Stone – “What is one God-size goal you’d like Old Stone to take on in the next year?”
- Updating the Church Directory

The Clerk’s report included:

- Request from Katrina White to be moved back to the Active Membership Roll.
- Worship Attendance
- Correspondence

The Session will hold their next Stated meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, July 27, 2022, in the Activity Room and on Zoom.

Submitted by Nancy Smallenberger, Clerk



Fellowship Committee:

Save the date: Our church family picnic will be held on September 11 after church at Charlie Mackey Park in Maxwellton (165 Charlie Mackey Lane - North 219 across from Clifton Presbyterian Church).

Planning of a Splash Party at Greenbrier Aquatic Center is also in the works. Get your swimsuits ready! *Date to be announced.*

Submitted by Karen Leland, Fellowship Committee



Presbyterian Women:

Circle Meetings Begin in September: YOU are Invited! – The second Wednesday of the month from September – May, is “Circle Day”! A very special, meaningful gathering of women (in person or via Zoom), who like to be together - get acquainted, study the Bible lesson, and enjoy refreshments!

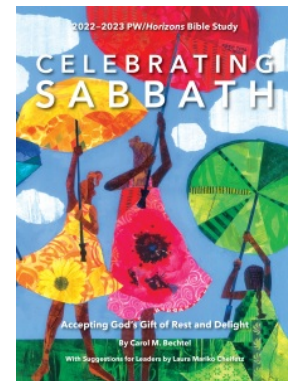
Afternoon Circle meets at 1:00 pm

Evening Circle meets at 7:00 pm

Circle Lesson Books for 2022-23 - *Celebrating Sabbath: Accepting God’s Gift of Rest and Delight*

“In the nine lessons of this Bible study—with passages from Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Matthew, Luke, and Acts—we’ll consider Sabbath:

- as a celebration, not a day of dreary formality
- as God’s intent for all of creation that includes busy women too
- as one day of the week, perhaps a Sunday
- as a time to surrender unhealthy striving and frantic busyness, and instead trust that God will provide
- as a reminder that life is precious and working too much is against God’s plans for our precious lives
- as a day devoted to community and justice and not exclusively to self-care.



Ultimately, Sabbath reminds us to honor God who honors us by giving us a day each week to reset our pace, our priorities, and our lives.”

From <https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/bible-study/celebrating-sabbath/>

For more information, contact:

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United Way 211 Program Special Offering:

In July, a total of \$536 was collected to support the United Way 211 program. Thank you for contributing to the success of our local United Way!

Stewardship Financial Update:

Old Stone Presbyterian Church Financial Update Through July, 2022		
	July Actual	Actual to Date
Pledges Received	\$22,773.00	\$186,427.00
Other Offerings	\$2,060.00	\$33,362.00
Other Income	\$332.00	\$9,497.00
Total Income	\$25,165.00	\$229,286.00
Expenses	\$28,938.00	\$199,972.00
Net Ordinary Receipts	-\$3,773.00	\$29,313.00

Trustees Quarterly Report (Second Quarter):

Trustees Report

	Location	Corpus	6.30.2022	5.31.2022	4.30.2022
Evans	GVCF	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 147,275.31		
Hamilton (#6488)	CNB	\$ 200,000.00	\$ 210,087.69	\$ 211,187.90	\$ 210,407.19
Matthews (#6487)	CNB	\$ 163,500.00	\$ 169,129.51	\$ 170,074.17	\$ 169,153.47
McMillion	GVCF	\$ 59,332.50	\$ 72,378.60		
Shafer	GVCF	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 206,322.73		
Checking Account	CNB/Trustees Checkbook			\$ 7,727.30	\$ 2,727.30
Total		\$ 622,832.50	\$ 805,193.84	\$ 388,989.37	\$ 382,287.96
			Fees (through June 2022)	Fees (through May 2022)	Fees (through April 2022)
Evans			\$ 533.01		
McMillion			\$ 254.03		
Shafer			\$ 724.16		
Total			\$ 1,511.20	\$ -	\$ -

A Word from Our General Presbyter - July 14, 2022

By Ed Thompson:

"I find it hard to rate General Assembly meetings. For in-person meetings, impressions get colored by the quality of the hotel room, the quality of the food, the friendliness – or perhaps the quality – of my roommate, the number of late night sessions, the number of “frequent fliers” (commissioners who make a nuisance of themselves by speaking repeatedly, often several times a day). The 225th

General Assembly (2022) was harder to rate because while committee meetings were held in person, plenaries, for the most part, were held online. Because of this arrangement, I didn't get to go to and really didn't need to go to Louisville. Instead, I spent the time sitting mostly in my office, although for a few of the evening session I was at home, watching the livestream on the computer. Sometimes that meant I was sitting staring at a screen for more than 10 hours a day. That's a lot. That got tiring. That has to affect my judgment.



Yet, after a few days for rest and reflection, I'd have to rate the 225th General Assembly pretty highly. There were only a couple of "frequent fliers," although they seemed to bother me more because I was watching them on my computer than they would have if we had been there in person. As I think back on it, the Assembly took some significant actions. There were probably 200 or more votes. (I could have gone back and counted them, but I didn't.) These are the 12 that I think are the most significant.

1. Appointment of a Commission to merge the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly. That was the recommendation of the Report of the Special Committee on Per-Capita Based Funding and National Church Financial Sustainability. However the Assembly's Financial Resources Committee decided that it should be a task force instead, meaning it would have little, if any, power and would be limited to making recommendations to the 2024 General Assembly, essentially kicking this can down the road for at least two more years. This is a complex situation since these are two complex organizations. While I have some misgivings that I'm not really able to explain or articulate, I strongly believe this was the right thing to do. We are not the same church we were when we established our current structure. It makes sense to me to merge these two agencies and hopefully streamline our structure. It can be done. There may be wailing and gnashing of teeth, but it can be done.

2. Raising Per Capita to \$9.85 in 2023. The original proposal would have raised General Assembly per capita to \$9.61 next year. That in itself is a significant jump from the current rate of \$8.98. Each morning's plenary at the General Assembly began with a financial report indicating the effect of the previous days' actions on the per capita and mission budgets. If commissioners were paying attention, they would have seen that approving studies, establishing task forces, and appointing administrative commissions had financial implications, meaning that the per capita rate would have to go up to cover these costs. In previous Assemblies, there would be occasional comments by commissioners that raising per capita would be hard on their home church, so maybe the Assembly should be a little more cautious in spending money. I don't remember hearing anything like that this year. It's not that the actions taken aren't appropriate or defensible. The reality is that they come with a cost. It was also surprising to see per capita drop by 5 cents to \$9.80 in 2024. That's the result of the Assembly deciding to make the 2024 General Assembly a hybrid meeting once again.

3. That would be my third highlight of this year's GA (though these really aren't in any particular order): having the 2024 General Assembly meeting as a hybrid event, but with committees meeting online and plenaries held in person. The cost savings come because this was originally budgeted as being held completely in person. I'm not sure I've ever seen a drop in the per capita apportionment from year to year before.

4. Approval of New Rules for Discipline. The Form of Government was revised in 2010. The Directory for Worship was revised in 2016. Covid delayed this effort by two years, but this year, we finally got around to approving a revision to the Rules of Discipline, changing the title along the way to Rules for Discipline. Although important, it's still probably the least read section of our constitution. Most people ignore it until they need it.

5. Writing a New Confession dealing with racism in the American context. This one may take a while, as the committee given this task doesn't have to be named until December 31, 2024. Nevertheless, this is a significant step. The Confession of 1967 mentions racism. The Belhar Confession deals mostly with racism but comes out of a South African context. Writing a new confession is significant in its own right, but saying, essentially, that we as white Christians need to directly address systemic racism feels like a big step.

6. If that's a big step, offering an apology for racism is a huge step. Yes, it's only words, but words matter. We've had study papers and pronouncements in the past. Maybe we've said essentially the same thing before. Somehow, this feels different, perhaps more honest. I find the Litany of Repentance, part of RGJ-08, On Offering an Apology to African Americans for the Sin of Slavery

and Its Legacy, to be particularly moving.

7. *Recognition That Israel's Laws, Policies, and Practices Constitute Apartheid Against the Palestinian People.* It's harsh language. It will offend some. However, if you look at the definition of apartheid and compare that to the actions of the Israeli government against the Palestinian people, it seems to fit. The PCUSA supports the right of the state of Israel to exist. The PCUSA condemns terrorist acts carried out against the state of Israel. The PCUSA supports the rights of the Palestinian people. It can be difficult to find the right balance in this complex situation.

8. *Changing Honorably Retired to Retired.* This one hits close to home since the "R" word has crossed my mind. I get this. Some Honorably Retired ministers are less than honorable, and it seems inappropriate, if not wrong, to apply the word honorable to their status. The thought is to simply call those who are retired retired.

9. *Requiring councils to have policies on anti-racism and non-sexual harassment.* The Advisory Committee on the Constitution recommended against taking this step not because they're racists or like to bully people but rather because it starts to turn the Book of Order into more of a manual of operations. In spite of that legitimate objection, I think it's appropriate for us to do this. To be honest, though, I'm not looking forward to doing the work or what it's going to take to get local church sessions to adopt these policies. It's been hard enough to get sessions to adopt sexual misconduct and child and youth protection policies, and we certainly don't have 100% compliance with those two requirements, even though they've been part of our constitution for years.

10. *Continued selective divestment from the Fossil Fuel Industry.* You might call this a compromise solution. You might call it cowardly. Rather than mandating complete divestment from the Fossil Fuel industry, the Assembly voted to divest from an additional five companies. The feeling of a majority of the commissioners is that it makes more sense to retain our investments so that we can have a "seat at the table" and engage companies in conversation with the hope and with the goal that they will adopt more environmentally-friendly or environmentally-sound practices. That might be wishful thinking. It can be thought of as practical and pragmatic. Maybe it just represents hope.

11. *Requiring 12 weeks of paid Family Leave.* That was the original recommendation of the Family Leave Task Force. The Health, Safety, and Benefits Committee dropped that and simply called for required family medical leave without specifying any particular length of time. People had different opinions about whether this should be 6 weeks, 8 weeks, 12 weeks, or even longer. The Assembly spent a fair amount of time on this, with a fair number of proposed amendments. Eventually, they settled on 12 weeks. Our presbytery's policy calls for 8 weeks. If this is eventually approved by a majority of presbyteries, we will have to change our policy. Since there was some resistance to taking this step, it will be interesting to see how the vote turns out.

12. *Reject attempts to reduce, limit, or eliminate access to abortion care.* Even 10 years ago, this would have been a more contentious issue, but a number of the people who would have strongly opposed this language have left our denomination. There were a few attempts to amend this language but they were strongly defeated. Support for access to abortion may still divide us, but it does not divide the PCUSA as it once did.

I could have fairly easily listed 15 or maybe even 20 items, but I'll stop here. It should be noted that items 4, 8, 9, and 11 still have to be approved by a majority of presbyteries before they will take effect because they will require changes in the Book of Order. Typically, we would do that at the February presbytery meeting following the General Assembly. At this point, we're planning to have that meeting online and not in person.

All the others items were actions of and by the General Assembly. In some ways, they speak to the church, and in other ways, they speak for the church. We are not bound by them, but we should be informed by them. Whether you agree or disagree, you may want to go to PC-Biz and see what the Assembly actually said before you get too excited or too upset."

The original article can be found at: <https://wvpresbytery.org/ed-july14/#>

July Birthdays

07/01 Ryan Meadows
07/01 Coriann Nemcik

August Birthdays

08/02 Jim Rowe
08/03 Sue Rock

07/01 Benjamin Snyder
07/01 Bill Snyder
07/02 Todd Williams
07/06 Pat Bashen
07/06 Susan Harkness
07/06 Molly Hileman
07/06 Mark Smith
07/07 Anita Snyder
07/08 John Lehman
07/10 Yvette Yarid
07/13 Pat Boisvert
07/15 Stuart Brown
07/16 Tom Greenstreet
07/16 Zach Hileman
07/18 Butch Neal
07/19 Lou Ella Lewis
07/22 Joan Montgomery
07/22 Sharon White
07/22 Dena Williams
07/23 Frank White
07/26 Jim Coleman
07/31 Betsy Hudgins

08/04 Norman Ahern, Jr.
08/05 Jacqueline Bennett
08/08 Bob Perkins
08/09 John Wilson Bicksler
08/11 Nancy Bulla
08/11 Shannon Lehman
08/11 Andrew Scarborough-McLaughlin
08/14 Jim Leitch
08/17 Wilson Bland
08/24 Dorothy Lee
08/24 Jen Runyon
08/25 Nancy Smallenberger
08/26 Bobbi Hoffman
08/27 Beverly Johnson
08/27 Acie Kesterson
08/27 Bonnie Marshall
08/30 Linda Hayes
