

**REPORT OF THE STATED CLERK**  
**April 24, 2010**

1. All reports have been filed with the General Assembly and the Synod of Lakes and Prairies as required as of this date, including the Annual Presbytery Report to the General Assembly.
2. All correspondence received on behalf of the Presbytery has been assigned, referred, or answered. Included was the resignation of Elder Dick Corwine as one of our elder commissioners to General Assembly. Alternate Elder Mike O'Bradovich was contacted and agreed to serve in this position.
3. Beginning with our February minutes, you will notice that I have included new notations in the minutes, indicating the year and number of each action that the Presbytery took – for example, **2010-001** indicates that this is the first action that the Presbytery took in the year 2010. After the last meeting of each year, I will compile an Annual Digest of the actions the Presbytery took during that year. I hope that this will provide a helpful summary of the Presbytery's actions, as well as provide an easier and quicker way to research Presbytery actions.

4. I will be on sabbatical leave from April 25 – May 5, and from July 24 – September 5. At its April 8 meeting, the Presbytery Council voted to fund the portion of my sabbatical that Central Presbyterian Church was not able to fund out of its regular operating budget. The following is from the focus statement for my sabbatical work:

“For more and more congregations, the day is rapidly drawing to a close when each can have its own building, run its own programs, support its own mission causes, and call and hire its own staff. Resources are too limited. Our continued insistence on doing things by ourselves results in fewer members, an inability to support staff or buildings, and closing church doors.”

I plan to visit with seminary professors, seminary field education directors, General Assembly staff members, and the leadership of several congregations who are finding new ways to be the Church of Jesus Christ. By the end of my sabbatical, I will have developed one or more models of how the congregation I serve, as well as other congregations in our Presbytery, might work together to share staff, facilities, resources, and programs.

In the midst of other new things I'll be doing and trying during these weeks, I will be trying one more thing: blogging. I've not had a blog before, but my hope is that this effort will do two things. First, it will provide a record of my conversations, readings, study, and reflection during my sabbatical. Second, it will provide an opportunity for those who are interested to journey with me, and to engage in a web dialogue of thoughts, reflections, ideas, and reactions. I would welcome the partnership of those who would like to follow along or add to this project as it unfolds. My blog is at <http://splank51.blogspot.com/>.

I am most appreciative of the Council's action, and of the Presbytery's support, as is the Session of Central Presbyterian Church. You all have their thanks as well as mine.

5. I have received the required written report of the Committee on Representation. Elder Marilyn Dierks, the chairperson of this committee, met regularly with the Nominating

Committee, consulting with them about the importance of good representation on the Presbytery's committees. I will attach this report to the minutes of this meeting, and will file the report with the Synod.

6. I received a letter on April 8 from Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, to our Presbytery. The letter expresses "a special word of appreciation... for your faithful stewardship in 2010. More than ever, maintaining the connection that links together the body of Christ is crucial for the faithful witness of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Your presbytery's full support for 2010 per capita apportionment is a tangible sign of commitment to that vision, and I am extraordinarily grateful."
7. The following summary of Presbytery's annual statistical report to General Assembly for the year 2009 is noted for the record:
  - a. The number of churches as of January 1, 2009 was 54. No new churches were organized, and none were received from or dismissed to other presbyteries. Lowe Avenue Presbyterian Church was closed. The number of churches as of December 31, 2009, therefore, was 53.
  - b. The number of ministers on the roll of Presbytery as of January 1, 2009 was 84. One minister died during the year (Ronald Hawkins), four ministers were transferred to other presbyteries, and four ministers were received from other presbyteries. As a result, the number of ministers on the roll as of December 31, 2009 was 83.
  - c. The annual statistical reports were submitted to General Assembly as required, with the exception of Woodbine. This is the third year (at least) that they have not reported. The active membership of the congregations was 10,398 as of January 1, 2009, and the December 31, 2009 membership was 10,020, a loss of 378 members during the year. Our thanks to all of the clerks and other individuals who worked hard to gather the information and submit these reports. A special word of thanks goes to Joan Royer, our Administrative Assistant at the Presbytery office, who does so much to support and complete this process! Some interesting highlights of the reports show that...
    - i. 4,318 children, youth, and adults were involved in the educational ministries of our congregations, led by 480 teachers.
    - ii. The churches in our Presbytery received just over \$11 million in regular contributions during 2009, and received over \$500,000 in bequests.
    - iii. On an average Sunday morning, 5,025 Presbyterians and others gather in our congregations to worship God.
    - iv. There were 172 adult professions of faith in Jesus Christ during 2009 in the churches of our Presbytery.
8. One of the key principles of Presbyterian church polity is to have equal numbers of ministers and elders in all governing bodies above the session. For this reason I am required to report annually to Presbytery any imbalance between the number of resident ministers on the roll of Presbytery and the number of elders who are entitled to vote at Presbytery meetings, so that adjustments can be made if necessary to maintain the parity of ministers and elders at Presbytery meetings (G-11.0101b).

As of the end of last year, there were 81 ministers on the active roll of Presbytery, 76 of whom reside within the Presbytery. In the above citation from the *Book of Order*, it

is permissible for a Presbytery to decide that honorably retired ministers who are not active in Presbytery may be excluded in figuring the balance of ministers and elders in attendance at Presbytery, and our Presbytery has so decided in the past. Given that decision, there are 11 retired ministers who would not be included in the calculation. In that case, the number of ministers who have to be matched with elders would be 65.

In addition to one elder commissioner from each church (a total of 53), there are five extra commissioners that churches with more than 500 members are eligible to send to Presbytery (two from Dundee, and one each from Church of the Cross, West Hills, and Faith). In addition, there are 11 elders who are members of Council. There are also four commissioned lay pastors who have a vote in Presbytery as elders. Two representatives of the leadership of the Sudanese Fellowship have been given the vote in Presbytery as elders. Therefore the total number of elders entitled to vote at Presbytery meetings is 75.

Since the number of elders eligible to vote exceeds the number of ministers, it is not necessary to provide for additional elder commissioners for the period from May 2010 through April 2011.

Steven W. Plank  
Stated Clerk