

Report of the Administrative Commission of Albany Presbytery  
for the Welsh Presbyterian Church of Poultney, Vermont

17 March 2020

The Administrative Commission was constituted by Albany Presbytery at its stated meeting on May 18, 2019 and consisted of the Rev. Laura Mitchell, the Rev. Kate Koffila, Elder Michael Barron, Elder Don Drew, and the Rev. Ken Applegate. The Commission was requested by the moderator, the Rev. Robin Greene, because the church was unable to meet its commitments in terms of its water, insurance, and heating oil bills. The building also required extensive repairs, which far outstrip the congregation's ability to address.

The Commission met with the Session of the Welsh church in June and discussed different avenues, including dissolving, becoming a fellowship, or trying to continue as a congregation in some fashion. The Commission, as it reviewed the situation and the church's financial status, voted to move toward dissolution. The proposal was for a third party—a community partner—to purchase the building for \$12,000 and then allow the congregation to “nest” in the building while also using it for its own purposes. Facing overwhelming costs for roof repair, bathroom repairs and installation and rising bills, it offered a way through for the congregation to remain intact.

The congregation and the commission traded letters and conversations over a period of time, resulting in the final offer from the congregation that “The Poultney Welsh Church Preservation Alliance” be allowed to purchase the building for \$6,759.50, representing the cost of the “quick claim deed” required by Vermont (which the Presbytery will pay), a grant of \$4900 that was given by the presbytery's Trustees to fund a handicapped ramp in the last two years, and to cover \$1329.50 that the Committee on Ministers and Congregations paid to cover an insurance bill for the fall of 2019. The congregation also requests that it be made a fellowship and that its members continue to be carried on presbytery's rolls.

The commission, after some discussion, believes this is a fair and equitable settlement and a healthy path forward for all concerned. Poultney is a community that has already suffered the loss of a college in its midst; the presbytery does not have the resources to “rescue” the church and its building; the community does not end up with another empty building; the congregation can continue in community as a fellowship. We therefore move its approval.