



Albany Presbytery Convocation in Stillwater
July 10, 2018

ENVISIONING STAFF: WHAT ROLES DO WE SEE AS MOST IMPORTANT?

SPAT and Personnel invited any and all who could come and help to discuss staffing on July 10th. We were able to meet in the comfy chairs of Stillwater's fellowship hall, with some refreshments to take time to discern together about staffing. We took time to discuss, not particular positions, but rather skills, resources and functions that only a staff of a Presbytery can provide. It was also shared that [Tim Coombs, Associate for Congregations](#), is stepping down later this year, and [Dan Rogers, Stated Clerk](#) plans to step down when his term ends April 2020, no other Presbytery staff was present.

We started by sharing what people heard that was new to them in this conversation. One person learned how vital having someone to Pastor the Pastors is. Some people were surprised to hear that communications staff person [Kim Deal, Communications Manager](#), is available to help you walk through media, including how to do a church website. We also heard that churches do not expect or depend upon the Presbytery to do mission, but rather are looking for support as the church pursues mission. Finally, we were brought to the understanding that the Presbytery often can act as a prophetic voice, on example being a statement on immigration and welcome that got national attention, but that the staff doesn't create that, the members of the Presbytery do.

In discussing skill sets, the [Personnel Committee](#) felt they were relatively unsurprised by the topics. In fact, the discussion group agreed that this conversation fit into a longer and larger conversation that we have been having for a while. However, with specific positions out of the picture, the skies were able to become a focal point. The skill sets mentioned included: pastoral care for pastors and churches, someone to be a Presbytery rep on Sundays, Visioning skills, a way to take care of finances, worship leadership was pointed to as a skill, as well as someone to be a connectional person, who keeps in touch with the other levels of church: GA and Synod, and connects us to other Presbyteries and resources, and connects between churches in the Presbytery.. Also, the need for someone to be able to understand the structures of the church and systems theory. Additionally, other skills suggested

included administrative/office/librarian skill set necessary for an office, especially if its a mobile office: someone to answer the questions, and the need to have a good list of referrals to call for counseling or coaching, etc.

A Stated Clerk was universally acknowledged as necessary by the Book of Order, but people shared about clerks who worked for multiple Presbyteries or were Clerk/Pastor or Clerk/General Presbyterian or Clerk/Presbytery Resource person; this information was shared in the spirit of understanding that the Stated Clerk will exist but the position might look different in the future. Discussions of lettings some positions be shared between Presbyteries also were floated.

The group wanted the following to be known throughout the Presbytery, especially if you couldn't make the meeting.

1. Keep the faith: We read 1 For 12 and it was noted by Terry Diggory of the [Presbyterian-New England Congregational Church, Saratoga](#), that God has already arranged the Body of Faith, our job is to clothe it and clothing can change.
2. We are not starting from scratch: SPAT, Personnel and the discussion group all started with the understanding that all the past data is present and available on the website for us to build on, this is part of the process.
3. We are not trying to fix the entire world; i.e. we are addressing the needs of this Presbytery here and now, as best we can, and we are trusting God to do the rest.

We closed, giving notes to Personnel, much closer to consensus of how to best equip Albany Presbytery

If you want to have further discussion about this or any convocation, we want to leave this process open, contact SPAT and we would love to reflect with you.

Rev. Ted Wright, HR, is the Moderator of SPAT and can be reached at this email address: wrightsafrica@gmail.com

Sincerely,

Rev. Katy Stenta (Co-Leader of Staffing Convocation & member of SPAT)