

Clerks' Tip of the Month

What Clerks Should Tell Their Presbytery Commissioners

If you have new ruling elder-commissioners going to Presbytery meetings (or you are a new elder going to a presbytery meeting), there are a few resources you can use to help figure out what is going on.

National Capital Presbytery is composed of 108 congregations and some 350 teaching elders. Congregations send ruling elder-commissioners to presbytery meetings, the goal being to have numerical parity of teaching elders and ruling elders. At least ten days before the meeting, the “packet” and the “reports” will be posted on the National Capital Presbytery Website, <https://www.thepresbytery.org/presbytery-meeting>, and the ministers and clerks of session will get an email indicating that the posting has happened.

Since the presbytery doesn't know which ruling elders may be coming to the meeting, the clerks of session should inform the appropriate elder-commissioners from their church about the availability of the meeting information.

The packet contains a letter from the moderator, directions to National Presbyterian Church, information on how to order a meal, the agenda, and the omnibus and other motions (including background material) that will constitute the business of the meeting. The reports contain submissions from various components of the presbytery, for example, the Leadership Council, the Committee on Ministry, the Administrative Commission on Congregational Property, and the Stated Clerk. Commissioners may want to print out and bring the packet to the meeting (there is wireless at National Presbyterian Church, so that is an option, too) and read the reports ahead of time. Then they will be ready to go!

The meeting proper starts at 6:00. But, one of the best parts of the afternoon happens before the meeting—at the 4:00 Open Space. For new commissioners (who get a free dinner, too), there will be an orientation offered at 4. But also, there will be numerous sessions that provide an invaluable opportunity to connect with people from other churches on a variety of issues. This time there will be meetings on: Refugee Ministries, Intergenerational Poverty, College Ministry, the Presbyterian Outlook (with former PCUSA Moderator Heath Rada), Mideast Peace, and a Conversation on progressive/conservative theological journeys. There will also be a Mission Fair with displays of many mission projects supported by the presbytery. Click [here](#) for information on the Open Space opportunities. Open Space, and indeed the Presbytery Meeting, are both open to noncommissioners—lots of people come who are not official commissioners from their churches but just interested in what is going on.

Happy 2018! If you have a tip you think others could use or a question you would like me to answer, please email it to me at scoe@thepresbytery.org.



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