

## MODERATOR'S LETTER

Larry Keith

March 21, 2017

Dear Friends in Christ,

Buenos dias!

No, I won't attempt any more Spanish introductions, as I did at our March Presbytery meeting in Amagansett. But I do want to thank Marilyn Fox, a retired Spanish teacher, for kindly praising my pronunciation!

We were blessed to meet on a beautiful day at the Amagansett church's lovely new facility. The Rev. Steven Howarth and his congregation can be justifiably proud of their building, and we appreciate the hospitality they showed us. Of course, when speaking of hospitality, I shouldn't forget to thank the crew from Flushing House that provided the delicious food and refreshments.

The meeting had a definite Spanish accent, from my opening remarks, to the hymn *Santo, Santo, Santo*, to the prayer, to the offering for New Church Development, to the terrific homily by Gustavo Sanchez, the CRE at Mission Emmanuel in Center Moriches.

Past Moderator Barbara Messier, who chairs the Shepherding Council, is to be commended for inviting a small-group discussion on "Building Community Among Strangers." This is such a timely and important topic, and the stories will be included in the next edition of *Nexus*, our on-line newsletter.

It was good to welcome Jim Rissler, the president and CEO of the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program. He presented an overview and video on the many ways that PILP can assist the financial needs of our member churches.

The Presbytery took some other important actions. We merged the Peacemaking, Justice and Hunger Work Group with the Salt and Light Committee; we concurred with the COM's request allowing the Levittown and Massapequa churches to explore merging; we certified for ordination Colby Rohde, currently a pastoral intern in Babylon; we accepted into our Presbytery the Rev. John Carrick, who has already begun serving in Mattituck; we commissioned missionaries to Cuba, (That's a journey I would like to take someday), to El Salvador, to an anti-trafficking mission in Northern Thailand, and to a work camp in Norristown, PA.

I think the most enthusiastic presentation was made by the Rev. Stephen Fearing of Shelter Island. His "Report from the Synod" opened a lot of eyes to the important work being done by that august group.

As I write this, our General Presbyter, Mark Tammen, is celebrating a birthday and arriving in England to visit his new grandchild. So prayers of celebration for our leader, who definitely deserves some vacation.

With gratitude,  
Larry Keith