



*from the virtual desk of Gini Courter*

December 22, 2008

Just a short note to orient you to the agenda for January –

From my October letter: *There's so much Board work to be done that there's barely time to conduct a Board meeting. Our policy governance work is forcing us to replace old ways of doing our work. It will be chaotic (which is a fine environment for change) and exhausting (which is, well, exhausting and not fine) until we're willing to give up some old ways to provide the new ways with a place to live and draw breath. For the past n years (5 years? 3? 8?) we've added new practices, yet clung tenaciously to our old habits, too. This year, we need to be willing to kick some of our old practices to the curb.*

In January we will be busy, as always, but CoCo and your moderators have ensured there is more time for leisure. There are more opportunities for deeper conversation and connection with your colleagues. To save wear and tear on the Board, we will have lunch at 25 most days. Please join the effort to make the January meeting a spirit-filled meeting.

I know you'll all read the agenda, but here's an overview:

**Wednesday:** committees, community dinner, vespers, and working groups

**Thursday:** ends, boundaries, more ends, vespers, and conversation with the presidential candidates

**Friday:** time to prepare working group and committee notes and motions, more ends work, a deeper look at the Pew data, policy governance monitoring, and a free evening

**Saturday:** board and staff reports; discussion with the Commission on Appraisal about the Article II recommendations; Pew Part II, and *action reports* from committees and working groups. (An *action report* only includes items that trustees will be asked to discuss and vote on Sunday.) Saturday night we'll have the budget session.

**Sunday:** President's report; Panel on Theological Education including a discussion of learnings from the Excellence in Ministry consultation; update from the 5<sup>th</sup> Principle Taskforce. We'll discuss and vote on all motions before lunch so that the folks who have to leave at 2:00 are included in our deliberations. After lunch we'll have working group updates and vote on recommendations from the Committee on Committees.

To make this work, each working group and committee needs to make sure that their notes have all the motions clearly identified (and on a separate page, ready for Nancy to put on the screen), and email/give Nancy their notes by noon on Friday. Nancy will assemble the notes into a packet and have the packets copied and ready for board members to pick up 5 pm on Friday. We will all need to review the notes packet before we start the meeting on Saturday. I think we can make this happen. (On Sunday afternoon, CoCo will decide if we actually did.)

Gotta go now. I have dress rehearsal for Messiah. I'm singing in a choir (Community Church of New York) for the first time in many years, and spent the last rehearsal totally lost. (When we got to the Hallelujah Chorus the tenor next to me said caringly "you'll probably be familiar with this one...") May you each do at least one thing that simultaneously scares and thrills you this holiday season.

Soon, friends. Very soon.

Gini

