

5 -DRAFT-
6 **PRESBYTERY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE**
7 **MINUTES OF ONE HUNDRED FORTY-THIRD STATED MEETING**
8 **FEBRUARY 6, 2021**

9 The 143rd Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee was held via Zoom on Saturday,
10 February 6, 2021. Rev. Nolan Huizenga presented Zoom tips for the meeting, and Stated Clerk Therese
11 Howell provided orientation for first time commissioners. Moderator Theresa Denton called the meeting
12 to order at 9:45 am.

13 **WORSHIP**

14 Worship included a sermon by Rev. Dr. Cynthia Rigby, The W. C. Brown Professor of Theology
15 at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, and the installation of Rev. Dr. Chris Joiner (First
16 Presbyterian Church, Franklin) as 2021 Moderator and Ruling Elder Cristi Scott Ligon (St. Andrews
17 Presbyterian Church, Nashville) as 2021 Vice-Moderator. The offering was collected for the Matthew 25
18 Feeding Program.

19 **DECLARATION OF QUORUM / RECOGNITION OF OUTGOING MODERATOR /**
20 **STATEMENT OF PROCEDURES / FIRST TIME COMMISSIONERS / STANDING RULES /**
21 **CORRESPONDING MEMBERS**

22 Moderator Joiner called the meeting back to order after worship, and declared a quorum was
23 present. Ruling Elder Robin Thomas and Rev. Ray Thomas, Co-Executive Presbyters, reported that they
24 had presented 2020 Moderator Theresa Denton with a gift for her service to the Presbytery, and thanked
25 her for her service. Moderator Joiner also thanked Mrs. Denton for her leadership and service.

26 After a brief recess, the Moderator reviewed procedures for the meeting. The Moderator stated
27 that due to the pandemic, it is still not possible for the Presbytery to meet safely in person, but a meeting
28 is necessary to transact essential business. The Moderator stated that *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly*
29 *Revised (12th Edition)*, the parliamentary authority for councils of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), states
30 electronic meetings must be properly authorized in the council's bylaws. The Presbytery of Middle
31 Tennessee's bylaws, the Mission and Operations Manual, does not allow the presbytery to meet
32 electronically, and it is not possible to meet in person to amend the Manual to allow electronic meetings.
33 The motion was made, seconded, and approved by the requisite three-fourths of commissioners to set
34 aside the standing rules to allow the electronic meeting and to ratify all actions taken at today's meeting
35 at the next stated, in person meeting.

36 The Presbytery's Mission and Operations Manual and the *Book of Order* provide for the seating
37 of corresponding members and teaching and ruling elders with voice and those with voice and vote. Any
38 ruling elder serving as presbytery's Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Moderator-in-Nomination, chairs of
39 committees, members of the Administrative Committee, members of the Finance Committee, and the
40 Moderator of Presbyterian Women, are enrolled as members of presbytery and shall have voice and vote.
41 Ruling elders commissioned to particular pastoral service, and ruling elders who have previously served
42 as presbytery moderator, within five years of completion of his/her term of service, are enrolled as
43 members of presbytery with voice and vote. Any ruling elder serving as a committee representative to a
44 particular meeting of presbytery in the absence of the chair shall have the privilege of voice and vote for
45 that particular meeting of the presbytery. Persons certified in church service who are ruling elders shall
46 have the privilege of voice and vote at all meetings of the presbytery, during their term of service in
47 ministry in the presbytery of Middle Tennessee. Persons certified in church service, who are members of
48 congregations in the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee, shall have the privilege of voice at all meetings of
49 the presbytery during their term of service in a congregation or other ministry validated by the presbytery.

50 Should a question arise concerning the enrollment of any person, the presbytery may resolve the matter
51 upon the recommendation of the Permanent Judicial Commission. Corresponding members were seated
52 without objection, and are listed with the roll.

53 The Moderator stated that Keenan Rodgers, the Presbytery’s Board of Pensions representative,
54 was present for the meeting, and encouraged commissioners to reach out to him in the chat feature. First
55 time commissioners were recognized and welcomed.

56 **ROLL**

57 The roll of commissioners, corresponding members, and visitors attending the presbytery meeting
58 is attached (Attachment A).

59 **AGENDA**

60 The Moderator stated that the agenda for the meeting had been provided in advance to
61 commissioners. The following agenda was approved without objection upon motion duly made and
62 seconded:

- 63 9:00 am 1. Registration (Order of the Day in CAPS)
- 64 9:35 am Orientation to Zoom | First Time Commissioners (10 min)
- 65 9:45 am 2. CALL TO ORDER / WORSHIP
 - 66 • Offering: Matthew 25 Food Program
 - 67 • Installation of 2021 Moderator and Vice-Moderator
- 68 10:45 am 3. Establishment of Quorum / Recognition of 2020 Moderator / Statement of
69 Procedures / Recognition of First Time Presbyters / Seating
70 of Corresponding Members / Adoption of Agenda
- 71 11:00 am 4. Stated Clerk’s Report – Therese Howell (5 min)
 - 72 • Approval of Minutes of 142nd Stated Meeting (October 15, 2020)
- 73 11:05 am 5. Administrative Committee – Cristi Scott Ligon (20 min)
- 74 11:25 am 6. Finance Committee – Steve Douse (10 min)
- 75 11:35 am 7. Hunger Action Advocate – Stuart Wilson-Patton (5 min)
- 76 11:40 am 8. Monroe Harding Report – Leah Susi (5 min)
- 77 11:45 am 9. Committee on Ministry Report – C. Nolan Huizenga (10 min)
- 78 11:55 am 10. Synod of Living Waters Commissioners’ Reports – (5 min)
- 79 Noon 11. Committee on Mutual Support – Stuart Wilson-Patton (5 min)
- 80 12:05 pm 12. Co-Executive Presbyters’ Report – Robin & Ray Thomas (10 min)
- 81 12:15 pm 13. Unfinished Business
- 82 **144th Stated Meeting – Thursday, May 20, 2021 (location TBD)**
- 83 12:20 pm 14. Closing Prayer / Adjourn

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STATED CLERK’S REPORT

86 Ruling elder Therese Howell, Stated Clerk, presented the following report, and called attention to
87 committee reports that were included in the packet (Church Transformation, Leadership Excellence) for
88 committees who did not have time on the agenda.

89 Committee on Church Transformation

90 2021 Areas of Focus

91 **1. New Worshipping Communities:**

- 92 a. *CCT will continue to work with new worshipping communities providing connection, guidance*
93 *and prayer when requested.*
- 94 b. Current NWCs
 - 95 i. Evangelical Presbyterian Arabic Community in Nashville
 - 96 ii. Rock Eternal Presbyterian Arabic Church
 - 97 iii. Telos at Southminster

98 **2. Immigrant Churches:**

- 99 a. *CCT will continue to work with immigrant churches providing connection, guidance and prayer*
100 *when requested.*
- 101 b. Current Immigrant Churches

- i. Sudanese American Nuer Church
- ii. Iglesia Presbiteriana Nueva Vida (NCD)
- iii. Nashville Korean Presbyterian Church

3. Existing Congregations:

- a. CCT will work with congregations that request a greater connection with presbytery as they work to transform their ministry.
- b. CCT will work to build relationships presbytery wide for the purpose of mutual support towards presbytery wide transformation and sustainability.

Committee on Leadership Excellence

The Committee on Leadership Excellence will be asking for, and then sending out, a Google doc which will include resources pastors and leaders have found helpful for them. Categories of resources will include, but not be limited to: Social Justice / Matthew 25 topics, Pastoral Care / Chaplaincy, Leadership Expertise, Biblical / PC(USA) Constitutional Basis of Leadership, Personal / Individual Leadership Development, and other resources which may be helpful. This document will be a living document; in other words, it will continually be updated, and available to the Presbytery.

Annual Statistical Reports

The Stated Clerk reported that Annual Statistical Reports for 2020 were mailed and emailed to the clerks of sessions. The deadline for church entries is February 18; deadline for the stated clerk to file the reports is March 4.

Handlson v. Presbytery of Middle Tennessee

The mediated settlement agreement in Handlson v. Presbytery of Middle Tennessee was reported to the Presbytery at the 142nd Stated Meeting. Certification of this action was provided to Rev. Handlson, the Stated Clerk of the Synod of Living Waters, and the Moderator of the Synod of Living Waters Permanent Judicial. The Synod Stated Clerk and Permanent Judicial Commission Moderator confirmed that Rev. Handlson withdrew his complaint. Rev. Handlson has been restored to the denominational roll as an Honorably Retired member of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee.

2019 Presbytery Minutes

The 2019 minutes of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee were approved without exception by the Synod of Living Waters.

Investigation

The Stated Clerk reported that allegations were received against a minister member of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee. Pursuant to the Mission and Operations Manual, an investigating committee was appointed. The investigating committee reported, upon completion of their investigation, that charges would not be filed.

Approval of Minutes of 142nd Stated Meeting (October 15, 2020)

The Minutes of the 142nd Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee (October 15, 2020) were presented for approval. The motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes. There were no questions or corrections, and the minutes were approved without objection as presented.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Ruling Elder Cristi Scott Ligon, Vice-Moderator and chair of the Administrative Committee, presented the committee's report.

Virtual Office Working Group

A Virtual Office Working Group has been appointed to work on the process of moving the Presbytery office to a virtual office, effective June 30, 2021. The working group is led by Robin Thomas, and includes Emily Dunbar (Living Waters for the World), Allen Kennedy (Finance Committee), Alex Koukol (Westminster Nashville), and staff members Ray Thomas and Therese Howell.

2021 Presbytery Meeting Dates

The Administrative Committee approved the following dates for 2021 Presbytery meetings: Saturday, February 6; Thursday, May 20; Saturday, July 17; Thursday, October 14. The February 6 meeting will be held by Zoom.

152 Committee Orientation Day

153 A virtual Committee Orientation Day is scheduled for January 9, 2021.

154 Stephen Yates / Nominating Task Force

155 The Administrative Committee appointed Stephen Yates to chair the Nominating Task Force.

156 February 6 Presbytery Meeting

157 The committee approved plans for the February 6 Presbytery meeting. The offering will go to the
158 Matthew 25 Feeding Program at Glencliff.

159 Personnel Task Force / Staff Evaluations

160 The Personnel Task Force completed evaluations on the staff for the year.

161 Resignation of Moderator-in-Nomination

162 The Administrative Committee accepted with regret the resignation of Mary Louise McCullough
163 as Moderator-in-Nomination. The Administrative Committee will ask the Nominating Task Force to
164 consider Stephen Yates for service as Moderator-in-Nomination, and allow Mary Louise McCullough to
165 fill Yates' term (Class of 2022).

166 Mission and Operations Manual Working Group

167 The Administrative Committee appointed Cristi Scott Ligon, Geeta McMillan, Melinda Sanders,
168 John Hinkle, Jr., Therese Howell, and Ray Thomas to review the Mission and Operations Manual for
169 necessary revisions.

170 Administrative Committee Goals for 2021

171 The Administrative Committee reviewed goals for 2021, including meeting with and reviewing
172 the work of presbytery's committees, and better communication.

173 2021 Committee Liaisons

174 The Administrative Committee appointed the following committee liaisons for 2021: Committee
175 on Ministry – Doug Berry; Committee on Leadership Excellence – Geeta McMillan; Committee on
176 Church Transformation – Mary Louise McCullough; Committee on Mutual Support – Chris Joiner;
177 Committee on Preparation for Ministry – Stephen Yates.

178 Sexual Misconduct Policy

179 The Administrative Committee, in consultation with the Committee on Ministry, recommended
180 approval of the attached Sexual Misconduct Policy (Attachment B). The policy was approved as
181 presented.

182 Safe Church Policy

183 The Administrative Committee, in consultation with the Committee on Ministry, recommended
184 approval of the attached Safe Church Policy (Attachment C). The policy was approved as presented.

185 Matthew 25 Food Program

186 The Administrative Committee met with the Committee on Mutual Support regarding a
187 partnership between the Presbytery, the Kharis Foundation, the Nourish Food Bank, Iglesia Presbiteriana
188 Nueva Vida, and Glencliff Presbyterian Church in Nashville, for a food distribution program called the
189 Matthew 25 Food Program. Churches have been contacted to encourage volunteers, the Kharis Foundation
190 provided funding for equipment, and an Intake Coordinator has been hired. Presbytery Peacemaking
191 Funds will provide the start-up funding, and the Committee on Mutual Support will administer the food
192 program. The program started in early December. Commissioners were encouraged to contact Stuart
193 Wilson-Patton and Robin Thomas with questions.

194 The Administrative Committee recommended approval of Matthew 25 Food Program as a
195 Presbytery ministry, and this was approved.

196 Nomination for Administrative Committee Vacancy

197 Ms. Scott stated that there was a vacancy on the Administrative Committee. She reported that the
198 Nominating Task Force met, and recommended that Rev. Stephen Yates be elected to serve as Moderator-
199 in-Nomination, which is in the class of 2023 of the Administrative Committee.

200 The Nominating Task Force also recommended that Mary Louise McCullough be elected to fill
201 Rev. Yates' term in the class of 2022. The Moderator opened the floor for additional nominations; there
202 were none. The recommendations, as presented, were approved.

203 **FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**

204 Ruling Elder Steve Douse, Treasurer, presented the Finance Committee report. He commented
205 briefly on the financials provided in the Presbytery packet.

206 Finance Committee Meetings

207 The Finance Committee meets, currently by Zoom, at 11:30 on the third Thursday of each month.
208 At 12:30 we are joined by the Administrative Committee for a joint meeting to address any financial
209 matters that require the attention or action of both committees. The committee may choose not to meet in
210 months when there is a full presbytery meeting.

211 Finance Committee Leadership

212 At the Finance Committee's January 9, 2021 meeting, Ruling Elder Melinda Sanders (Woodland
213 Presbyterian Church, Nashville) was selected to serve as vice-moderator, Ruling Elder Allen Kennedy
214 (First Presbyterian Church, Nashville) agreed to serve as clerk, and Ruling Elder Anders Hall
215 (Westminster Presbyterian Church, Nashville) agreed to serve as chair of the Investment Task Force.

216 Investment Task Force

217 In addition to Anders Hall, Rev. Evelyn Graham (Member-at-Large) and Ruling Elder Vance
218 Lahey (First Presbyterian Church, Franklin) are also members of the Investment Task Force.

219 Financials

220 Financial reports as of December 31, 2020 were included in the Presbytery packet.

221 Contingencies to 2021 Budget

222 The contingency attached to two line items in the 2021 budget adopted at the October 2020
223 Presbytery meeting, related to the Tennessee Tech UKirk and NaCoMe, have been satisfied, and those
224 expenses will be fully funded.

225 Handlson Mediation Fee

226 The \$1,900 fee for the Handlson mediation, which was unbudgeted but was authorized by
227 presbytery, was charged to undesignated reserves.

228 Stewardship Letters to Churches

229 The stewardship letter to the churches that was attached to the Finance Committee's October report
230 to presbytery, which included a 2021 pledge form, was inadvertently not sent out in September as
231 intended. As a consequence, we received very few pledges. Once the error was discovered, the letter was
232 sent and many churches have submitted pledges. Members of the Administrative and Finance Committees
233 will be writing personal notes to individual churches thanking them for their giving and their pledges, and
234 encouraging those that have not yet pledged to do so.

235 2019 Financial Review

236 After research and discussion, the Finance Committee informed Mullins, Clemmons and Mayes
237 PLLC, which was engaged to perform the presbytery's 2019 financial review (in lieu of an audit), that it
238 does not believe presbytery has any liability for the debts of its member churches unless presbytery has
239 expressly guaranteed those obligations. It also informed the reviewers that it considers the small Joe
240 Hutton fund to be a true endowment. The reviewers incorporated these changes into their report, which
241 the committee has reviewed and approved, subject only to a couple of minor questions; the review should
242 be finalized shortly.

243 Grant Application Form

244 The committee is finalizing a grant application form that will be used to obtain information about
245 funding recipients during the budgeting process.

246 Payroll Protection Loan

247 At their January 9, 2021, meetings the Administrative and Finance Committees approved
248 submitting an application for a second Payroll Protection Loan from the Small Business Administration

249 if the presbytery met the statutory criteria – primarily that it had suffered a 25% decline in gross revenues
250 in 2020 compared to 2019, either during any one quarter or for the year. Once the calculations were
251 completed, however, it turned out that even though presbytery suffered significant reductions in revenue
252 during 2019, these reductions did not exceed 25% for any quarter or for the year as a whole. Presbytery
253 therefore was not eligible for a second draw PPP loan.

254 An application for forgiveness of presbytery’s first draw PPP loan will be submitted as soon as the
255 SBA issues a new simplified form, which was recently authorized for smaller loan recipients.

256 Church Property Sale Policy

257 Mr. Douse stated the Finance Committee recommended approval of the Church Property Sale
258 Policy (a copy was included with the Presbytery packet). After discussion, the policy was approved as
259 presented (Attachment D).

260 **HUNGER ACTION ADVOCATE REPORT**

261 Stuart Wilson-Patton, Presbytery’s Hunger Action Advocate, encouraged commissioners to
262 participate in the Souper Bowl of Caring, and asked that everyone continue to support the Centsability
263 program.

264 **MONROE HARDING CHILDREN’S HOME**

265 Leah Susi, Development Director for Monroe Harding Children’s Home, provided an update on
266 Monroe Harding. She stated that Monroe Harding valued this partnership, and thanked the churches for
267 their continued support of this ministry.

268 **COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**

269 Rev. Nolan Huizenga, chair of the Committee on Ministry, presented the committee’s report.

270 Training

271 The COM held training for its task forces and teams at its January 12 meeting.

272 Committee on Ministry Leadership

273 Rev. Erin Howton-Angel (Allardt) will serve as vice-chair of the COM in 2021, and Elder Pat
274 Bridges will serve as clerk of the COM. The 2021 COM Team and Task Force leadership: Rev. Leslie
275 Traylor, Examinations Task Force chair; Elder David Wood, Transitions Task Force chair; Rev. Cynthia
276 Schwartz, Pastoral Care Team chair; Elder Debra Van Derveer, Mediation Team chair.

277 Bellevue Administrative Commission

278 The COM receives regular reports from the Bellevue Administrative Commission.

279 Sparta First United Presbyterian Church Administrative Committee

280 The COM receives regular reports from the Sparta First Administrative Commission.

281 Rev. Mike Wilson / Downtown Presbyterian Church, Nashville

282 The relationship between The Downtown Presbyterian Church, Nashville, and Rev. Mike Wilson,
283 designated pastor, has been dissolved effective 12/27/2020, with severance through 4/7/2021. Rev.
284 Wilson’s status has been changed to member-at-large.

285 Rev. Larissa Romero / Pulpit Supply List

286 The COM approved placing Rev. Larissa Romero, a pastor in the Reformed Church in America,
287 on the pulpit supply list.

288 Rev. Scott Huie / Downtown Presbyterian Church, Nashville

289 Rev. Scott Huie has been appointed moderator for The Downtown Presbyterian Church, effective
290 12/28/2020.

291 Rev. Pat Handlson / Restoration to Ordered Ministry and Honorable Retirement

292 Rev. Pat Handlson has been restored to ministry as Honorably Retired, effective October 12, 2020,
293 pursuant to the mediated settlement between Rev. Handlson and the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee.

294 Westminster Presbyterian Church, Fairfield Glade / Pastoral Contracts

295 The COM approved the renewal of the contracts between Westminster Presbyterian Church,
296 Fairfield Glade, and Dr. Robert Ochsenrider, part-time stated supply, and Elizabeth Smith, part-time
297 commissioned pastor.

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Mentors

The COM appointed the following mentors: Dr. Guy Griffith will mentor Dr. Tom Bagley, Rev. Lindsey Groves will mentor Rev. Sally Ann McKinsey, and Dr. Jim Hudnut-Beumler will mentor Rev. Lee Catoe.

Family Leave Policy

The COM is reviewing a proposed family leave policy.

COM Liaisons

The COM has instituted a new liaison initiative between COM members and Presbytery's churches. (Attachment E)

COMMITTEE ON MUTUAL SUPPORT

Stuart Wilson-Patton, Hunger Action Advocate and chair of the Committee on Mutual Support, presented the committee's report.

Hunger Grants

From October 2020 through January 2021, the Committee on Mutual Support approved Hunger Grant Applications from: Good Samaritan of Tullahoma (\$2,000), Woodland Presbyterian's direct feeding program (\$4,000), Good Samaritan Ministries of Franklin County (\$2,000), Home Bound Meals Program of Hendersonville (\$4,000), and the Good Samaritan Association of Lincoln County (\$1,000).

Food Program Partnership

On November 5, 2020, the CMS recommended to the Administrative Committee as follows: (1) to approve the proposal for a partnership between the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee, the Kharis Foundation, the Nourish Food Bank, the Iglesia Prebiteriana Neuva Vida, and the Glencliff Presbyterian Church to operate a food program; (2) to use the Presbytery Peacemaking Funds on hand and any additional Peacemaking funds received through the end of 2020 as seed money to get the food program going; (3) to encourage the other partners to apply for Hunger Grants from the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee, and (4) to administer the food program through the Presbytery Committee on Mutual Support.

REPORT OF THE CO-EXECUTIVE PRESBYTERS

Robin and Ray Thomas, Co-Executive Presbyters, called attention to their written report, and updated the Presbytery on mission initiatives, celebrated new committee members, and thanked Anne Keener (First Franklin) and Nolan Huizenga (Second Nashville) for serving as Zoom hosts for the meeting. They then asked commissioners to share concerns and celebrations, and Rev. Thomas offered a prayer.

REPORT OF COMMISSIONERS TO THE SYNOD OF LIVING WATERS

Commissioned Pastor Leonard Jordan reported on the annual meeting of the Synod of Living Waters, and thanked the Presbytery for the opportunity and honor to serve as a commissioner. Mr. Jordan stated that Elder Susan Sumrall (Presbytery of Mississippi) would serve as Synod Moderator, and Rev. Doodle Harris (Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky) would serve as Vice-Moderator. He reported that the Synod per capita would remain at \$3.98.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The Moderator called for unfinished business, and there was a question regarding the Sexual Misconduct Policy and the Safe Church Policy. Rev. Thomas addressed the question of background and authorship.

There was no unfinished business. The Moderator announced the 144th Stated Meeting was scheduled for Thursday, May 20, 2021, and stated he hoped and prayed the Presbytery could meet in person.

The motion was made, seconded and approved without objection to adjourn after a closing prayer by the Moderator at 12:15pm.

Therese P. Howell, Stated Clerk