

DRAFT

**PRESBYTERY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE
MINUTES OF ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-EIGHTH STATED MEETING
JULY 20, 2019**

The 138th Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee was held Saturday, July 20, 2019, at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Columbia, Tennessee. Stated Clerk Therese Howell led an orientation and time of prayer for first time commissioners. Moderator John Hinkle called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

WORSHIP / INSTALLATION OF CO-EXECUTIVE PRESBYTERS

Worship included sermons by Meredith Cox, candidate under care of the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, who preached on Psalm 15, and Whitney Booth Lockard, candidate under care of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee, who preached on Luke 10:34-42. Also participating in worship were Rev. Jeff Kane (pastor, Westminster Columbia), Rev. Ray Thomas (Co-Executive Presbyter), and Elder Robin Thomas (Co-Executive Presbyter). The Westminster Singers of Westminster Presbyterian Church, Columbia, provided special music, under the leadership of music director Wilson Henderson and organist Charline Henderson. The offering was collected to support Youth Triennium.

DECLARATION OF QUORUM / STATEMENT OF PROCEDURES / WELCOME BY HOST / FIRST TIME COMMISSIONERS / CORRESPONDING MEMBERS

The meeting reconvened after worship; the Moderator declared a quorum was present and reviewed procedures for the meeting. Rev. Jeff Kane, pastor of the host church, welcomed commissioners, and spoke of the church's ministry to homeless families. First time commissioners to presbytery were recognized and welcomed.

The Presbytery's Mission and Operations Manual and the *Book of Order* provide for the seating of corresponding members and teaching and ruling elders with voice and those with voice and vote. Any ruling elder serving as presbytery's Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Moderator-in-Nomination, chairs of committees, members of the Administrative Committee, members of the Finance Committee, and the Moderator of Presbyterian Women, are enrolled as members of presbytery and shall have voice and vote. Ruling elders commissioned to particular pastoral service, and ruling elders who have previously served as presbytery moderator, within five years of completion of his/her term of service, are enrolled as members of presbytery with voice and vote. Any ruling elder serving as a committee representative to a particular meeting of presbytery in the absence of the chair shall have the privilege of voice and vote for that particular meeting of the presbytery. Persons certified in church service who are ruling elders shall have the privilege of voice and vote at all meetings of the presbytery, during their term of service in ministry in the presbytery of Middle Tennessee. Persons certified in church service, who are members of congregations in the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee, shall have the privilege of voice at all meetings of the presbytery during their term of service in a congregation or other ministry validated by the presbytery. Should a question arise concerning the enrollment of any person, the presbytery may resolve the matter upon the recommendation of the Permanent Judicial Commission. Corresponding members were seated without objection, and are listed with the roll.

ROLL

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

1 **AGENDA**

2 The Moderator stated that the agenda for the meeting had been provided in advance to
3 commissioners. The motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda. There were no questions
4 or objections, and the following agenda was approved without objection:

- 5 8:30 am 1. Registration (Order of the Day in CAPS)
- 6 9:00 am Orientation for First Time Commissioners and Prayer for Presbytery – (20 min)
- 7 9:30 am 2. CALL TO ORDER / WORSHIP
- 8 (Offering: Youth Triennium)
- 9 10:30 am 3. Break
- 10 10:45 am 4. Reconvene / Establishment of Quorum / Statement of Procedures / Welcome by Host /
- 11 Recognition of First Time Presbyters / Seating of Corresponding Members / Adoption of
- 12 Agenda
- 13 11:00 am 5. Stated Clerk’s Report – Therese Howell (5 minutes)
- 14 11:05 am 6. Administrative Committee – Theresa Denton (5 min)
- 15 11:10 am 7. Finance Committee – Mike Ingram (5 minutes)
- 16 11:15 am 8. Committee on Leadership Excellence – Sally Hughes (5 min)
- 17 11:20 am 9. Committee on Ministry – Stephen Yates (35 min)
- 18 • Examination of Candidates for Ordination
- 19 11:55 am 10. Hunger Action Advocate Report – Stuart Wilson-Patton (5 min)
- 20 Noon 11. Prayer of Thanksgiving / Lunch
- 21 1:00 pm Reconvene
- 22 12. The Village Church Isaiah 1:18 Team Report – (45 min)
- 23 1:45 pm 13. Co-Executive Presbyters’ Report – Robin and Ray Thomas (10 min)
- 24 1:55 pm 14. Concerns, Celebrations, and Announcements – Thomases (15 min)
- 25 2:10 pm 15. Unfinished Business
- 26 **139th Stated Meeting – Thursday, October 17, 2019, Second Presbyterian Church,**
- 27 **Nashville**
- 28 2:15 pm 16. Closing Prayer / Adjourn

29 **REPORT OF THE STATED CLERK**

30 Ruling Elder Therese Howell, Stated Clerk, presented the following report.

31 Shane Smith / Hillsboro Presbyterian Church, Nashville

32 The Stated Clerk has received the minutes of the commission to install The Rev. Shane Smith as
33 Pastor of Hillsboro Presbyterian Church, Nashville. *[minutes to be included in permanent record]*

34 Toby Mueller / Historic Franklin Presbyterian Church, Franklin

35 The Stated Clerk has received the minutes of the commission to install The Rev. Dr. Toby Mueller
36 as Pastor of Historic Franklin Presbyterian Church, Franklin. *[minutes to be included in permanent record]*

37 Investigating Committee

38 The investigating committee appointed earlier completed their work and will not file charges.

39 Books of Order and Planning Calendars

40 The presbytery office ordered Books of Order and Presbyterian Planning Calendars. Books of
41 Order are available for purchase at \$8.50 each. Calendars are to be shipped late August and are \$8.00.

42 Minutes of the 137th Stated Meeting (May 30, 2019)

43 The Stated Clerk presented the minutes of the 137th Stated Meeting (May 30, 2019) of the
44 Presbytery of Middle Tennessee for approval. The motion was made and seconded to approve the
45 minutes. After corrections, the minutes were approved as amended.

46 **ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT**

47 Ruling Elder Theresa Denton, Vice-Moderator and chair of the Administrative Committee,
48 presented the committee’s report.

1 Telos at Southminster New Worshipping Community

2 The Administrative Committee approved the grant request for the new worshipping community,
3 Telos at Southminster. Telos has scheduled its first worship service on the first Sunday of July at 9AM in
4 the sanctuary at Southminster Presbyterian Church, Nashville.

5 Handlson v. Presbytery of Middle Tennessee

6 The committee received an update on Handlson v. Presbytery of Middle Tennessee.

7 Village Church / Isaiah 1:18 Report

8 The committee received a report from The Village Church Isaiah 1:18 Team. The Village Church
9 has asked to be dismissed to the Disciples of Christ; Kelli X, the ruling elder approved to preach and lead
10 worship, is scheduled to be ordained by the Disciples of Christ on July 14.

11 July 20, 2019 Presbytery Meeting

12 The committee approved the agenda for the July 20 Presbytery meeting. Two candidates for
13 ordination, Whitney Booth Lockard and Meredith Cox, will preach during worship. The offering was
14 approved for Youth Triennium scholarships; the Presbytery will hear a report on Triennium at the
15 October meeting (the youth do not return from Triennium until July 20).

16 Rock Eternal New Church Development

17 The Rock Eternal Presbyterian Church (the Arabic speaking Egyptian NCD at Priest Lake) received
18 a \$7,500 seed grant from 1001 Worshipping Communities.

19 **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

20 Ruling Elder Mike Ingram, Treasurer and chair of the Finance Committee, presented the
21 committee's report. He reported the Finance Committee met monthly in conjunction with the
22 Administrative Committee.

23 Financials

24 The Finance Committee provided financials as of May 30, 2019, and financials as of June 30, 2019
25 were handed out at the meeting. Mr. Ingram briefly reviewed the financials, and thanked the
26 Presbytery's accountant, Pat Webb, for her excellent work. Mr. Ingram briefly discussed the new tax
27 laws related to charitable giving.

28 **COMMITTEE ON LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE**

29 The Rev. Sally Hughes, chair of the Committee on Leadership Excellence, spoke of the
30 committee's work. Events are planned throughout the year, including events lead by Craig Barnes and
31 another by Joe Small. Surveys were distributed on the lunch tables and Rev. Hughes asked they be
32 returned to her. She stated the Presbytery was blessed to have Ray Thomas, Robin Thomas, and Therese
33 Howell as resources.

34 **COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY REPORT**

35 The Rev. Stephen Yates, chair of the Committee on Ministry, presented the COM's report, and
36 introduced the new ministers who had joined the Presbytery in 2019.

37 Committee on Ministry Meetings

38 The Committee on Ministry meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 4PM at Westminster
39 Presbyterian Church, Nashville.

40 Stephen Yates / Northminster Presbyterian Church, Murfreesboro

41 The COM approved Rev. Stephen Yates as Moderator of the Session of Northminster Presbyterian
42 Church, Murfreesboro.

43 Jane Herring / Woodland Presbyterian Church, Nashville

44 The COM approved Rev. Jane Herring as liaison to Woodland Presbyterian Church, Nashville.

45 Mike Magee / Honorably Retired

46 The COM approved Rev. Mike Magee as Honorably Retired, effective July 1, 2019.

1 The Village Church / Isaiah Team Report

2 The COM received a report from the Isaiah Team for The Village Church. Kelly X, a ruling elder at
3 Village Church approved to preach, will be ordained by the Disciples of Christ on July 14. The Isaiah Team
4 will recommend The Village Church's dismissal to the Disciples of Christ.

5 Steve Musick / Honorably Retired

6 The COM sustained the examination of Rev. Steve Musick, Honorably Retired, and added him to
7 the Pulpit Supply List and approved his transfer from the Presbytery of East Tennessee to the Presbytery
8 of Middle Tennessee. A copy of his statement of faith and biographical statement is attached.

9 Evelyn Graham / Southminster Presbyterian Church, Nashville

10 The COM sustained the examination of the Rev. Evelyn Graham, Designated Pastor at
11 Southminster Presbyterian Church, Nashville, and approved her call as installed pastor at Southminster,
12 under the same terms of call. A copy of her statement of faith and biographical statement is attached.

13 Amy Busse / First Presbyterian Church, Pulaski

14 The COM sustained the examination of Rev. Amy Busse, a member of the Presbytery of Indian
15 Nations, and approved her call to serve as pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Pulaski. The COM
16 approved the following terms of call: salary - \$37,280; housing allowance - \$10,000; dental insurance -
17 \$1,000; professional expenses - \$2,000; automobile expenses - \$1,500; Social Security supplement -
18 \$3,999.37; other (bonus) - \$1,000; moving expenses - \$900; 4 weeks of vacation; and 2 weeks of
19 continuing education. A copy of her statement of faith and biographical statement is attached.

20 Pat Handlson

21 The COM received a letter from Pat Handlson in response to the COM's request for more
22 specificity in Handlson's required reports, as well as report from his care team. The Presbytery's
23 attorneys will be contacted regarding a response to Mr. Handlson's letter.

24 Meredith Cox / Alive Hospice

25 Rev. Yates stated the Committee on Ministry examined Meredith Cox, a candidate under care of
26 the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta, who has been called to serve as a chaplain at Alive Hospice, Nashville,
27 as part of the St. Thomas CPE Residency program. A copy of their statement of faith and biographical
28 statement was included with the COM report. The COM validated this ministry, and recommends
29 Meredith Cox be examined by the Presbytery for ordination. Cox spoke of their journey of faith and call,
30 and responded to questions from The Rev. Nolan Huizenga, chair of the COM's Examinations Task Force,
31 and commissioners.

32 Whitney Booth Lockard / Agnes Scott College

33 Rev. Yates stated the Committee on Ministry examined Whitney Booth Lockard, a candidate
34 under care of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee, who has been called to serve as Campus Chaplain at
35 Agnes Scott College, Decatur, Georgia. A copy of her statement of faith and biographical statement is
36 attached. Pending a successful examination, the COM recommended Whitney Booth Lockard be
37 examined by the Presbytery for ordination, and that she be dismissed to the Presbytery of Greater
38 Atlanta following her ordination. Lockard responded to questions from Huizenga and commissioners.

39 Cox and Lockard were escorted out of the sanctuary by Rev. Huizenga.

40 The motion to sustain the examination of Meredith Cox and approve them for ordination was
41 approved without questions or discussion. The following commission to ordain was approved without
42 objection: Sunday, August 11, 3PM, Woodland Presbyterian Church, Nashville; Teaching Elders – Lindsey
43 Groves (UKIRK Nashville), chair; Mark DeVries (First Nashville); Rachel Penmore (Westminster Nashville);
44 Ruling Elders – Jeff Moles (Second); Heidi Hall (Woodland); Guest of the Commission – Rev. Mary Cox,
45 Presbytery of Greater Atlanta.

46 The motion to sustain the examination of Whitney Booth Lockard, approve her for ordination,
47 and dismiss her to the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta following ordination was approved without

1 questions or discussion. The following commission to ordain was approved without objection: Sunday,
2 July 21, 8:30AM, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Nashville; Teaching Elders –Janet Salyer (Harpeth),
3 chair; Guy Griffith (Westminster Nashville); Jim Hudnut-Beumler (Vanderbilt Divinity School); Ruling
4 Elders – Claire Harris Kramer (Westminster Nashville); Trice Gibbons (Second).

5 Cox and Lockard were escorted back into the sanctuary, and informed of the votes. Presbytery
6 welcomed persons present in support of the candidates.

7 Commissions to Install

8 Rev. Yates stated the Committee on Ministry would bring the commissions to install The Rev.
9 Evelyn Graham as pastor of Southminster Presbyterian Church, Nashville, and The Rev. Amy Busse as
10 pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Pulaski, to the October Presbytery meeting.

11 The Rev. Len Carrell, pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Columbia, asked the Presbytery to
12 approve an amended commission to install. The following commission to install Rev. Carrell as pastor of
13 First Columbia on Sunday, September 29, 2019, 3:30PM, First Columbia, was approved without
14 objection: Teaching Elders – Chris Joiner (First Franklin), chair; C. Nolan Huizenga (Second); Carol Tate
15 (At-Large); Ruling Elders – Argie Satterwhite (First Columbia); Leonard Jordan (St. Andrews); Therese
16 Howell (Stated Clerk); Guests of the Commission – Ted Wardlaw (Austin Presbyterian Theological
17 Seminary); Christi Armstrong (Hannahway Street Original Church of God); Hallie Hottle (Presbytery of
18 Heartland); Carolyn Fisher (First Columbia).

19 The Presbytery took a brief recess, and approved without objection, adjustments in the agenda.

20 **CO-EXECUTIVE PRESBYTERS' REPORT**

21 Robin and Ray Thomas reported on their work so far, and called attention to the Nominating flyer
22 in the packet, as well the presbytery's new administrative assistant, Erin Dolman, who will begin work
23 on Wednesday.

24 **CONCERNS, CELEBRATIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS**

25 The Thomases led the Presbytery in the sharing of concerns, celebrations, and announcements.

26 **HUNGER ACTION ADVOCATE REPORT**

27 Ruling Elder Stuart Wilson-Patton, Presbytery's Hunger Action Advocate, spoke of the
28 Presbytery's work towards the eradication of hunger and poverty. He called attention to hunger grants,
29 and encouraged churches to continue support of the Centsability program.

30 Mr. Wilson-Patton then offered a prayer for lunch.

31 The Moderator called the meeting back to order at 1PM, and offered a prayer.

32 **VILLAGE CHURCH / ISAIAH 1:18 REPORT**

33 The Rev. Robert Montgomery, a member of the Village Church Isaiah 1:18 Team, presented the
34 following report.

35 *"Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord." Isaiah 1:18*

36 The overriding goal of the gracious separation process is, ". . . the creation of an atmosphere where the
37 peaceful discussion and resolution of disagreements as brothers and sisters in Christ can take place."¹

38 Upon learning The Village Church wished to be dismissed from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the
39 Administrative Committee of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee appointed an Isaiah 1:18 Team to carry out the
40 Presbytery's Gracious Separation Policy.

41 **History**

42 Village Church (PCUSA) Mission Statement (November 1997):

43 "The mission of the Village Church is to *Introduce* people to Jesus Christ. *Inspire* them in the worship of
44 God. *Enlighten* them to the rich cultural heritage of people of African descent. *Encourage* them to seek justice

¹ Policy Concerning Dismissal of Congregations, Presbytery of Middle Tennessee, revised July 18, 2015, page 12
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1 and liberation of the oppressed. *Instruct* them in the process of Christian growth and *Inflame* them with a passion
2 to serve Christ in the church and in the world.”²

3 The Village Church was officially organized February 27, 2000, with 125 members, primarily from the
4 Cayce Homes community. The church’s initial focus was on meeting the spiritual and social worship
5 attendance of 100.³

6 The church’s history includes involvement with Tying Nashville Together, supporting ministries with
7 schools and universities, Drum and Dance Ministry, and leadership within the community it serves. The church
8 has supported persons in ministry, including an ordained Minister of the Word and Sacrament, two commissioned
9 lay pastors, and a candidate under care.

10 The church shared space for a period of time with Woodland Presbyterian Church, Nashville, and has
11 relocated to Madison, Tennessee. The church currently meets in the Martin Center in Madison. The Presbytery’s
12 Committee on Ministry approved candidate under care, Kelli X, to serve as the church’s student pastor until Kelli
13 could complete the requirements for ordination. The Presbytery also approved the commissioning of William A.
14 Radford, a ruling elder, to serve as commissioned ruling elder for the congregation.

15 **Request**

16 The Administrative Committee reported to Presbytery on October 19, 2017 that the Session of The Village
17 Church requested to be dismissed from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). An Isaiah Team 1:18 Team was
18 appointed: Carol A. Tate, chair; Robert Montgomery (pastor, First Lewisburg); Connie Hamblen (elder,
19 Eastminster). The Village Church appointed elders Rico X, Jenifer Grady, and Tremeta Norman. Kelli X, Warner
20 Durnell (Executive Presbyter), and Therese Howell (stated clerk), served as advisory members.

21 The Isaiah 1:18 team held meetings on March 18, 2018, April 18, 2018, April 24, 2018, July 22, 2018 with
22 the session and members of the congregation of The Village Church. It was clear that members of the church had
23 been discussing a move from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for several years.

24 It became very clear the overwhelming sentiment was to leave. The church has requested to be dismissed
25 to the Disciples of Christ. The Rev. Dr. Christal Williams, presiding bishop of the Disciples of Christ in Tennessee,
26 has confirmed the Disciples will welcome The Village Church into membership. Kelli X will be ordained as a
27 Disciples of Christ minister on July 14.

28 At a meeting on July 20, with members of the congregation and members of the Isaiah 1:18 Team present,
29 the following question was put to the congregation of The Village Church:

30 *Can we undertake a gracious separation, forgiving one another for our mutual struggles and failure/s,*
31 *remembering and rejoicing in the strong gifts and witness of The Village Church, and seeking God’s will as we*
32 *prayerfully move forward to serve Christ in the world?*

33 The answer was yes.

34 **Recommendation**

35 The Isaiah Team for The Village Church recommended to the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee that The
36 Village Church, and those in its membership who wish to leave, be dismissed to the Disciples of Christ. The
37 dismissal will include all assets and liabilities of The Village Church, all real and personal property. The session
38 records, including session and congregational meeting minutes and the church roll, will be provided to the Stated
39 Clerk, who will make a copy and return the originals to The Village Church. Persons who wish to remain in the
40 PC(USA) will have their membership held by the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee, for up to one year from the date
41 of the Presbytery’s action, or until such time as they unite with another congregation.

42 Rev. Montgomery reviewed the report and spoke of the work of the team. The recommendation
43 was approved without discussion. Rev. Montgomery offered a prayer, and the Moderator thanked the
44 team for their work.

2 Launching the Expansion of the Ministry of The Village Church (PCUSA), approved by the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee,
July 24, 2007.

3 Ibid.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business, and the Moderator stated the 139th Stated Meeting would be held on Thursday, October 17, 2019, at Second Presbyterian Church, Nashville. The meeting was adjourned with prayer by the Moderator upon motion made, seconded, and approved without objection.

Therese P. Howell
Stated Clerk