Highlights of the 159th Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee

February 8, 2025

Below are the highlights of the reports received and actions taken at the 159th Stated Meeting.

The Presbytery of Middle Tennessee met in person on Saturday, February 8, 2025, at First Presbyterian, Shelbyville. Over 115 attendees were greeted warmly by gracious host congregation members. Stated Clerk Mary Catherine Sevier provided a brief welcome and orientation for first time commissioners. Moderator Rev. Jane Herring, Emmanuel, called the meeting to order and announced that a quorum was in place; corresponding members were seated, and the agenda and the consent agenda were approved. Rev. Jim Moran, First Shelbyville, presided over worship with the Rev. Erin Howton-Angel, First, Allardt serving as liturgist. Worship included lovely choral pieces and organ and piano pieces from the First Shelbyville choir and musical director and organist Michael Hooper. Rev. Moran preached the inspiring sermon on our calling to be fishers and to “catch people”. Rev. Jane Herring was installed as the 2025 Moderator and RE Chris Williams was installed as the Vice-Moderator. Rev. Herring re-convened the meeting after worship and welcomed first time commissioners, including newly received teaching elders the Rev. Il Sun Kim, the Rev. Eddie Bellis, and the Rev. Chuck Taber. The Rev. Dr. Guy Griffith was appointed Assistant Parliamentarian. Among the actions taken and the reports received were:

* + Candidate Mallory Hammond of First, Nashville was certified ready to be examined for ordination pending a call
  + CRE Leonard Jordan, chair of the Nominating Task Force presented four nominations to the Commission on Ministry which were all elected unanimously
  + RE Hal Sauer, vice-chair of the Finance Committee, presented the Finance report and noted that while pledges were down, so were expenses, thus PMT had an operational surplus for 2024.
  + The Rev. Stephen Yates presented several items from the COM, including the receipt of the Rev. Jim Mays, HR, from Holston and the Rev. Jim Taber from Pines.
  + The 13 proposed amendments to the Book of Order from the 226th General Assembly were presented with comments on their possible affects on PMT from the PJC. Debate and discussion followed on almost every amendment with many viewpoints represented with respect and love for each other, which demonstrated the “big tent” of the presbytery. Eleven amendments were approved; 24-C which adds Historic Principles of Church Order and principles of participation and representation to the required areas for examination for ordination, and 24-I, which eliminates the need for a presbytery which offers an overture to GA to have a concurrence, were not approved. Moderator Herring directed the Stated Clerk to enter those results in the denominational portal.
  + A refreshment and fellowship break followed, with delicious baked goods, both savory and sweet, and a bountiful charcuterie board offered. The refreshments and fellowship were greatly enjoyed.
  + The Leadership Visioning team led the group in the second of three listening sessions in its charge to set the vision for the Presbytery as it seeks its next installed Executive Presbyter. The discussion was robust, productive, and greatly enjoyed by all.
  + Following the listening session, Moderator Herring reconvened the meeting. Administrative Chair RE Chris Williams of First, Pulaski presented the committee’s report. The committee moved that the Nominating Task Force present nominees for a search committee for the Executive presbyter position at the May meeting with the guideline that this committee will be charged with working closely in consultation with the Visioning Team and its recommendations. The motion was approved.
  + The Stated Clerk presented a recommendation to charge a Permanent Administrative Committee with working with congregations who request dissolution or an alternative means of ministry. The motion was made, seconded, and approved.
  + The Decherd AC and the St. John Isaiah Team were dissolved with thanks.
  + The Rev. John Hilley of East Brentwood and chair of the Committee on Church Transformation reported on the work of his committee in encouraging congregations who may be experiencing change. He also noted the growing uncertainty around our congregations and members who are more recently immigrated to this country and encouraged prayer and support for them.
  + Committee on Social Justice member Hannah Cruse of First, Clarksville reported on the committee’s request for needs such as educational programs on social justice issues and the committee’s offer to help congregations with organizational tasks around social justice issues. She also reported that the committee is working with the Committee on Mutual Support to advance initiatives.
  + The Rev. Dr. Greg Glover, First, Clarksville and Ruling Elder Melinda Sanders presented language to be included in the Presbytery’s finance policies as they were charged to do so in a motion to defer to the definite time of this meeting from the November 14, 2024 Stated Meeting. The language was slightly amended to reflect the requirements of the Book of Order and was approved.
  + The Rev. Herring then asked for joys and concerns, offered a closing prayer, and asked for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made, seconded and approved to do so.
  + The next Stated Meeting will be May 3rd, 2025, at First, Pulaski.

-- Mary Catherine Sevier, Stated Clerk