

Presbytery of Middle Tennessee

159th Stated Meeting Main Agenda and Materials

Memorandum

To: Commissioners, Members, and Attendees

From: Mary Catherine Sevier, Stated Clerk, Middle Tennessee Presbytery (contact: sc.midtennpres@gmail.com)

Re: Call to 159th Stated Meeting of the Middle Tennessee Presbytery to be held February 8, 2025

Date: January 24, 2025

Please find attached the packets including the agenda, reports, and other relevant documents pertaining to the 159th Stated Meeting of the Middle Tennessee Presbytery, which will be held Saturday, February 8, 2025 at First Presbyterian Church, Shelbyville, 600 N. Brittain St., Shelbyville, TN 37160. In keeping with the standing rules of the presbytery, this packet is distributed at least seven days before the meeting.

The Registration link for the meeting is below; you can find the links on the presbytery website as well.

<https://pbymidtn.org/meeting-registration/>

The word will be proclaimed by the Rev. Evelyn Graham, the offering will be go to the Guatemala Team, and we will install our 2025 Moderator Jane Herring and Vice-Moderator Chris Williams.

In the packet, titled “159th Stated Meeting Main Agenda and Materials” you will find the following:

--Map and Parking instructions for First Presbyterian Church, Shelbyville

--Agenda

--Reports from various committees, taskforces, and the Stated Clerk.

--The Evaluation form to be submitted after the meeting

In the second packet, entitled “159th Stated Meeting Consent Agenda and Materials”, you will find:

--Consent Agenda, containing the minutes of the 158th Stated Meeting and a request to be exempt from the rotation of officers

These are sent separately for your convenience in accessing them before and during the meeting.

Of particular note and interest at this meeting is the time we will spend together beginning the discernment of the future direction of the Presbytery. **The newly formed Leadership Visioning Team, tasked to work closely with the consultants from Healthy Churches/Pneumatrix** as approved by Presbytery at its August Stated Meeting, **will lead us in the second of three listening sessions.** All are welcome and encouraged to participate, even if not serving as commissioners. We will also vote on the amendments to the book of Order and ecumenical agreement proposed by the 226th General Assembly.

The meeting is scheduled to conclude by 12:45 pm. There will not be break out sessions at this gathering.

Thank you for your time in reviewing these documents and attending the meeting. We look forward to being together in person as we move forward with the ministry of the congregations and the business of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee.

Here are the ways to give to the offering: ▲ send a check to the Presbytery office (1113 Murfreesboro Rd, Suite 106, #216, Franklin, TN 37064)

▲ go to the presbytery website, www.pbymidtn.org, and click the “Give Now” button

▲ scan the QR Code on the agenda which will direct you to the presbytery website.

Parking Instructions, First Shelbyville, 600 N. Brittain St., Shelbyville, TN 37160

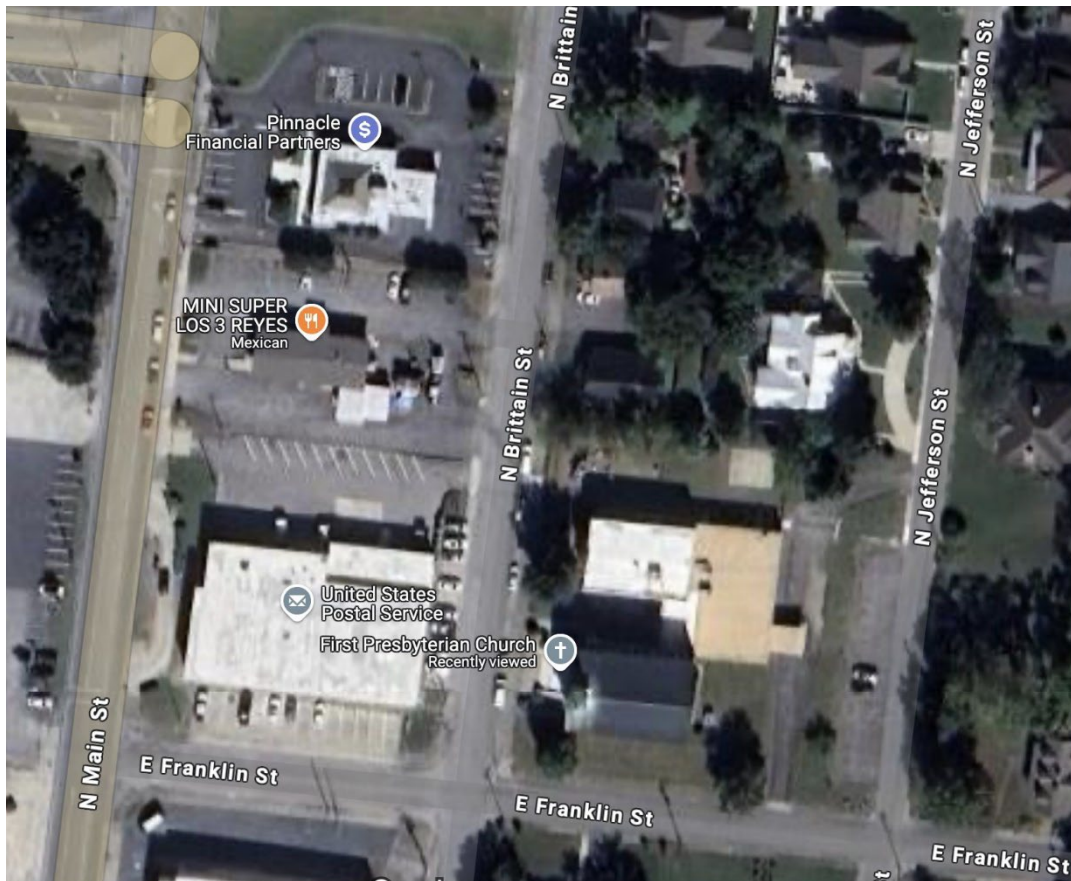
The front of the church has 20+ with 3 handicap spaces

The side street can provide 5 spaces

There is a rear lot of 18 spaces with 3 handicap spaces

Pinnacle Bank has 16 spaces

Entry for registration will be at the rear entrance on Jefferson Street, but it is accessible through the office and courtyard on Brittain Street.



The Presbytery of Middle Tennessee is a community of churches and church leaders whose role is to guide and support the work of its constituents, striving to build up the body of Christ through connections of mutual support, creating a culture of leadership excellence and church transformation.

**THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-NINTH STATED MEETING
THE PRESBYTERY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE
AGENDA OF FEBRUARY 8, 2025
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, SHELBYVILLE, TN**

8:00 am		Registration (Order of the Day in CAPS)
8:15 am		Orientation for First Time Commissioners – Mary Catherine Sevier(10 min)
8:30 am	•	CONVENE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishment of Quorum• Adoption of Agenda and Consent Agenda• Seating of Corresponding Members• Recognition of First Time Presbyters
8:40 am	•	Worship <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sermon:• Offering: Guatemala Partnership• Installation of Moderator and Vice-Moderator
9:25 am	3.	REPORTS (numbers indicate order in packet)
9:25 am		(1) Committee on the Preparation for Ministry – Lisa Hermann (10 minutes)
9:35 am	-	(2) Evelyn Graham (15 minutes)
9:50 am		(3) Nominating Task Force – Leonard Jordan (5 minutes)
9:55 am		(4) Commission on Ministry – Mickey Stuecke (10 minutes)
10:05 am		(5) PJC and Stated Clerk, Part 1: six amendments to Book of Order proposed by the 226 th General Assembly (15 mins)
10:20 am		BREAK

- 10:40 am LISTENING SESSION WITH VISIONING TEAM (60 minutes)
 - 11:40 am RECONVENE
 - (6) Administrative Committee – Chris Williams (10 minutes)
 - 11:50 am
 - (5) PJC and Stated Clerk, Part 2 – (20 minutes)
 - Vote on remaining amendments to Book of Order and Ecumenical Agreement
 - 12:10 pm
 - (7) Stated Clerk - Mary Catherine Sevier (10 minutes)
 - 12:20 pm
 - Committee on Church Transformation - John Hilley (5 minutes)
 - 12:25 pm
 - Committee on Social Justice-Henry Deaderick (5 minutes)
 - 12:30 pm
 - Committee on Leadership Excellence – Dave Nock (5 minutes)
 - 12:35 pm
 - OLD BUSINESS
 - (8) Consideration of language in PMT Property Policy
Greg Glover, TE and Melinda Sanders, RE (10 minutes)
 - 12:45 pm
 - ANNOUNCEMENTS and ADJOURNMENT
 - 160th Stated Meeting, Saturday, May 3, 2025
 - First, Pulaski
 - Closing Prayer
- Adjournment

****Here are the ways to give to today’s offering: ▲ send a check to the Presbytery office (1113 Murfreesboro Rd, Suite 106, #216, Franklin, TN 37064)***
▲go to the presbytery website, www.pbymidtn.org, and click the “Give Now” button
▲scan the QR Code below which will take you to the donation page



Rev. Lisa C. Hermann, MDiv, BCC

wakechappy@gmail.com

Presbytery of Middle Tennessee
Committee on Leadership Excellence
February 8, 2025

Information

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) is responsible for guiding, caring for, and examining candidates for ministry in our denominational process. All those seeking to become teaching elders/Ministers of the Word and Sacrament must move through the steps detailed in the CPM checklist that can be found on the presbytery website. And there are a lot of steps.

Typically, the full presbytery is only involved when prospective teaching elders desire to move from the inquiry phase to the candidacy phase and are “examined with respect to personal Christian faith, forms of Christian service undertaken, and motives for seeking the ministry.” The presbytery then votes to “affirm or deny the examination.” Enrollment as an inquirer and being certified “ready to receive” a call are handled by the CPM and those actions are reported back to the presbytery. Occasionally the CPM will consider requests to validate a ministry to which a ready-to-receive candidate may be ordained. These are usually settings that are not in a church but which may be considered pastoral (e.g. hospital, hospice, prison or street chaplaincy; certain positions in seminaries and divinity schools; or work at the denominational level). The Committee on Leadership Excellence is tasked with encouraging, equipping and teaching ruling and teaching elders of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee. The CPM will continue our work in 2025, with both new and returning members, and would be glad to have your suggestions, and collaborate across the bounds of committees to further the work and life of Middle TN Presbytery.

Meeting regularly in 2024 the committee welcomed new inquirers to their journey in responding to feeling called to ministry and continued to walk along side of those already enrolled as inquirer’s and candidates through the liaison, inquirer/candidate, and congregation relationships.

Admit to Record – N/A

Recommendations

The CPM recommends that Candidate for Ministry Mallory Hammond be certified ready to be examined for ordination pending a call.

Evelyn Graham
(615) 892-9721
mevelyngraham@gmail.com

**FINANCE COMMITTEE
REPORT TO THE PRESBYTERY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE
February 8, 2025**

INFORMATION

1. The Finance Committee conducts a hybrid meeting at 3:00 on the fourth Thursday of each month at Westminster Nashville in person and on Zoom. The committee meets immediately before the Administrative Committee so that the committees are able to meet to discuss joint issues, if necessary.
2. An audit of the PMT's 2023 financials is underway by Mullins, Clemmons & Mayes. Results are pending.

ADMIT TO RECORD

1. Financial statements are attached including year to date activity through December 2024 and monthly activity for December 2024. A summary of both the balance sheet and the income statement is also attached.

RECOMMENDATIONS

None

The Presbytery of Middle Tennessee
Actual to Budget
Statement of Activity
 Period Ending December 2024

	Dec 2024			Jan-Dec 2024				Annual Budget
	Actual	Budget	\$ Over Budget	Actual	YTD Budget	\$ Over Budget		
Ordinary Income/Expense								
Income								
4000 - Pledged giving	202,928.05	194,446.22	8,481.83	514,062.60	522,000.00	-7,937.40		522,000.00
4070 - Investment income								
4070-10 - Investment income	13,614.99	13,642.00	-27.01	54,914.99	54,568.00	346.99		54,568.00
Total 4070 - Investment income	13,614.99	13,642.00	-27.01	54,914.99	54,568.00	346.99		54,568.00
Total Income	216,543.04	208,088.22	8,454.82	568,977.59	576,568.00	-7,590.41		576,568.00
Gross Profit	216,543.04	208,088.22	8,454.82	568,977.59	576,568.00	-7,590.41		576,568.00
Expense								
5000 - Finance								
5000-01 - Occupancy	550.00	550.00	0.00	6,600.00	6,600.00	0.00		6,600.00
5000-02 - Equipment	0.00	208.37	-208.37	1,400.00	2,500.00	-1,100.00		2,500.00
5000-03 - Insurance	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,219.00	2,000.00	219.00		2,000.00
5000-05 - Office Expense	266.27	166.63	99.64	3,022.55	2,000.00	1,022.55		2,000.00
5000-06 - POMA (Database)	0.00	0.00	0.00	830.00	1,250.00	-420.00		1,250.00
5000-07 - Telephone	189.45	250.00	-60.55	2,264.30	3,000.00	-735.70		3,000.00
5000-08 - Audit Fee	0.00	0.00	0.00	17,465.00	22,877.00	-5,412.00		22,877.00
5000-11 - Processing Fees (Bank, Payroll)	182.57	166.63	15.94	2,118.30	2,000.00	118.30		2,000.00
5000-12 - Webpage	75.00	83.37	-8.37	400.00	1,000.00	-600.00		1,000.00
5070-01 - GA Per Capita	146,676.60	146,677.00	-0.40	146,676.60	146,677.00	-0.40		146,677.00
5070-03 - Synod Per Capita	14,892.25	14,892.25	0.00	59,569.00	59,569.00	0.00		59,569.00
Total 5000 - Finance	162,832.14	162,994.25	-162.11	242,564.75	249,473.00	-6,908.25		249,473.00
5020 - Committee on Mutual Support								
5010-03 - NaCoMe Camp	0.00	0.00	0.00	27,000.00	27,000.00	0.00		27,000.00
5020-02 - MTSU Campus Ministry	1,666.67	1,666.63	0.04	20,000.04	20,000.00	0.04		20,000.00
5020-03 - TTU Campus Ministry	1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00	18,000.00	18,000.00	0.00		18,000.00
5020-05 - Vanderbilt Campus Ministry	1,750.00	1,750.00	0.00	21,000.00	21,000.00	0.00		21,000.00
5020-06 - Synod - Campus Ministry Support	-2,201.41	-2,201.41	0.00	-26,416.92	-26,416.92	0.00		-26,416.92
Total 5020 - Committee on Mutual Support	2,715.26	2,715.22	0.04	59,583.12	59,583.08	0.04		59,583.08
5030 - Committee on Ministry								
5030-01 - Retreat - COM	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00
5030-04 - Background Checks	0.00	83.37	-83.37	2,008.07	1,000.00	1,008.07		1,000.00
Total 5030 - Committee on Ministry	0.00	83.37	-83.37	2,008.07	1,000.00	1,008.07		1,000.00
5040 - Comm. on Prep. for Ministry	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00
5050 - Comm. on Church Transformation								
5050-07 - Sudanese church support	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00
5050-08 - Hispanic church support	2,083.33	2,083.37	-0.04	24,999.96	25,000.00	-0.04		25,000.00
Total 5050 - Comm. on Church Transformation	2,083.33	2,083.37	-0.04	24,999.96	25,000.00	-0.04		25,000.00
5060-01 - Comm. for Social Justice	0.00	83.37	-83.37	500.00	1,000.00	-500.00		1,000.00
5100 - Administrative Committee								
5100-02 - GA Co-Moderator Visit	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00
5100-03 - Moderator Conference	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00
5100-04 - EP expenses	367.31	833.37	-466.06	5,614.98	10,000.00	-4,385.02		10,000.00
5100-05 - EP Salary	8,250.00	3,896.88	4,353.12	84,465.76	46,763.00	37,702.76		46,763.00
5100-06 - EP Housing	0.00	4,124.13	-4,124.13	12,372.48	49,490.00	-37,117.52		49,490.00
5100-07 - EP FICA	631.12	613.62	17.50	7,407.98	7,363.00	44.98		7,363.00
5100-08 - EP Medical/Pension	990.00	3,128.25	-2,138.25	18,060.62	37,538.67	-19,478.05		37,538.67
5100-14 - EP 403b Match	0.00	252.50	-252.50	757.50	3,030.00	-2,272.50		3,030.00
5100-20 - Stated Clerk Salary	3,250.00	2,253.37	996.63	33,988.86	27,040.00	6,948.86		27,040.00
5100-21 - Stated Clerk FICA	248.63	172.38	76.25	2,411.68	2,069.00	342.68		2,069.00
5100-23 - Stated Clerk expenses	109.84	166.63	-56.79	3,184.93	2,000.00	1,184.93		2,000.00
5100-30 - Operations Coord. Wages	1,785.34	1,785.37	-0.03	21,424.08	21,424.00	0.08		21,424.00
5100-31 - Operations Coord. FICA	136.56	136.62	-0.06	1,638.81	1,639.00	-0.19		1,639.00
5100-32 - Operations Coord. Med/Pension	587.38	583.37	4.01	7,051.37	7,000.00	51.37		7,000.00
5100-61 - Accounting	857.37	800.00	57.37	12,210.90	11,500.00	710.90		11,500.00
5100-70 - Legal Fees	0.00	833.37	-833.37	0.00	10,000.00	-10,000.00		10,000.00
5100-80 - EP Search expenses	0.00	333.37	-333.37	54.48	4,000.00	-3,945.52		4,000.00
5100 - Administrative Committee - Other	0.00	0.00	0.00	260.00	0.00	260.00		0.00
Total 5100 - Administrative Committee	17,213.55	19,913.23	-2,699.68	210,904.43	240,856.67	-29,952.24		240,856.67
Total Expense	184,844.28	187,872.81	-3,028.53	540,560.33	576,912.75	-36,352.42		576,912.75
Net Ordinary Income	31,698.76	20,215.41	11,483.35	28,417.26	-344.75	28,762.01		-344.75
Other Income/Expense								
Other Income								
7001 - Unbudgeted Income								
7001-15 - Unrealized gain/loss on Invest.	-104,657.17	0.00	-104,657.17	149,479.12	0.00	149,479.12		0.00
7001-21 - Temp. Restricted-Receipts	19,363.04	0.00	19,363.04	161,824.26	0.00	161,824.26		0.00
Total 7001 - Unbudgeted Income	-85,294.13	0.00	-85,294.13	311,303.38	0.00	311,303.38		0.00
Total Other Income	-85,294.13	0.00	-85,294.13	311,303.38	0.00	311,303.38		0.00
Other Expense								
7002 - Unbudgeted expenses								
7002-21 - Temp. Restricted disbursements	34,473.63	0.00	34,473.63	182,108.83	0.00	182,108.83		0.00
Total 7002 - Unbudgeted expenses	34,473.63	0.00	34,473.63	182,108.83	0.00	182,108.83		0.00
Total Other Expense	34,473.63	0.00	34,473.63	182,108.83	0.00	182,108.83		0.00
Net Other Income	-119,767.76	0.00	-119,767.76	129,194.55	0.00	129,194.55		0.00
Net Income	-88,069.00	20,215.41	-108,284.41	157,611.81	-344.75	157,956.56		-344.75

The Presbytery of Middle Tennessee
Statement of Financial Position
As of December 31, 2024

	<u>Dec 31, 24</u>
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1005 · Pinnacle Bank - PMT	113,042.70
1015 · Pinnacle Bank - NV	<u>890.93</u>
Total Checking/Savings	113,933.63
Other Current Assets	
1102 · Prior year pledges receivable	159,576.94
1300 · Investments	
1300-11 · Vanguard-Pooled	2,006,033.19
1300-12 · Vanguard-Default Reserve	629,766.84
1300-13 · Vanguard-Endowment	10,749.80
1300-14 · Vanguard-Cash Equivalent	<u>0.04</u>
Total 1300 · Investments	<u>2,646,549.87</u>
Total Other Current Assets	<u>2,806,126.81</u>
Total Current Assets	2,920,060.44
Fixed Assets	
1500 · Fixed Assets	
1500-02 · Furniture and Equipment	2,165.37
1500-10 · Accumulated Depreciation	<u>-2,165.37</u>
Total 1500 · Fixed Assets	<u>0.00</u>
Total Fixed Assets	<u>0.00</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>2,920,060.44</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
20000 · *Accounts Payable	<u>155,167.17</u>
Total Accounts Payable	<u>155,167.17</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>155,167.17</u>
Total Liabilities	155,167.17
Equity	
3001 · Unrestricted Net Assets	
3001-01 · Allowance for church defaults	200,000.00
3001-04 · Designation - NCD (Properties)	
3001-08 · Designation - NCD Upper Cumberl	313,387.20
3001-41 · Silver Point, Mattie Smith	-7,175.93
3001-42 · New Hope, Franklin	395,196.54
3001-43 · Central Presbyterian, Culleoka	86,391.42
3001-44 · Decherd PC	-11,420.56
3001-46 · St. John's, Fayetteville	-2,500.00
3001-04 · Designation - NCD (Properties) - Other	<u>243,870.95</u>
Total 3001-04 · Designation - NCD (Properties)	1,017,749.62
3001-10 · Youth & Young Adult Support	10,000.00
3001-11 · Connectional Development Fund	8,152.52
3001-12 · Social Media & Technology Fund	6,875.39
3001-13 · Leadership Dev & Education Fund	16,762.68
3001-14 · Mediation Fund	18,000.00
3001-15 · Matthew 25 Fund	35,680.00
3001-17 · EP Transition Fund	56,363.42
3001-18 · Southminster AC loan	-10,000.00
3001-19 · Hispanic Ministry - PMT Board	50,000.00
3001-20 · Investment Income - PMT Board	40,707.08
3001 · Unrestricted Net Assets - Other	<u>958,971.37</u>
Total 3001 · Unrestricted Net Assets	2,409,262.08
3002 · Temporarily restricted funds	
3002-01 · Centsability	3,270.60
3002-05 · Guatemalan Support Funds	8,710.21
3002-06 · Pastoral Care	1,470.00
3002-09 · Disaster Assistance Fund	19,269.02
3002-10 · Triennium	2,941.26
3002-12 · Women in Ministry	190.00
3002-26 · Sabbatical Assistance	4,625.82
3002-27 · Hispanic New Church Dev	43,588.87
3002-32 · CPM - Scholarships	5,974.18
3002-33 · Nueva Vida Food Bank	12,667.15
3002-34 · Mburu Family Fund	2,641.15
3002-50 · St. Andrews Fund	56,636.75
3002-52 · Meeting scholar/preacher	<u>5,000.00</u>
Total 3002 · Temporarily restricted funds	166,985.01
3003 · Permanently restricted funds	10,749.80
3100 · Restricted/Designated income	20,284.57
Net Income	<u>157,611.81</u>
Total Equity	<u>2,764,893.27</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>2,920,060.44</u>

The Presbytery of Middle Tennessee
Actual to Budget
Statement of Activity
 Period Ending December 2024

	Dec 2024			Jan-Dec 2024				Annual Budget
	Actual	Budget	\$ Over Budget	Actual	YTD	Budget	\$ Over Budget	
Ordinary Income/Expense								
Income								
4000 - Pledged giving	202,928.05	194,446.22	8,481.83	514,062.60	522,000.00	-7,937.40	522,000.00	
4070 - Investment income								
4070-10 - Investment income	13,614.99	13,642.00	-27.01	54,914.99	54,568.00	346.99	54,568.00	
Total 4070 - Investment income	13,614.99	13,642.00	-27.01	54,914.99	54,568.00	346.99	54,568.00	
Total Income	216,543.04	208,088.22	8,454.82	568,977.59	576,568.00	-7,590.41	576,568.00	
Gross Profit	216,543.04	208,088.22	8,454.82	568,977.59	576,568.00	-7,590.41	576,568.00	
Expense								
5000 - Finance								
5000-01 - Occupancy	550.00	550.00	0.00	6,600.00	6,600.00	0.00	6,600.00	
5000-02 - Equipment	0.00	208.37	-208.37	1,400.00	2,500.00	-1,100.00	2,500.00	
5000-03 - Insurance	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,219.00	2,000.00	219.00	2,000.00	
5000-05 - Office Expense	266.27	166.63	99.64	3,022.55	2,000.00	1,022.55	2,000.00	
5000-06 - POMA (Database)	0.00	0.00	0.00	830.00	1,250.00	-420.00	1,250.00	
5000-07 - Telephone	189.45	250.00	-60.55	2,264.30	3,000.00	-735.70	3,000.00	
5000-08 - Audit Fee	0.00	0.00	0.00	17,465.00	22,877.00	-5,412.00	22,877.00	
5000-11 - Processing Fees (Bank, Payroll)	182.57	166.63	15.94	2,118.30	2,000.00	118.30	2,000.00	
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5070-01 - GA Per Capita	146,676.60	146,677.00	-0.40	146,676.60	146,677.00	-0.40	146,677.00	
5070-03 - Synod Per Capita	14,892.25	14,892.25	0.00	59,569.00	59,569.00	0.00	59,569.00	
Total 5000 - Finance	162,832.14	162,994.25	-162.11	242,564.75	249,473.00	-6,908.25	249,473.00	
5020 - Committee on Mutual Support								
5010-03 - NaCoMe Camp	0.00	0.00	0.00	27,000.00	27,000.00	0.00	27,000.00	
5020-02 - MTSU Campus Ministry	1,666.67	1,666.63	0.04	20,000.04	20,000.00	0.04	20,000.00	
5020-03 - TTU Campus Ministry	1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00	18,000.00	18,000.00	0.00	18,000.00	
5020-05 - Vanderbilt Campus Ministry	1,750.00	1,750.00	0.00	21,000.00	21,000.00	0.00	21,000.00	
5020-06 - Synod - Campus Ministry Support	-2,201.41	-2,201.41	0.00	-26,416.92	-26,416.92	0.00	-26,416.92	
Total 5020 - Committee on Mutual Support	2,715.26	2,715.22	0.04	59,583.12	59,583.08	0.04	59,583.08	
5030 - Committee on Ministry								
5030-01 - Retreat - COM	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
5030-04 - Background Checks	0.00	83.37	-83.37	2,008.07	1,000.00	1,008.07	1,000.00	
Total 5030 - Committee on Ministry	0.00	83.37	-83.37	2,008.07	1,000.00	1,008.07	1,000.00	
5040 - Comm. on Prep. for Ministry	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
5050 - Comm. on Church Transformation								
5050-07 - Sudanese church support	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
5050-08 - Hispanic church support	2,083.33	2,083.37	-0.04	24,999.96	25,000.00	-0.04	25,000.00	
Total 5050 - Comm. on Church Transformation	2,083.33	2,083.37	-0.04	24,999.96	25,000.00	-0.04	25,000.00	
5060-01 - Comm. for Social Justice	0.00	83.37	-83.37	500.00	1,000.00	-500.00	1,000.00	
5100 - Administrative Committee								
5100-02 - GA Co-Moderator Visit	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
5100-03 - Moderator Conference	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
5100-04 - EP expenses	367.31	833.37	-466.06	5,614.98	10,000.00	-4,385.02	10,000.00	
5100-05 - EP Salary	8,250.00	3,896.88	4,353.12	84,465.76	46,763.00	37,702.76	46,763.00	
5100-06 - EP Housing	0.00	4,124.13	-4,124.13	12,372.48	49,490.00	-37,117.52	49,490.00	
5100-07 - EP FICA	631.12	613.62	17.50	7,407.98	7,363.00	44.98	7,363.00	
5100-08 - EP Medical/Pension	990.00	3,128.25	-2,138.25	18,060.62	37,538.67	-19,478.05	37,538.67	
5100-14 - EP 403b Match	0.00	252.50	-252.50	757.50	3,030.00	-2,272.50	3,030.00	
5100-20 - Stated Clerk Salary	3,250.00	2,253.37	996.63	33,988.86	27,040.00	6,948.86	27,040.00	
5100-21 - Stated Clerk FICA	248.63	172.38	76.25	2,411.68	2,069.00	342.68	2,069.00	
5100-23 - Stated Clerk expenses	109.84	166.63	-56.79	3,184.93	2,000.00	1,184.93	2,000.00	
5100-30 - Operations Coord. Wages	1,785.34	1,785.37	-0.03	21,424.08	21,424.00	0.08	21,424.00	
5100-31 - Operations Coord. FICA	136.56	136.62	-0.06	1,638.81	1,639.00	-0.19	1,639.00	
5100-32 - Operations Coord. Med/Pension	587.38	583.37	4.01	7,051.37	7,000.00	51.37	7,000.00	
5100-61 - Accounting	857.37	800.00	57.37	12,210.90	11,500.00	710.90	11,500.00	
5100-70 - Legal Fees	0.00	833.37	-833.37	0.00	10,000.00	-10,000.00	10,000.00	
5100-80 - EP Search expenses	0.00	333.37	-333.37	54.48	4,000.00	-3,945.52	4,000.00	
5100 - Administrative Committee - Other	0.00	0.00	0.00	260.00	0.00	260.00	0.00	
Total 5100 - Administrative Committee	17,213.55	19,913.23	-2,699.68	210,904.43	240,856.67	-29,952.24	240,856.67	
Total Expense	184,844.28	187,872.81	-3,028.53	540,560.33	576,912.75	-36,352.42	576,912.75	
Net Ordinary Income	31,698.76	20,215.41	11,483.35	28,417.26	-344.75	28,762.01	-344.75	
Other Income/Expense								
Other Income								
7001 - Unbudgeted Income								
7001-15 - Unrealized gain/loss on Invest.	-104,657.17	0.00	-104,657.17	149,479.12	0.00	149,479.12	0.00	
7001-21 - Temp. Restricted-Receipts	19,363.04	0.00	19,363.04	161,824.26	0.00	161,824.26	0.00	
Total 7001 - Unbudgeted Income	-85,294.13	0.00	-85,294.13	311,303.38	0.00	311,303.38	0.00	
Total Other Income	-85,294.13	0.00	-85,294.13	311,303.38	0.00	311,303.38	0.00	
Other Expense								
7002 - Unbudgeted expenses								
7002-21 - Temp. Restricted disbursements	34,473.63	0.00	34,473.63	182,108.83	0.00	182,108.83	0.00	
Total 7002 - Unbudgeted expenses	34,473.63	0.00	34,473.63	182,108.83	0.00	182,108.83	0.00	
Total Other Expense	34,473.63	0.00	34,473.63	182,108.83	0.00	182,108.83	0.00	
Net Other Income	-119,767.76	0.00	-119,767.76	129,194.55	0.00	129,194.55	0.00	
Net Income	-88,069.00	20,215.41	-108,284.41	157,611.81	-344.75	157,956.56	-344.75	

The Presbytery of Middle Tennessee
Statement of Financial Position
As of December 31, 2024

	<u>Dec 31, 24</u>
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1005 · Pinnacle Bank - PMT	113,042.70
1015 · Pinnacle Bank - NV	<u>890.93</u>
Total Checking/Savings	113,933.63
Other Current Assets	
1102 · Prior year pledges receivable	159,576.94
1300 · Investments	
1300-11 · Vanguard-Pooled	2,006,033.19
1300-12 · Vanguard-Default Reserve	629,766.84
1300-13 · Vanguard-Endowment	10,749.80
1300-14 · Vanguard-Cash Equivalent	<u>0.04</u>
Total 1300 · Investments	<u>2,646,549.87</u>
Total Other Current Assets	<u>2,806,126.81</u>
Total Current Assets	2,920,060.44
Fixed Assets	
1500 · Fixed Assets	
1500-02 · Furniture and Equipment	2,165.37
1500-10 · Accumulated Depreciation	<u>-2,165.37</u>
Total 1500 · Fixed Assets	<u>0.00</u>
Total Fixed Assets	0.00
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>2,920,060.44</u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
20000 · *Accounts Payable	<u>155,167.17</u>
Total Accounts Payable	<u>155,167.17</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>155,167.17</u>
Total Liabilities	155,167.17
Equity	
3001 · Unrestricted Net Assets	
3001-01 · Allowance for church defaults	200,000.00
3001-04 · Designation - NCD (Properties)	
3001-08 · Designation - NCD Upper Cumberl	313,387.20
3001-41 · Silver Point, Mattie Smith	-7,175.93
3001-42 · New Hope, Franklin	395,196.54
3001-43 · Central Presbyterian, Culleoka	86,391.42
3001-44 · Decherd PC	-11,420.56
3001-46 · St. John's, Fayetteville	-2,500.00
3001-04 · Designation - NCD (Properties) - Other	<u>243,870.95</u>
Total 3001-04 · Designation - NCD (Properties)	1,017,749.62
3001-10 · Youth & Young Adult Support	10,000.00
3001-11 · Connectional Development Fund	8,152.52
3001-12 · Social Media & Technology Fund	6,875.39
3001-13 · Leadership Dev & Education Fund	16,762.68
3001-14 · Mediation Fund	18,000.00
3001-15 · Matthew 25 Fund	35,680.00
3001-17 · EP Transition Fund	56,363.42
3001-18 · Southminster AC loan	-10,000.00
3001-19 · Hispanic Ministry - PMT Board	50,000.00
3001-20 · Investment Income - PMT Board	40,707.08
3001 · Unrestricted Net Assets - Other	<u>958,971.37</u>
Total 3001 · Unrestricted Net Assets	2,409,262.08
3002 · Temporarily restricted funds	
3002-01 · Centsability	3,270.60
3002-05 · Guatemalan Support Funds	8,710.21
3002-06 · Pastoral Care	1,470.00
3002-09 · Disaster Assistance Fund	19,269.02
3002-10 · Triennium	2,941.26
3002-12 · Women in Ministry	190.00
3002-26 · Sabbatical Assistance	4,625.82
3002-27 · Hispanic New Church Dev	43,588.87
3002-32 · CPM - Scholarships	5,974.18
3002-33 · Nueva Vida Food Bank	12,667.15
3002-34 · Mburu Family Fund	2,641.15
3002-50 · St. Andrews Fund	56,636.75
3002-52 · Meeting scholar/preacher	<u>5,000.00</u>
Total 3002 · Temporarily restricted funds	166,985.01
3003 · Permanently restricted funds	10,749.80
3100 · Restricted/Designated income	20,284.57
Net Income	<u>157,611.81</u>
Total Equity	<u>2,764,893.27</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>2,920,060.44</u>

Leonard Jordan
LE_Jordan@bellsouth.net

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**NOMINATING TASK FORCE
REPORT TO THE PRESBYTERY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE
February 8, 2025**

INFORMATION

1. The Task Force is required to submit a slate of nominees to fill all committees as well as individuals to serve as readers of exams, attend the General Assembly, attend the Synod, and serve on the Permanent Judicial Commission
2. The Task Force is composed of: Leonard Jordan, CRE, St. Andrews Chair and member of the Administrative Committee, Dave Coleman, RE, Downtown, Beth McCaw, TE, Southminster, Scott Huie, TE, Bellevue, Vicky Harwell, RE, First, Pulaski and Vicky McMillen, RE, First, Dickson. Terry Newland, TE and Bridge Executive Presbyter, and Mary Catherine Sevier, RE and Stated Clerk, staff the Task Force.

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Task Force recommends the following individuals be elected to the following terms on the Commission on Ministry:
Amy Stoker, TE, First, Pulaski, Class of 2026
David Sadler, CRE, Priest Lake, Class of 2026
Susan Carey, RE, Westminster Nashville, Class of 2026

Presbytery of Middle Tennessee | Committee Membership 2025-2027

TE – Minister of the Word and Sacrament RE – Ruling Elder *Second Term *to be elected 11/14/2024*

^To be elected 02/08/2025

Administrative Committee

<u>Class of 2025</u>	<u>Class of 2026</u>	<u>Class of 2027</u>
Leonard Jordan, CRE St. Andrews	Sandra Randleman, TE First, Nashville	*Betsy Bond, RE Trinity
Kathy Corlew (RE) FPC Murfreesboro		*Mark Bryan, TE Glen Leven
		Erin Howton Angel, TE First Allardt Moderator-in-Nomination

Trustees (by virtue of office; serve as members of both Administrative and Finance Committees)

Jane Herring, TE Emmanuel 2025 Moderator	Chris Williams, RE First, Pulaski Vice-Moderator	Evelyn Graham, TE (Class of 2025) Second, Nashville Treasurer
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Finance Committee

*Melinda Sanders, RE Woodland Donovan Drake, TE Westminster, Nashville	*Anders Hall, RE Westminster, Nashville Bruce McVey, TE First, Fayetteville	*Hal Sauer, RE First, Nashville *Jim Moran, TE First, Shelbyville
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Committee on Church Transformation

*Lila Ramirez-Jimenez, TE Latin X, Hub Barbara Halverstadt, RE Emmanuel	*Robin White, RE Historic Franklin *John Hilley, TE East Brentwood	*Keith Gunter, TE New Creation Kim Luther, RE First Allardt
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Committee on Leadership Excellence

*Sarah Bird Kneff, TE First, Columbia *Dr. Mary Martin, RE First, Murfreesboro	Denise Moran, RE First, Shelbyville Dave Nock, RE Priest Lake	Sara Hill, TE Member at Large Greg Glover, TE FPC Clarksville
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Class of 2025

Class of 2026

Class of 2027

VACANT (TE)
(in process)

Anne Keener, CRE
First, Franklin
Gary Kelly, TE
HR
Todd Jones, TE
HR
Mickey Stueck, RE
First, Lebanon
*Leslie Traylor, TE
Hermitage

Commission on Ministry

Stephen Yates, TE
First, Tullahoma
Sally Hughes, TE
Trinity
^*Amy Stoker (TE)
First, Pulaski
^David Sadler (CRE)
Priest Lake
Judy Arnold (TE)
Westminster, Fairfield
Glade
^Susan Carey (RE)
Westminster, Nashville

Brit Withers, RE
Woodland
VACANT (RE)

**Bill Patterson, RE*
First, Murfreesboro
Zach Sasser, TE
Downtown
VACANT, RE

Cade Arnold, RE
First, Cookeville

Committee on Mutual Support

Will Wellman, TE
Member-at-large
(Validated-Westminster,
Nashville)
Spencer Truett, RE
First, Dickson
*Ross Thomas, RE
First, Springfield

*Bobby Harding, TE
First, Murfreesboro
Claire Harris Kramer, TE
Member-at-Large
(Validated-NCCC)

Samara Zavaro (RE)
Downtown

Committee on Preparation for Ministry

*Michael McLaughlin, TE
First, Cookeville
Judy Schomber, RE
Trinity
Judy Tygard, RE
Bellevue

Lisa Hermann, TE
Validated -Monroe Carrell
*James Peeler, RE
Harpeth
Debra Gentry, RE
Downtown

Marilee Meschefske, RE
Westminster, Columbia
CJ Thompson, TE
First, Manchester
Roseanna Anderson, TE
Validated at large

Committee on Social Justice

Hannah Cruse
First, Cookeville
Stacy Rector (TE)
Validated-TADP

*Andrea Elkins
First, Murfreesboro
*Claire Berry, TE
Historic Franklin

**Henry Deaderick, RE*
St. Andrews
**Adam Devries, TE*

*Validated – Westminster,
Nashville*

Class of 2026

Michael Bradley, TE
HR
James Hudnut-Beumler, TE
Validated – VU Divinity
J.B. Smith, RE
First, Pulaski

Permanent Judicial Commission

Class of 2028

Bill Russell, RE
First, Spring Hill
Walt Tennyson, TE
Validated – Alive Hospice
Terry Denton, RE
Emmanuel

Class of 2030

*John Smith, TE
First, Dickson/Ellis Grove
Keith Dennen, RE
New Creation
Ryan Moore, TE
First, Nashville*

Committee Chairs (“nominated by the Admin Committee through the Nominating Task Force”)

Administrative

RE Chris Williams (by virtue of office)

Finance

TE Evelyn Graham (by virtue of office)

Church Transformation

TE John Hilley

Leadership Excellence

RE Dave Nock

Commission on Ministry

TE Stephen Yates

RE Mickey Stueck

Mutual Support

TE Bobby Harding

Preparation for Ministry

TE Lisa Hermann

Social Justice

RE Henry Deaderick

Synod Commissioners Class of 2025

Jim Hoobler RE

Andy Gay, TE

Downtown

HR

Carol Foster, RE Alternate

Claire Berry, TE Alternate

First, Fayetteville

Historic Franklin

Ordination Exam Readers, Class of 2025

Gloria Dale, RE, First, Columbia

Annesse Ashton, RE, St. Andrews Nashville

Greg Glover, TE, First, Clarksville

Sally Hughes, TE, Trinity

Alternates:

Joyce Harris, RE, St. Andrews

Guy Griffith, TE, Westminster, Nashville

UKIRK Nashville Board (reported only; not elected by PMT)

Rev. Claire Berry, Executive Director

Will be reported at next stated meeting

COMMISSION ON MINISTRY
Report to the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee
February 8, 2025

INFORMATION

1. The Commission meets on the second Tuesday of the month in hybrid format at 4:00 pm. It receives reports from the Bridge Executive Presbyter and the Stated Clerk.
2. The Commission hears reports from active Administrative Commissions on a quarterly basis and reports those to the Presbytery.

ADMIT TO RECORD

- Received the Rev. Jim Mays from Holston Presbytery.
- Received the Rev. Chuck Tabor from the Pines Presbytery.
- Dismissed the Rev. Laura Cheifetz to the San Francisco Presbytery.
- Dismissed the Rev. Rachel Thompson Orfield to James Presbytery effective July 1, 2025.
- Extended Jason Loscuito's contract to July 31, 2025.
- Extended the commission of CRE David Sadler at Priest Lake to March 31, 2025 at the session's request.
- Approved the congregation's dismissal of the PNC of Big Lick Calvary
- Renewed Commission for CREs Anne Keener, First Franklin, and Laura Purtle, Spring Hill pending paperwork
- Approved First Fayetteville to submit renewal request for Therese Howell and Harold Dawkins to serve during the Rev. McVey's sabbatical, from June-August, 2025. Mentors to be assigned.
- Approved at First Dickson and Ellis Grove to submit renewal request for the commission for CRE James Rountree for three years. The Rev. John Smith will serve as his mentor.
- Approved the contract between Chuck Tabor and Calvary/Big Lick.
- Approved the contract between Eddie Bellis and First Presbyterian, Franklin
- Approved recommendation of MDP for Second Presbyterian, Nashville
- Approved the CRE Renewal form.
- Approved a Congregational meeting to take place in February at First Lewisburg to dissolve the pastoral relationship with Robert Montgomery (retiring) effective later this year.
- Approved a Congregational meeting at Normandy to dissolve the pastoral relationship with Rev. Tom Bagley (retiring) effective January 31, 2025.
- Approved First Presbyterian, Nashville, to form a second APNC to search for an associate PNC.
- Approved the revised Transitions Tool Kit.
- Approved NKPC Installation Commission: Rev. Jane Herring, Emmanuel Presbyterian Church (Nashville, TN); Teaching Elder/Presbytery Moderator; Rev. Dr. Amy Stoker,

First Presbyterian Church (Pulaski, TN); Teaching Elder Rev. John Smith(Dickson, TN); Ruling Elder Mickey Stueck, First Presbyterian Church (Lebanon, TN); Ruling Elder Yeon Su Na, Nashville Korean Presbyterian Church (Nashville, TN); Ruling Elder Guest of the Commission: Rev. Moongil Cho, PMA (Presbyterian Mission Agency Staff, Teaching Elder; Rev. Jae Heung Chung, Teaching Elder (HR)

Approved the Installation Commission of the Rev Claire Berry to Historic Franklin: The Rev. Jane Herring, Emanuel, Ms. Susan Henry, RE, Historic Franklin, the Rev. Stacy Ikard, Westlake Hills PC, Mission Presbytery, The Rev. Marjorie Thompson, HR, The Rev. Mary Sellers Shaw, Validated Minister, the Rev. Dr. Guy Griffith, Westminster, Ms. Nancy Morris, RE, Second PC, Mr. Doug Berry, RE, Westminster PC.

- Approved Beau Carr, Christ Presbyterian Church, Alpine to moderate the session and serve the Lord's Supper. Rev. John Smith is his mentor.
- Approved the Ministerial Compensation Policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

n/a

Proposed Amendments to the Constitution
*****Updated with Comments from PMT**
Permanent Judicial Commission (comments
found below each amendment)

24-A — F-1.0403

OPENNESS TO THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

F-1.0403 UNITY IN DIVERSITY (POL-01 1)

The 226th General Assembly (2024) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall F-1.0403 in the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity be amended as follows?
(Deleted text is in ~~strike through~~; added text is in *italics*.)

“F-1.0403 Unity in Diversity ...

The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church’s membership. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, *gender identity, sexual orientation*, disability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall guarantee full participation and representation in its worship, governance, and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership. No member shall be denied participation or representation for any reason other than those stated in this Constitution.

Background and Rationale

...While affirming the freedom of councils of the church to make ordination decisions as guided by the Holy Spirit, we acknowledge that the Church has been called upon historically to be ever more faithful to the most inclusive and affirming statements of Scripture and promptings of the Holy Spirit...

We feel that the Spirit is working in the churches concerning this matter. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the following resolution.

1. Celebrating the expansive embrace of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the breadth of our mission to serve a world in need, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) affirms the gifts of

LGBTQIA+ people for ministry and celebrates their service in the church and in the world...

5. *The assembly also gives thanks for those who continue to seek deeper understanding, and more authentic welcome, even amid discomfort or uncertainty about how best to show hospitality, in the spirit of continuing Reformation...*

10. *The assembly encourages all congregations and councils of the PC(USA) continually to seek to expand their welcome so that all might know the Good News of Jesus Christ and encourages all other communions to do the same.*

We follow this encouragement by urging that gender identity and sexual orientation be established as protected classes against which we must not discriminate.

Advice – From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC)

We believe the witness of Scripture and the Constitution testifies to the full inclusion of persons as members of the Church (universal), as noted not only in F-1.0403 but also reiterated in G 1.0302 regarding the church particular: “No person shall be denied membership for any reason not related to profession of faith” (see also the “Confession of Belhar,” *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): Part I The Book of Confession* (2016), 10.3). A positive affirmation of this principle through constitutional amendment is consistent with this witness.

Comment – From the LGBTQIA+ Advocacy Task Force

At the 223rd General Assembly (2018), the Assembly approved item 11-13 “On Celebrating the Gifts of People of Diverse Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities in the Life of the Church.” This statement affirmed the faithful presence and service of LGBTQIA+ folks in the PC(USA). This is one of many overtures passed at past General Assemblies (dating to at least the 221nd General Assembly in 2014) in support of LGBTQIA+ people in the church and around the world.

Thus the LGBTQIA+ Advocacy Committee advises the Assembly to continue to embody this commitment by stating explicitly in our Foundations that, alongside “race, ethnicity, age, sex, [etc.],” sexual orientation and gender identity are similarly fundamental dimensions of personhood that shall not be used as barriers from membership in the Church universal or participation in the “worship, governance, and emerging life” of PC(USA) churches.

Advice and Counsel – From the Advocacy Committee for Women and Gender Justice (ACWGJ)

F-1.0403 outlines the principles of unity in diversity, citing Gal. 3:27-29 as the guiding scriptural basis for these principles. ACWGJ reads Gal. 3:27-29 alongside Col. 1:16-17. The diversity in which we are united is not only plentiful but also specifically flows from God. As a result, affirming these diverse identities with language that closer estimates the depths of human experience in the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity allows us to stand firmly in our Reformed Tradition. Only when we explicitly affirm the theological, ecclesial, and biblical foundations of openness and welcome to individuals with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities can we

proclaim the “good news” Gospel truth.

Advice and Counsel – From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)

We acknowledge the historic role that the church has occupied, both as the oppressor and as advocate. We acknowledge that there is still much work to do in fostering healing with our siblings who have been harmed by the church. Echoing the 223rd General Assembly (2018), we celebrate the faithful, loving, and courageous Gospel witness of LGBTQIA+ persons. Our church is enriched, made vibrant and vital by the contributions of LGBTQIA+ people and they ought to be afforded the same constitutional protections that have been extended to those on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, age, ability, location, and theological conviction.

Advice and Counsel – From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC)

REAC notes that the PC(USA) has already take the step in accepting “On Celebrating the Gifts of People of Diverse Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities in the Life of the Church.” At the 223rd General Assembly in St. Louis in June 2018, the PC(USA) voted unanimously to pass three significant overtures related to LGBTQ+ inclusion. Therefore, in approving POL-01, the PC(USA) cements and demonstrates the denomination’s commitment to inclusivity and its Matthew 25 platform, which sends a resounding message of acceptance across the denomination.

Comment – From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR)

GACOR will primarily direct its comments toward Part 1 (proposing changes to F-1.0403) from which section of the *Book of Order* GACOR receives its primary mandate and focus. GACOR has already been studying the impact of gender identity and sexual orientation on equity and representation within the structures, systems, and leadership of the PC(USA). Approval of this item, however, would greatly increase the capacity of GACOR to invite the wider church to include ways to collect data and understand the ways the diversity already among us impacts how we live and move together as the Church in terms of process and norms. This change also, foundationally, acknowledges the multiplicity of leaders and members led by the Spirit to serve and take part in the life of the Church (Joel 2:28-29/Acts 2:17-18).

The Assembly Committee on Polity approved Item POL-01 1, 35/3. The 226th General Assembly (2024) approved Item POL-01 1, 389/24.

For the full report on POL-01, go to
<https://www.pc-biz.org/search/3001122>

PMT PJC Comments on 24A

24A deals with F-1.0403 and adds “gender identity” and “sexual orientation” to the list of “rich diversity” which makes up our denomination. Since F-1.0403 concerns the diversity of our denomination and our ongoing commitment to maintain the spirit of unity in the midst of that diversity this amendment upholds that ideal. Our diversity is not a new issue. Over the last 2 and a half decades our denomination and presbytery has only grown more diverse. The addition of “gender identity” and “sexual orientation” to the list of diversity only codifies what we already are in practice. The commitment to non-discrimination is something that we already hold to at every level as evidenced in our commitment to open communion. This amendment in no way changes or takes away the principle of local authority to elect their own leadership.

24-B – G-1.0104

THE CONGREGATION

G-1.0104 OTHER FORMS OF CORPORATE WITNESS (WORSHIPING COMMUNITIES, etc.) (POL-03)

The 226th General Assembly (2024) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-1.0104 be added to Congregations in the Form of Government as follows? (Deleted text is in ~~strike through~~; added text is in *italics*.)

G-1.0104 Other Forms of Corporate Witness (Worshiping Communities, etc.)

In circumstances where the formation of a traditional ecclesiastically and legally organized congregation is not desired or deemed appropriate, and a worshiping community has been formally recognized by a presbytery according to its own definition, presbyteries and congregations may work together with such a group to provide supervision and support. Such recognized groups shall be under the mutually agreed upon oversight of a minister of the Word and Sacrament approved by the presbytery, shall include at least one ruling elder in their chosen leadership, and shall function under the financial, legal, and disciplinary sponsorship of an ecclesial council (either a session or a presbytery). The sponsoring council shall, in consultation with the worshiping community, authorize any celebrations of the sacraments within the group in accordance with the Directory for Worship. Membership records for group participants desiring to be formally enrolled as baptized, active, or affiliate members in the PC(USA) shall be maintained by the sponsoring council. Such groups shall not hold property, and may not undertake any financial, legal, or contractual obligations, apart from their sponsoring council. They shall adhere to the sponsoring council's required policies on sexual misconduct, harassment, child and youth protection, and antiracism. Presbyteries shall determine appropriate means of representation and participation of such groups in and through the sponsoring councils (session and/or presbytery).

Background and Rationale

1. The intention of the proposed amendment is to provide a minimal, flexible, and adaptable level of historic Reformed polity for small worshiping communities that wish to identify with the larger church in worship and formation, discipleship, and mission. The wording is intended to be adaptable to current constitutional provisions and/or to whatever recommendations may emerge from the Task Force to Explore the Theology and Practice of Ordination.

6. The role of the sponsoring council (session or presbytery) would basically be that of an

“umbrella organization” with oversight of financial, legal, and disciplinary matters as needed.

7

The principal body responsible for discerning the appropriateness of any such groups and their activities in relationship to the PC(USA) would be the presbytery, in consultation with any sponsoring congregation, acting under the authority of Scripture, guided by the *Book of Confessions*, and governed by the *Book of Order*.

Advice – From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC)

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution verbally advised the General Assembly that this language does not have constitutional implications.

Comment – From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR)

The General Assembly Committee on Representation recommends approval of this item. While there are many types of New Worshiping Communities (NWCs), from the perspective of representation and equity, GACOR notes that many NWCs actually serve historically marginalized communities – particularly communities of color and members of the LGBTQIA+ community. These NWCs provide a vibrant, safe place for the exploration of what it means to be the church in the 21st century. However, under the current provisions in the *Book of Order*, there is no church wide mechanism for participants in NWCs to receive the sacrament of Baptism, or be counted as members of the larger church. This lack of standing has caused confusion and frustration, as well as a lack of representation in all councils of the church. While this has a daily impact for these NWCs, creating a “second class” of church participants and organization, it also affects the capacity of GACOR to understand the diversity of the church through the annual statistical reporting of the Church. This item would correct these issues while also providing the necessary oversight, allowing NWC participants full standing and representation within the PC(USA).

Advice and Counsel) – From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 226th General Assembly (2024) approve Item POL-03. This overture continues progress made by the 225th General Assembly (2022) in developing standardized guidelines for chartering immigrant fellowships, worshiping communities, and new church developments. Crucially, this overture seeks to provide an adaptable framework rooted in our Reformed polity.

The Assembly Committee on Polity amended the overture language and then approved Item POL 03, 35/3 with comment. The 225th General Assembly (2024) amended and then approved Item POL-03, 391/14 with comment.

For the full report on POL-03, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/search/3001126>

PMT PJC Comments on 24B

I find this proposed amendment to be well written, clear in its meaning, and designed to meet a need in the life of the church today. The state of our society currently shows a need for innovative forms of worship and this amendment provides guidance in developing these forms.

24-C — G-2.0104b

ORDERED MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH

G-2.0104b GIFTS AND QUALIFICATIONS (POL-01 2)

The 226th General Assembly (2024) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-2.0104b be amended as follows:

(Deleted text is in ~~strike~~through; added text is in *italics*.)

b. Standards for ordained service reflect the church's desire to submit joyfully to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all aspects of life (F-1.02). The council responsible for ordination and/or installation (G-2.0402; G-2.0607; G-3.0306) shall examine each candidate's calling, gifts, preparation, and suitability for the responsibilities of ordered ministry. The examination shall include, but not be limited to, a determination of the candidate's ability and commitment to fulfill all requirements as expressed in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.0404), *the Historic Principles of Church Order (F-3.01)*, and *in the principles of participation and representation found in F-1.0403*. Councils shall be guided by Scripture and the confessions in applying standards to individual candidates.

Background and Rationale

...While affirming the freedom of councils of the church to make ordination decisions as guided by the Holy Spirit, we acknowledge that the Church has been called upon historically to be ever more faithful to the most inclusive and affirming statements of Scripture and promptings of the Holy Spirit...

We feel that the Spirit is working in the churches concerning this matter. The 223rd General Assembly (2018) approved the following resolution:

1. Celebrating the expansive embrace of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the breadth of our mission to serve a world in need, the 223rd General Assembly (2018) affirms the gifts of LGBTQIA+ people for ministry and celebrates their service in the church and in the world...

5. The assembly also gives thanks for those who continue to seek deeper understanding, and more authentic welcome, even amid discomfort or uncertainty about how best to show hospitality, in the spirit of continuing Reformation...

10. The assembly encourages all congregations and councils of the PC(USA) continually to seek to expand their welcome so that all might know the Good News of Jesus Christ and encourages all other communions to do the same.

We follow this encouragement by urging that gender identity and sexual orientation be established as protected classes against which we must not discriminate.

Advice – From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC)

Inserting the wording “and in the principles of participation, representation, and non-discrimination found in F-1.0403” into G-2.0104b adds a requirement for acknowledgment of F-1.0403 in the examination of all candidates for ordered ministry before ordination and/or installation. Under the proposed amendment, a council is required to examine candidates to be ordained and/or installed, to

1. determine the candidate’s ability and commitment to fulfill all requirements as expressed in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.0404), and 2. determine the candidate’s ability and attentiveness to fulfill the principles of participation, representation, and non-discrimination of church members found in F-1.0403 which pertains to
3. the foundational principles of unity in diversity of the Church (universal), and 4. the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), as a particular church, guaranteeing full participation and representation in its worship, governance, and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership, and no member shall be denied participation or representation for any reason other than those stated in this Constitution.

The proposed amendment, in effect, would require the candidate to acknowledge, by some means, during the examination, what F-1.0403 states regarding the unity in diversity of the Church universal when it comes to non-discrimination, and church particular when it comes to participation and representation related to membership in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The Authoritative Interpretation of the General Assembly (1987, 151, 15.252, Com. 17-87) states that the determination for church membership is different from the determination for ordination and/or installation to the ordered ministries of deacon, ruling elder, and minister of Word and Sacrament. Furthermore, the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission in 1985 determined that the right to elect deacons, ruling elders, and ministers of Word and Sacrament is not absolute but is bound by the constitutional framework of the larger church (Minutes, 1985, Part I, pp. 118--23, Union Presbyterian Church of Blasdell, New York, et al. vs. The Presbytery of Western New York).

When a council is prayerfully discerning and examining candidates to be ordained and/or installed, the council is required to act with due diligence on behalf of the whole church in accordance with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). As stated in G-2.0104b, standards for ordained service reflect the church's desire to submit joyfully to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all aspects of life (F-1.02). The council responsible for ordination and/or installation (G-2.0402; G 2.0607; G-3.0306) shall examine each candidate's calling, gifts, preparation, and suitability for the responsibilities of ordered ministry.... Councils shall be guided by Scripture and the confessions in applying standards to individual candidates.

Where membership within the greater church is to be inclusive, demonstrating unity in diversity, ordination and/or installation into an ordered ministry of the church does require candidates to

determine their ability to uphold the Constitution and principles of Presbyterian polity.

In *Book of Order* G-2.0105, “in entering the ordered ministries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), one chooses to exercise freedom of conscience within certain bounds. His or her conscience is captive to the Word of God as interpreted in the standards of the church so long as he or she continues to seek, or serve in, ordered ministry. The decision as to whether a person has departed from essentials of Reformed faith and polity is made initially by the individual concerned but ultimately becomes the responsibility of the council in which he or she is a member” or to become a member (i.e. a session or a presbytery).

The current examination standards already require a candidate to affirm W-4.0404e, to be governed by our church’s polity and to abide by its discipline. Adding the proposed language to the examination requirements is redundant.

Comment – From the LGBTQIA+ Advocacy Task Force

The heart of this proposal intends for emerging teaching elders, ruling elders and deacons to make explicit their intention, as part of the preparation/examination process for ordination (prior to an ordination service), not to discriminate in the course of their service based on identity markers named in F-1.0403. The committee believes that every person in the church has a right to be treated with equality, fairness and dignity.

On one hand, this proposed measure may be seen as a redundancy since the constitutional questions for ordination already articulate a commitment “to be governed by our church’s polity,” which, obviously, includes the current version of F-1.0403. On the other hand, this commitment has not, in practice, preserved ordained individuals from discriminatory behavior in the course of their service based on race, age, sex, etc. Also, this overture refers to the examination process and therefore neither requests nor requires a change to the constitutional questions.

Thus the LGBTQIA+ Advocacy Committee calls upon the Assembly to continue to support ordained individuals in keeping their ordination vows by making explicit in the preparation/examination process a determination of the candidate’s “ability and commitment to fulfill all requirements as expressed in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.0404)” – “the principles of participation, representation and non-discrimination,” [*Proposed addition to G-2.0104b*]. We also believe the changes to G-20104b are the action to the sentiments expressed in F-1.0403 and therefore they should not be separated into two amendments.

This assessment does not require uniformity of thought or conviction – only a commitment not to disrupt or block other individuals from living into their callings based on the identity markers named in F-1.0403. We not only support this regarding LGBTQIA+ identities, but also in regard to the other identities listed in F-1.0403 (all of which can and do intersect with LGBTQIA+ identities). People with a variety of identities and convictions exist in the church, are baptized in the name of the Lord, and are called to lay and ordained ministry, and all should be able to exist and serve in the church without discrimination or disruption.

Advice and Counsel – From the Advocacy Committee for Women and Gender Justice (ACWGJ)

The Advocacy Committee for Women and Gender Justice advises that the 226th General Assembly (2024) **approve** POL-01 2.

Since the original overture addresses changes to two parts of the Book of Order, ACWGJ looks at the two parts separately, in light of advice from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution. Ordination already calls us to uphold our commitment “to be governed by our denomination’s polity.” G-2.0104b explicitly names our baptismal call to include welcome and openness as named in 1 Cor. 12: 12-13. As a community of disciples who seek to embody the Gospel of Jesus Christ, asking those preparing for ordination to name their baptismal call with specific detail allows us to work towards the Great Ends of the Church together. Only by being explicit in this way can we stand for justice, rising up against the wicked and standing for God against evildoers (Psalm 94:16). Vague affirmation, like silence, only perpetuates the pain inflicted on our siblings in Christ when their experiences are not recognized as part of the Body of Christ. Naming our belief in participation, representation, and non-discrimination is not only important, it is precedent.

Finally, ACWGJ affirms the work of our siblings on the LGBTQIA+ Equity Advocacy Committee to specifically advocate for individuals with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities before the Assembly.

The Assembly Committee on Polity approved Item POL-01 2, 28/10. The 226th General Assembly (2024) amended and approved Item POL-01 2, 297/130.

For the full report on POL-01 02, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/search/3001122> For the video of the GA Plenary 10 discussion on POL 01 2 go to <https://ga-pcusa.org/videos/>

PMT PJC Comments on 24C

24C deals with G-2.0104b. This section lists the appropriate topics that councils are responsible for when they examine potential members. The amendment would add two new topics to the list; “Principles of Participation and Representation” and “Historic Principles of Church Order”. Adding these to the topics that individuals are examined on will help councils as they discern a candidate’s suitability for ordered ministry. Councils will be able to assess a candidate's ability to serve in the diverse community we exist in as the PCUSA. It will also allow a council to assess the candidate’s commitment to the principles which have guided our life together since the 1700s, one of those being “God alone is Lord of the conscience”. The addition of these topics reinforces our commitment to unity in diversity. This amendment in no way changes or takes away the principle of local authority to elect their own leadership or a council's right to determine its own membership.

24-D — G-2.0504b

PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

G-2.0504b TEMPORARY PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS (POL-05)

The 226th General Assembly (2024) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall Section G-2.0504b, Temporary Pastoral Relationships, be amended as follows:
(Deleted text is in ~~strike through~~; added text is in *italics*.)

...

Titles and terms of service for temporary relationships shall be determined by the presbytery. A person serving in a temporary pastoral relationship is invited for a specified period not to exceed ~~twelve~~*thirty-six* months in length, which is renewable with the approval of the presbytery. ...

Background and Rationale

An increasing number of congregations are being served by temporary pastors. Extending the specified period of service from 12 to 36 months will provide these congregations a stronger sense of stability. It would save both sessions and presbyteries considerable time and paperwork if they did not have to renegotiate a contract every year, giving them more time to attend to the tasks of interim/transitional ministry rather than continuous contract negotiation. Finally, given that the average time that it takes a congregation to move from the end of one pastoral relationship to the start of another pastoral relationship is longer than 12 months, the church should be able to make provision for temporary pastor contracts that are longer than 12 months.

Advice – From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC)

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 226th General Assembly (2024) to approve POL-05. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the Assembly that POL-05 identifies a helpful improvement in the language by retaining a specific standardized time length for temporary pastoral relationships, as well as providing a practical time length in response to the current missional context.

The Assembly Committee on Polity approved Item POL-05, 34/0. The 226th General Assembly (2024) approved Item POL-05, 397/8.

For the full report on POL-05 go to
<https://www.pc-biz.org/search/3001129>

PMT PJC Comments on 24D

Our congregation went through a pastoral change a few years ago. The process was difficult when there were so few choices from a pool of available pastors. If we had a longer window to search and invite pastors, the task may have been easier. Churches that have gone through this process understand more than others the benefit of extending this period.

I totally agree with the period of temporary pastoral relationship being extended from twelve months to thirty-six months. Too often we are rushed to get a pastor in place rather than finding one that fits the calling of the church. The process established by Presbytery puts too much pressure on a congregation moving from losing a pastor to gaining a new one. Thus, an extended period for a temporary relationship is more justified.

This amendment will be of huge significance to those congregations plowing through a difficult process when looking to replace or obtain a preacher.

24-E — G-2.0504b

PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

G-2.0504b TEMPORARY PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS (POL-08 2)

The 226th General Assembly (2024) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-2.0504b in the Form of Government be amended as follows?

(Deleted text is in ~~strike through~~; added text is in *italics*.)

G-2.0504b Temporary Pastoral Relationships

Temporary pastoral relationships are approved by the presbytery and do not carry a formal call or installation. When a congregation does not have a pastor, or while the pastor is unable to perform her or his duties, the session, with the approval of presbytery, may obtain the services of a minister of the Word and Sacrament, candidate, or ruling elder in a temporary pastoral relationship. No formal call shall be issued and no formal installation shall take place.

Titles and terms of service for temporary relationships shall be determined by the presbytery. A person serving in a temporary pastoral relationship is invited for a specified period not to exceed twelve months in length, which is renewable with the approval of the presbytery. A minister of the Word and Sacrament employed in a temporary pastoral relationship is ordinarily not eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co- pastor, or associate pastor.

When the temporary pastoral relationship ends, no non-disclosure agreement shall be allowable.

A non-disclosure agreement, also known as a confidentiality agreement, is an agreement that outlines confidential material, knowledge, or information that is to remain confidential. Such an agreement binds the party or parties who have signed it and prevents them from discussing any information included in the contract with anyone not authorized by the agreement.

Background and Rationale

In the vows we take at ordination, we (ruling elders, teaching elders, and deacons) promise to serve one another, God, and God's church with love (W-4.0404). Non-disclosure agreements indicate the opposite has happened, and tend to engender speculation rather than truth-seeking. While there are specific instances when police or a court may forbid the sharing of information, those circumstances would not require any non-disclosure agreement for the parties specified so the

ruling can be honored without any agreement. Similarly, a proper order of a permanent judicial

commission (PJC) would also take precedence over any such agreement entered into by the parties, and this would in no way preclude a PJC from making its own determination.

As pertains to a church and a pastor, a non-disclosure agreement invites speculation that is typically a disservice to all parties. The dissolution of pastoral relationships is similar to divorce in that the absence of information often results in speculation of the circumstances that can be far worse than the actual circumstance and can brand a pastor with erroneous behavior or brand a congregation as damaging to pastors. Further, if the dissolution involved a traumatic event from inappropriate behavior either on the part of a pastor or members of the congregation, the non disclosure agreement would prevent the congregation from processing the collective trauma appropriately, so they would be unlikely to put it behind them. Dysfunction in the congregation as a result of unprocessed trauma typically carries over to negatively affect the next pastoral relationship.

Advice – From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC)

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 226th General Assembly (2024) to approve Item POL-08, with amendment.

The overture seeks to amend two sections of the Constitution, G-2.0901 and G-2.0504b, by prohibiting non-disclosure agreements at the dissolution of installed and temporary pastoral relationships. There have been numerous General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GA PJC) decisions against contractual non-disclosure agreements, also called “Confidentiality Statements” or “Confidentiality Agreements.” The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the General Assembly that Item POL 08 identifies a helpful improvement by making explicit in the *Book of Order* a principal prohibition against such contracts. (See GA PJC (1990, 202-1, Baumann v. Bellefield Church); GA PJC (2006, 217-1, Hope, et al. v. Pby of San Francisco); GA (1998, 165, 16.0199, Req. 98-4).)

Advice – From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 226th General Assembly (2024) **approve POL-08.**

The policy statement “[God’s Work in Our Hands](#)” (1995) says:

“The glory of God shines in God’s own first work of creation before it shines in any work of our hands. It can shine in every fragment of faithful human work done in response to the One in whose image we are created. As the Creator God continues to create, we can participate through our work. By working with integrity and responsibility toward all our neighbors and all of creation; by treating other workers and ourselves with respect, compassion, and gratitude and by seeking forgiveness from God for the imperfections in our work; we bring ourselves and our work to God as an offering. This we understand to be good work, pleasing to God.”

employees to end in acrimony. The practice of requiring non-disclosure agreements as a 15

condition of severance precludes the opportunity for the light of God’s glory to shine on every fragment of faithful human work, inhibits treating one another with respect and compassion, and prohibits individuals and congregations from authentically seeking forgiveness from God for the imperfections in our work.

The Assembly Committee on Polity amended the overture language following advice from the ACC and then approved Item POL-08 2, 40/0. The 226th General Assembly (2024) approved Item POL-08 2, 393/11.

For the full report on POL-08, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/search/3001169>

PMT PJC Comments on 24E

Both 24E and 24G define and explicitly prohibit the use of non-disclosure (NDA) or confidentiality agreements relative to temporary pastoral relationships (24E) and installed pastoral relationships (24G). According to Greg Goodwiller, General Assembly Advisory Committee on the Constitution, there have been numerous GA PJC decisions against NDA’s; and, that these amendments make the definition of the agreements and prohibition clear. Since I could not recall ever having seen an NDA included in a pastoral or temporary contract (when I served on COM I reviewed all such contracts) I confirmed with our Stated Clerk that these agreements, to her knowledge, have not been used. Since NDAs have not been used in the Presbytery and, going forward, will not be allowed, there will be no impact to Presbytery practices.

24-F — G-2.0610

PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY

G-2.0610 ACCOMODATIONS TO PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES (ORD-05)

The 226th General Assembly (2024) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-2.0610 in the Form of Government be amended as follows?

(Deleted text is in ~~strikethrough~~; added text is in *italics*.)

When a presbytery concludes there are good and sufficient reasons for accommodations to the particular circumstances of an individual seeking ordination, it may, by a three-fourths vote, waive any of the requirements for ordination in G-2.06, except for those of G-2.0607d. If a presbytery judges that there are good and sufficient reasons why a candidate should not be required to satisfy the requirements of G-2.0607d, it shall approve by three-fourths vote some alternate means by which to ascertain the readiness of the candidate for ministry in the areas covered by the standard ordination examinations. ~~A full account of the reasons for a~~ *The existence of any waiver or alternate means to ascertain readiness, with confidential details omitted, shall be included in the minutes of the presbytery and* communicated to the presbytery to which an inquirer or candidate may be transferred.

Background and Rationale

Editor's note: This rationale attached to the original item of business which was significantly amended by the General Assembly.

Those persons who respond to the call to serve as a minister of the Word and Sacrament in the church have embarked on a sacred journey, accompanied by their home congregation and presbytery of care. Along the way, the presbytery and the inquirer or candidate develop a relationship of accountability and trust that enables and empowers the whole church to be a part of this journey of faithful response to God's call. Placing a detailed record of a potentially traumatic encounter in the permanent records of the presbytery does little to further this relationship of accountability and trust and only provides an opportunity to increase and intensify harm.

Removing this requirement for this full account of the reasons for a waiver of examination requirements for those under the care of a presbytery clarifies that the detailed record of a person's preparation for ministry process is independent from the long-term story of that person's faithful service as a minister. This amendment simplifies the text of the Constitution by making it less of a manual of operations and gives voice to emerging understandings of learning differences, cultural competency, and neurodivergence that are increasingly common within and beyond the church. The proposed amendment allows for greater pastoral sensitivity by presbyteries in their care of those preparing for ministry and encourages presbyteries to trust one another in their work with those preparing for this sacred calling.

Advice – From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC)

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Editor's note: This Advice attached to the original item of business which was significantly amended by the General Assembly

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 226th General Assembly (2024) to approve item ORD-05 with amendment.

The overture seeks to allow “for greater pastoral sensitivity” when candidates for ministry require waivers from ordination requirements or an alternate means to assess readiness by removing the requirement of G-2.0610 that a “full account of the reasons” for the action(s) be recorded in presbytery minutes and reported “to the presbytery to which an inquirer or candidate may be transferred,” which the overture rationale characterizes as “placing a detailed record of a potentially traumatic encounter in the permanent records of the presbytery.” The overture would therefore strike the entire last sentence of G-2.0610.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes, first, that the Accommodations to Particular Circumstances described in G-2.0610 occur as part of the Final Assessment and Negotiation for Service outlined in G-2.0607, resulting in a presbytery certifying a candidate ready for examination by a presbytery. In so certifying a candidate, a presbytery has an ethical duty to inform the presbytery receiving the candidate of any waiver granted, or alternative form of assessment utilized in granting that certification of those facts.

Additionally, since a presbytery is required to approve any such accommodations by a three-fourths vote, a record of that action will necessarily be recorded in the presbytery’s minutes, and there is no need for G-2.0610 to specifically so require.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution therefore concludes that the desired outcome of the overture could be achieved by striking only the part of the final sentence that refers to the contents of presbytery minutes as follows:

When a presbytery concludes there are good and sufficient reasons for accommodations to the particular circumstances of an individual seeking ordination, it may, by a three-fourths vote, waive any of the requirements for ordination in G-2.06, except for those of G-2.0607d. If a presbytery judges that there are good and sufficient reasons why a candidate should not be required to satisfy the requirements of G-2.0607d, it shall approve by three-fourths vote some alternate means by which to ascertain the readiness of the candidate for ministry in the areas covered by the standard ordination examinations. ~~A full account of the reasons for a~~ Any waiver or alternate means to ascertain readiness shall be included in the minutes of the presbytery and communicated to the presbytery to which an inquirer or candidate may be transferred.

The Assembly Committee on Ordination amended the overture language following advice from the ACC and then approved Item ORD-05, 37/6.

The 226th General Assembly (2024) approved Item ORD 05 by consensus.

For the full report on ORD-05, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/search/3001125>

PMT PJC Comments on 24F

This amendment allows for CPMs (including ours) to exercise great pastoral sensitivity during the examination of a candidate's preparedness for ministry. This sensitivity should allow for more open communication and greater collaboration in developing assessments that truly discern someone's readiness for the work of ministry.

24-G — 2.0901

DISSOLUTION OF PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

G-2.0901 CONGREGATIONAL MEETING (POL-08 1)

The 226th General Assembly (2024) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-2.0901 in the Form of Government be amended as follows?

(Deleted text is in ~~strike~~through; added text is in *italics*.)

An installed pastoral relationship may be dissolved only by the presbytery. Whether the minister of the Word and Sacrament, the congregation, or the presbytery initiates proceedings for dissolution of the relationship, there shall always be a meeting of the congregation to consider the matter and to consent, or decline to consent, to dissolution. *No non-disclosure agreement shall be allowable.*

A non-disclosure agreement, also known as a confidentiality agreement, is an agreement that outlines confidential material, knowledge, or information that is to remain confidential. Such an agreement binds the party or parties who have signed it and prevents them from discussing any information included in the contract with anyone not authorized by the agreement.

Background and Rationale

In the vows we take at ordination, we (ruling elders, teaching elders, and deacons) promise to serve one another, God, and God's church with love (W-4.0404). Non-disclosure agreements indicate the opposite has happened, and tend to engender speculation rather than truth-seeking. While there are specific instances when police or a court may forbid the sharing of information, those circumstances would not require any non-disclosure agreement for the parties specified so the ruling can be honored without any agreement. Similarly, a proper order of a permanent judicial commission (PJC) would also take precedence over any such agreement entered into by the parties, and this would in no way preclude a PJC from making its own determination.

As pertains to a church and a pastor, a non-disclosure agreement invites speculation that is typically a disservice to all parties. The dissolution of pastoral relationships is similar to divorce in that the absence of information often results in speculation of the circumstances that can be far worse than the actual circumstance and can brand a pastor with erroneous behavior or brand a congregation as damaging to pastors. Further, if the dissolution involved a traumatic event from inappropriate behavior either on the part of a pastor or members of the congregation, the non-disclosure agreement would prevent the congregation from processing the collective trauma appropriately, so they would be unlikely to put it behind them. Dysfunction in the congregation as a result of unprocessed trauma typically carries over to negatively affect the next pastoral

relationship.

Advice – From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC)

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 226th General Assembly (2024) to approve Item POL-08, with amendment.

The overture seeks to amend two sections of the Constitution, G-2.0901 and G-2.0504b, by prohibiting non-disclosure agreements at the dissolution of installed and temporary pastoral relationships. There have been numerous General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GA PJC) decisions against contractual non-disclosure agreements, also called “Confidentiality Statements” or “Confidentiality Agreements.” The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the General Assembly that Item POL-08 identifies a helpful improvement by making explicit in the *Book of Order* a principal prohibition against such contracts. (See GA PJC (1990, 202-1, Baumann v. Bellefield Church); GA PJC (2006, 217-1, Hope, et al. v. Pby of San Francisco); GA (1998, 165, 16.0199, Req. 98-4).)

Advice – From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 226th General Assembly (2024) approve POL-08.

In the policy statement “[God’s Work in Our Hands](#)” (1995), it is stated:

“The glory of God shines in God’s own first work of creation before it shines in any work of our hands. It can shine in every fragment of faithful human work done in response to the One in whose image we are created. As the Creator God continues to create, we can participate through our work. By working with integrity and responsibility toward all our neighbors and all of creation; by treating other workers and ourselves with respect, compassion, and gratitude and by seeking forgiveness from God for the imperfections in our work; we bring ourselves and our work to God as an offering. This we understand to be good work, pleasing to God.”

“The glory of God shines in God’s own first work of creation before it shines in any work of our hands. It can shine in every fragment of faithful human work done in response to the One in whose image we are created. As the Creator God continues to create, we can participate through our work. By working with integrity and responsibility toward all our neighbors and all of creation; by treating other workers and ourselves with respect, compassion, and gratitude and by seeking forgiveness from God for the imperfections in our work; we bring ourselves and our work to God as an offering. This we understand to be good work, pleasing to God.”

It is not infrequent for calls between congregations and ministers, educators, and other church employees to end in acrimony. The practice of requiring non-disclosure agreements as a condition

of severance precludes the opportunity for the light of God's glory to shine on every fragment of

faithful human work, inhibits treating one another with respect and compassion, and prohibits individuals and congregations from authentically seeking forgiveness from God for the imperfections in our work.

The Assembly Committee on Polity amended the overture language following advice from the ACC and then approved Item POL-08 1, 40/0. The 226th General Assembly (2024) approved Item POL-08 1, 393/11.

For the full report on POL-08, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/search/3001169>

PMT PJC Comments on 24G

Both 24E and 24G define and explicitly prohibit the use of non-disclosure (NDA) or confidentiality agreements relative to temporary pastoral relationships (24E) and installed pastoral relationships (24G). According to Greg Goodwiller, General Assembly Advisory Committee on the Constitution, there have been numerous GA PJC decisions against NDA's; and, that these amendments make the definition of the agreements and prohibition clear. Since I could not recall ever having seen an NDA included in a pastoral or temporary contract (when I served on COM I reviewed all such contracts) I confirmed with our Stated Clerk that these agreements, to her knowledge, have not been used. Since NDAs have not been used in the Presbytery and, going forward, will not be allowed, there will be no impact to Presbytery practices.

24-H — G-3.0106

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF COUNCILS

G-3.0106 ADMINISTRATION OF MISSION (POL-11)

The 226th General Assembly (2024) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes: (Deleted text is in ~~strike through~~; added text is in *italics*.)

Shall the fourth paragraph of G-3.0106 be amended as follows:

All councils shall adopt and implement the following policies: a sexual misconduct policy, a harassment policy, a child, ~~and~~ youth, *and adults with vulnerabilities* protection policy, and an antiracism policy. Each council's policy shall include requirements for boundary training which includes the topic of sexual misconduct, and child sexual abuse prevention training for its members at least every thirty-six months.

Background and Rationale

This amendment builds upon the important work carried out by previous assemblies to provide for institutional protections for at-risk populations within our congregations and councils. Specifically, this amendment would create a constitutional mandate for all councils of the church to include vulnerable adults in our protection policies. The amended language fosters a deeper sense of accountability. By explicitly mentioning "vulnerable adults," we acknowledge our responsibility to protect those who may be at risk due to various factors. This enhancement to the policy framework demonstrates our dedication to a comprehensive approach in upholding the highest standards of ethical conduct. Inclusion is a key value of our faith community. By extending the protection of policies to vulnerable adults, we reaffirm our commitment to inclusivity, compassion, and justice. This addition reflects our core values and emphasizes our mission to create a community that embraces and protects every member.

Advice – From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC)

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 226th General Assembly (2024) to approve item POL-11.

Item POL-11 seeks to amend G-3.0106 by expanding the list of required protection policies to include protection for vulnerable adults. The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises that the Constitution is not intended to serve as a Manual of Operations. Generally, the Advisory Committee on the Constitution would advocate against the creation or expansion of lists. However, because a list is deemed exhaustive unless it states otherwise, an omission is regarded as exclusionary, not permissive. Therefore, adding "vulnerable adults" to the list of those to be

protected furthers the goal of G-3.0106 to provide protection to those in need.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution notes, however, that the definition of “vulnerable adult” varies by legal jurisdiction. It will be necessary for councils to consult their local legal requirements in developing their policies.

Advice and Counsel – From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 226th General Assembly (2024) approve POL-11 with amendment. On this overture, ACSWP recommends the following amendment:

... “All councils shall adopt and implement the following policies: a sexual misconduct policy, a harassment policy, a child[,] [and] youth[, and adults lacking mental capacity vulnerable adult] protection policy, and an antiracism policy...”

This language is consistent with other references in the *Book of Order*.

The Assembly Committee on Polity amended the original recommendation then approved Item POL-11, 37/1. The 226th General Assembly (2024) approved Item POL-11, 403/1.

For the full report on POL 11, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/search/3001131>

PMT PJC Comments on 24H

We have always provided protection for children and the youth of the congregations. With congregations aging rather quickly, it is imperative that we include vulnerable adults. Many of our elderly adults have developed mental incapacities as well as physical ones. It is not difficult to understand the need for their protection. Autistic adults, adults with Alzheimer, and physical disabilities must be shown inclusion and compassion from the church. Too often, the church may be the only place they can receive inclusivity, compassion and justice.

Too often we hear that congregational services in America are the most segregated places in the country from 10:00-12:00. We need to be more inviting and conscious of inviting minorities into the church. We wear rose colored glasses if we think congregations across our Presbytery are overly inviting to anyone who “doesn’t look like us or act like us.” Rules are easily written, but harder to follow on breaking social norms. The church must be anti racist in its actions, invitations and acceptance of God’s children.

This amendment will, in no way, hinder the ability of the Middle TN Presbytery to function on the behalf of all Presbyterian congregations in this region.

24-I — G-3.0302d

THE PRESBYTERY

G-3.0302d RELATIONSHIPS WITH SYNOD AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY (GAP-05)

The 226th General Assembly (2024) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-3.0302 in the Form of Government be amended as follows?

(Deleted text is in ~~strike through~~; added text is in *italics*.)

G-3.0302 Relations with Synod and General Assembly

d. proposing to synod such measures as may be of common concern to the mission of the church, ~~and/or~~ proposing to General Assembly overtures that ~~have received a concurrence from at least one other presbytery, and/or~~ *concurring with proposed overtures, and*

Background and Rationale

The requirement for every overture from a presbytery to have at least one concurrence was designed to ensure that the business coming before the General Assembly was supported by at least two presbyteries. In practice, this requirement has created confusion within the deadlines for the submission of business, a flurry of activity among presbyteries seeking to have at least one concurrence, and the rise of at least one presbytery consistently voting to concur with all of the overtures. In short, this requirement has created more difficulties while not solving the stated problem.

In addition, we seek in our polity and in our constitution to honor voices from the margins of the church and society, recognizing that the call to justice and faithfulness is often a difficult call to hear from within the center. The requirement for a concurrence can create a barrier that further marginalizes the very voices we need to hear. By eliminating the need for a concurrence, while allowing for that practice to continue as a way of showing broad support, we seek to remove an unnecessary barrier to the work of the General Assembly.

Advice – From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC)

The request seeks to amend section G-3.0302d regarding the delineated responsibilities of a presbytery in maintaining regular and continuing relationships with the General Assembly as it relates to proposing overtures to the General Assembly. The proposed amendment would overturn the 2012 amendment to the Constitution which requires proposed overtures to the General Assembly to receive concurrence from at least one other presbytery (see 220th General Assembly Minutes, 2012, 72-72, 241, Item 04-01, Rec. ~~48 of 100~~ 12 amendment on concurrences, as

proposed by the Committee to Review Biennial Assemblies and stated in its report, was to “improve collaboration among presbyteries, assure that the business before it is both of common concern to the mission of the church (G-3.0302(d)) and about key issues facing the church and society, and to encourage well-considered, significant overtures and resolutions of church-wide significance.”

The rationale for this proposed amendment from the General Assembly’s Standing Committee on Standing Rules states that the concurrence requirement:

has created confusion within the deadlines for the submission of business, a flurry of activity among presbyteries seeking to have at least one concurrence, and the rise of at least one presbytery consistently voting to concur with all of the overtures. In short, this requirement has created more difficulties while not solving the stated problem.The requirement for a concurrence can create a barrier that further marginalizes the very voices we need to hear. By eliminating the need for a concurrence, while allowing for that practice to continue as a way of showing broad support, we seek to remove an unnecessary barrier to the work of the General Assembly.

Amendments to the Constitution are intended to be part of the process of “the church reformed, always to be reforming.” (G-6.01). As such, a process for amendment that is not serving its intended purpose, is creating undue burdens on presbyters and mid council staff, and, indeed, may be presenting barriers to such reformation should be eliminated. While the amendment would remove the requirement for a concurrence, it still permits concurrences to show support.

The Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures approved Item GAP-05, 36/0. The 226th General Assembly (2024) approved Item GAP-05, 390/14.

For the full report on GAP-05, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/search/3001247>

PMT PJC Comments on 24I

This amendment makes the proposal of constitutional amendments easier by taking the burden of the solicitation of a concurrence from another presbytery. This does not diminish the need and expectation of collaboration. It simply amplifies the voice of a single presbytery in proposing ideas for the benefit of the larger Church.

24-J — G-3.0501

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

G-3.0501 COMPOSITION AND RESPONSIBILITY (GAP-04)

The 226th General Assembly (2024) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-3.0501 Composition and Responsibilities be amended as follows:

(Deleted text is in ~~strike through~~; added text is in *italics*.)

The General Assembly is the council of the whole church, and it is representative of the unity of the synods, presbyteries, sessions, and congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It shall consist of equal numbers of ruling elders and ministers of the Word and Sacrament elected by the presbyteries and reflective of the diversity within their bounds (F 1.0403 and G-3.0103), to serve as commissioners according to the following proportions:

~~8,000~~ *6,000* members or less: 1 ruling elder and 1 minister of the Word and Sacrament
~~8,001–16,000~~ *6,001–12,000*: 2 ruling elders and 2 ministers of the Word and Sacrament
~~16,001–24,000~~ *12,001–19,000*: 3 ruling elders and 3 ministers of the Word and Sacrament
~~24,001–32,000~~ *19,001* or more: 4 ruling elders and 4 ministers of the Word and Sacrament
~~32,001–40,000~~: 5 ruling elders and 5 ministers of the Word and Sacrament
~~40,001–48,000~~: 6 ruling elders and 6 ministers of the Word and Sacrament
~~48,001 or more~~: 7 ruling elders and 7 ministers of the Word and Sacrament

Background and Rationale

Placing the proportions for determining the number of commissioners in the *Book of Order* creates a system that doesn't allow for flexibility and creates an exceptionally high threshold for change. The current wording is already out of date, with no presbytery fitting into the largest two categories and more presbyteries only being allocated one ruling elder and one teaching elder. This then causes a smaller and smaller number of commissioners to be elected, reducing the number of people who gather for the work of the General Assembly.

Advice – From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC)

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised that the 226th General Assembly (2024) disapprove the original recommendation of Item GAP-04. The committee amended the original recommendation.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution acknowledges that the current system for determining the number of commissioners to the General Assembly is out of sync with the realities of shrinking presbytery membership and declining numbers of presbyteries.

The Assembly Committee on General Assembly Procedures amended the original recommendation significantly then approved Item GAP-04 by consensus. The 226th General Assembly (2024) approved Item GAP-04, 400/12.

For the full report on GAP-04, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/search/3001246>

PMT PJC Comments on 24J

Summary: This amendment resets the numerical categories of members of the presbyteries that will determine how many ruling elders and ministers of the Word who will be assigned to the General Assembly from each presbytery.

The numbers change from the current lowest/1st category of 8,000 or fewer members per Presbytery to a new beginning category of 6,000 members or less in their presbytery with 1 ruling elder and 1 minister of the Word to be assigned to the General Assembly; a new 2nd category of Presbytery is set at 6,001 to 12,000 members with 2 ruling elders and 2 ministers of the Word; a new 3rd category of 12,001 up to 19,000 with 3 ruling elders and 3 ministers of the Word and, finally, the amendment sets a top tier or 19,001 or more with a maximum of 4 ruling elders and 4 ministers of the Word.

Effect on Presbytery: The effect on Presbytery and its representation at General Assembly will be determined by the number of members it has.

24-K — D-7.0501

INVESTIGATION

D-7.0501 REFERRAL TO INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE (POL-02)

The 226th General Assembly (2024) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall D-7.0501 Referral to Investigating Committee be amended as follows: (Added text is in *italics*.)

When a clerk of session or the stated clerk of a presbytery receives an allegation, without undertaking further inquiry, that clerk shall then report to the council only that an offense has been alleged without naming the *person* accused or the nature of the alleged offense and *shall* refer the statement of allegation promptly to an investigating committee, which shall conduct an inquiry as defined below. *Pursuant to G-4.0302, the clerk shall report to civil legal authorities any knowledge of harm, or risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or adult lacking mental capacity.* The clerk of session or stated clerk shall also inform the accuser of the disciplinary process and their rights and responsibilities in the process.

Background and Rationale

Editor's note: The original rationale was written for language which was significantly amended by the General Assembly. This edited rationale is limited to those sections of the rationale which apply to the approved proposed amendments.

The context for D-7.0501 is the procedure by which submission of a formal accusation of a disciplinary offense prompts the council of a church or presbytery to form an investigating committee and commence the disciplinary process of the *Book of Order*.

Disclosing relevant information as our primary moral obligation follows in G-4.0302, the Mandatory Reporting provision. Here is the explicit mandate to take positive action to protect vulnerable people by disclosing information to authorities. It reiterates the primary moral value which prioritizes protecting people at risk. G-4.0302 makes clear the substantive basis for disclosing: "...knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity..." Knowledge is essential to being able to act preventively.

The second part of the moral and polity framework is our obligation which is implicit in Chapter

7 of the Book of Order Disciplinary Process. D-7.0201a. and D-7.1501b. both address accountability in circumstances when a person “knew, or reasonably should have known of the reasonable risk of sexual abuse of another... [and] failed to take reasonable steps to minimize the risk.” The moral commitment in Chapter 7 is that we are responsible for recognizing a risk and that once we know, we are obligated to act to reduce the possibility of harm.

Advice—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC)

Editor’s note: The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advised that the 226th General Assembly (2024) disapprove the original recommendation of Item POL-02. The committee amended the original recommendation. This edited advice is limited to those sections of the advice which apply to the approved proposed amendments.

The *Book of Order* includes provisions designed to protect the vulnerable, such as requirements for administrative leave or other restrictions when there has been an allegation of sexual abuse (D-7.09), and requirements for sexual misconduct and child and youth protection policies (G-3.0106). The confidentiality provisions for the exercise of pastoral care state explicitly that confidentiality is not to be used to keep secret allegations of abuse and mandate reporting to ecclesiastical and civil authorities, especially in a situation where an individual “reasonably believes that there is a risk of future physical harm or abuse” (G-4.0302).

The Assembly Committee on Polity amended the original Recommendation significantly then approved Item POL-02, 37/0.

The 226th General Assembly (2024) approved Item POL-02, 401/4.

For the full report on POL-02, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/search/3001123>

PMT PJC Comments on 24K

This amendment adds a requirement that a clerk of session or the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery “promptly” report to "civil legal authorities" an allegation involving “any knowledge of harm, or risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or adult lacking mental capacity,” The amendment also adds a requirement that the accuser be informed of the disciplinary process and their rights and responsibilities in the process.

The existing language mandates that the clerk initiate a disciplinary process but did not mandate such notification occur until the matter had been resolved.

24-L — D-7.0902b

ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

D-7.0902b ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE (POL-04)

The 226th General Assembly (2024) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall D-7.0902B Administrative Leave be amended as follows:

(Added text is in *italics*.)

Regardless of the employment status of the minister of the Word and Sacrament, the members designated in accordance with D-3.0102, shall determine as quickly as possible, after receiving the written allegations and providing the accused an opportunity to be heard, whether the risk to a congregation and/or to other potential victims of abuse requires *paid* administrative leave or other restrictions upon the minister’s service when considered in light of the nature and probable truth of the allegations. Such *paid* administrative leave or restrictions will continue until either the matter is resolved in one of the ways prescribed in the disciplinary process or until the leave or restrictions are altered or removed by members of the commission. *The cost shall be borne by the employing entity whenever possible or be shared by the presbytery as necessary.*

Background and Rationale

This amendment would preserve the due process rights of all ministers of the Word and Sacrament accused of sexual misconduct without diminishing the protections afforded to the alleged or potential victims of that misconduct.

Since the imposition of administrative leave was first authorized on July 3, 2005, until the adoption of Church Discipline on July 9, 2023, all ministers and presbyteries throughout the denomination were subject to a single, standard process when allegations of sexual misconduct were received. That process provided presbyteries the necessary mechanism for imposing administrative leave while requiring that the leave be paid.

The imprecision and ambiguity of the current language in D-7.0902 fails to provide a standard process applicable throughout the denomination. The text of D-7.0902 fails to define the administrative leave as either paid or unpaid. The conspicuous omission or deletion of “paid administrative leave” from the text of D-10.0106 in the Church Discipline, and the substitution of simply “administrative leave” in D-7.0902, lead to at least two plausible interpretations: first, that all administrative leave is to be unpaid, and second, that each presbytery can set its own policy as to whether the leave is to be paid or unpaid. Such imprecision and ambiguity do not provide an acceptable constitutional standard to be applied equally to all ministers of the Word and Sacrament.

I. Unpaid Administrative Leave is Improper. If the drafters' intent was that all administrative

leave is to be unpaid, that result unfairly and improperly deprives ministers of the Word and Sacrament of vital due process protections.

A. Unpaid Leave Undercuts the Presumption of Innocence. The imposition of unpaid administrative leave within days of receipt of allegations, before even an investigative committee has been appointed, is completely inconsistent with and dramatically undercuts the presumption of innocence set forth in D-8.0201.c. Not only is a minister stripped of all ecclesiastical authority, but the presbytery immediately deprives the minister of any right to compensation as set forth in the terms of call to which the minister and congregation have agreed and which the presbytery approved.

B. Diminished Standard of Proof. The current language in D-7.0902.b. allows the forfeiture of all compensation based upon a demonstrably lower standard of proof than that required for an ultimate finding of guilt. D-7.0902.b. allows the imposition of administrative leave based on the “probable truth of the allegations.” D-8.0902 allows a finding of guilt only “when a comparison and consideration of all the evidence compels an abiding conviction that the material facts necessary to prove the charge are true.” Relying on phraseology from the Rules of Discipline, those standards of proof would have been probable cause and beyond reasonable doubt. Regardless of the phraseology incorporated into Church Discipline, the quantum of proof required under D-7.0902.b. is dramatically less than that in D-8.0902.

C. Pretrial Forfeiture of Compensation is Punitive. “[T]he exercise of church discipline is one for building up the body of Christ, not for destroying it, for redeeming, *not for punishing.*” D 1.01 (Emphasis added). The forfeiture of all compensation within days of receipt of allegations, before an investigation or trial, is tantamount to punishment before an adjudication of guilt and is contrary to the constitutional objectives.

Advice – From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC)

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 226th General Assembly (2024) to approve Item POL-04.

Section D-7.0902 provides a process for determining whether administrative leave should be required when an allegation of sexual abuse has been received against a minister of the Word and Sacrament. When the Rules of Discipline were updated in 2022, Section D-7.0902 of Church Discipline replaced D-10.0106. The former D.10.0106 expressly required administrative leave to be “paid.” The word “paid” is missing from the new D-7.0902. Section D-7.0902 is equally silent on whether administrative leave should be unpaid. It is simply silent.

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution agrees with the rationale offered in support of reinserting the requirement that administrative leave be paid and believes that the omission of the word “paid” was an oversight. POL-04 also inserts clarifying language, “The cost shall be borne by the employing entity whenever possible or be shared by the presbytery as necessary.” The Advisory Committee on the Constitution has no objection to the clarifying language and believes it could be helpful to the church.

The Assembly Committee on Polity approved Item POL-04, 38/0. The 226th General Assembly (2024) approved Item POL-04, 403/9.

For the full report on POL-04, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/search/3001127>

PMT PJC Comments on 24L

Summary: The current rule states that regardless of the employment status of the minister, he/she shall be placed on administrative leave if it is determined that the risk to the congregation or to other victims or potential victims of abuse requires it. It does not specify whether this administrative leave of the minister is to be paid or unpaid.

The amendment would clarify this by requiring the administrative leave to be paid until the matter is resolved, and that the cost is to be borne by the employing entity and possibly shared by the presbytery, if necessary.

This preserves due process for the accused while the investigation and any proceedings occur and clarifies the status of the accused and the accused's right to compensation while the matter is resolved.

Effect on Presbytery: It will establish consistent treatment of persons who may have been alleged to have committed acts which could lead to suspension or dismissal.

This is appropriate to protect due process for the accused and the accused's need for compensation during the process before any final adjudication, and, in principle, I would recommend its adoption.

However, the requirement to pay the minister in the period between the allegation and the final adjudication could be a burden on any church, but particularly on small churches in the Presbytery. A church without an interim pastor(s) is looking at possible loss of attendance and the income that provides. It would be necessary to have visiting/Interim pastors to maintain the church's worship and educational programs and, hopefully, maintain a relatively normal weekly attendance and income.

Also, some specific provision for the pastor's compensation needs to be considered to determine if the required interim compensation can be made with the assistance of Presbytery and/or other churches in the Presbytery with this to be funded, perhaps, by the churches out of the annual amounts pledged to Presbytery.

24-M Episcopal-Presbyterian Agreement on Local Sharing of Ministries

THE WAY FORWARD

In our current agreement, our two churches agreed “that authorized ministers of our churches may, subject to the regulations of the churches and within the limits of their competence, carry out the tasks of their own office in congregations of the other churches when requested and approved by the diocesan bishop and local presbytery.” Furthermore, a conditional was established on this point of agreement that “because we do not yet have reconciliation and full interchangeability of ordained ministries, all authorization for these special opportunities must conform to the *Book of Common Worship* and the *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the *Book of Common Prayer* and the *Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church*.”

Our current agreement also calls the two denominations to “encourage diocesan bishops and presbyteries to provide a regular occasion for planning, discussing, resourcing for missional, educational and liturgical life together. In addition, to explore possibilities for new church development and redevelopment together,” as well as provide a process to support and implement the above recommendations (guidelines).

Our two churches have agreed to be in dialogue for the specific purpose of considering the question of the mutual recognition of ordained ministries, as a step towards the unity that is Christ’s will for his Church. Our current agreement enabled The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in June of 2017 to formally and publicly participate in the

Churches Uniting in Christ recognition of ordered ministry. This public proclamation underscores and casts away possible barriers of our current agreement to move forward in missional partnership.

On the basis of converging but not yet wholly compatible understandings of the ordained ministry, and sufficient agreement in faith and ministry, together with a marked growing together of our two churches over recent decades, this group proposes that our churches deepen our current relationship.

Sharing in ecumenical ministry

We agree with the World Council of Churches’ 2013 *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* in regard to ordered ministry, there is no single pattern of ministry in the New Testament, though all churches would look to Scripture in seeking to follow the will of the Lord concerning how ordained ministry is to be understood, ordered and exercised. At times, the Spirit has guided the Church to adapt its ministries to contextual needs (cf. Acts 6:1-6). Various forms of ministry have been blessed with the gifts of the Spirit. Early writers, such as Ignatius of Antioch, insisted upon the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter and deacon.

This pattern of three related ministries can be seen to have roots in the New Testament; eventually it became the generally accepted pattern and is still considered normative by many churches today... Among the several means for maintaining the Church's apostolicity, such as the scriptural canon, dogma and liturgical order, ordained ministry has played an important role. Succession in ministry is meant to serve the apostolic continuity of the Church.¹

Both The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) reflect the threefold ordered ministries expressed by Ignatius of Antioch (bishop, presbyter and deacon), however in our polities express them differently or "locally adapted" and both denominations hold, in the broad ecumenical sense, apostolic succession.² Both The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have recognized the gift of *episkopé*, the ministry of oversight, locally adapted, as expressed in the 2017 Churches Uniting in Christ mutual recognition or ordered ministry.

Specifically, the ecumenical dialogue between The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in round two and in this round three, recognize that diocese bishops and presbytery moderators have similar constituted ecclesial authority and expression of the gift of *episkopé* as it relates to presiding at ordination, as well as installing or instituting a presbyter to a pastoral relationship.

Guided by the World Council of Churches' 1982 foundational paper, *Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry*, Chapter VI, as well as the 2013 *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (Faith and Order Paper No. 214), presbyteries and dioceses are strongly encouraged to invite presbytery moderators and diocese bishops to participate in each other's celebrations of ministry, not only ordinations but also installations and institutions, and bishops and moderators share an ecumenical blessing. It is also strongly encouraged in their ordination of presbyters that each also includes bishops from other denominations with whom each church shares recognition of mutual ministry (i.e. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Northern Province and the Southern Province of the Moravian Church in America). Finally, we fervently pray that when a presbytery moderator is installed, an Episcopal bishop or their designee be present, and

¹ *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (Faith and Order Paper No. 214) (Geneva: WCC, 2013), 26. Cf. Ignatius of Antioch's Letter to the Magnesians 6 and 13; Letter to the Trallians 7; Letter to the Philadelphians 4; Letter to the Smyrnaeans 8.

² See *The Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (Philadelphia: PCUSA, 1789), "bishop" and "pastor" are interchangeable, and it is the pastor, as moderator of the session, that oversees as a member of the presbytery and presides at the ordination of elders and deacons. Cf "The Successor to Peter: A Paper for Discussion from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)", Unilateral Discussion PC(USA) and Vatican. Louisville, Kentucky, December 6-7, 2000. Endnote 5, "It may be of some interest that prior to the 1983 reunion of the northern and southern branches of Presbyterianism, the Book of Order of the northern branch, the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., offered several titles for ministers of Word and Sacrament, among them the title 'bishop.' If one looks, say, at the roll calls in the minutes of the Presbytery of Philadelphia around the middle of the nineteenth century one will read 'The following bishops were in attendance' The concept was that every installed pastor of a congregation is bishop of a congregationally constituted diocese. He or she is surrounded by presbyters or 'elders' and assisted by 'deacons.'" Here, on a small scale, as a parochial diocese, Presbyterians have the historic threefold ministry expressed by Ignatius.

when an Episcopal bishop is consecrated, a Presbyterian moderator or their designee be present, and both be invited in those moments of celebration to share an ecumenical blessing.

Limited orderly exchange of ministers

Within the current agreement (2008-2009), and without exceeding the discretion of The Episcopal Church bishops and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) presbyteries, there shall be provision for the following exchange of ordered ministers between our churches:

- the acceptance of Episcopal presbyters (those ordained and referred to as *priests*) in Presbyterian placements and in ecumenical ministries where the Presbyterian Church has the right of appointment;
- the acceptance of Presbyterian Church presbyters (specifically those ordained and consecrated to the ministry of the Word, Sacrament, and teaching, referred to as *ministers of Word and Sacrament* or *teaching elders*) in Episcopal appointments such as ecumenical ministries and cooperating parishes where the Episcopal Church has the right of appointment.
- This agreement does not enable ordained ruling elders and commissioned pastors (also known as commissioned ruling elders) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), nor deacons of The Episcopal Church or Presbyterian Church (U.S.A), to be considered.

THE GUIDELINES FOR LIMITED ORDERLY EXCHANGE OF MINISTERS

For missional purposes and in consultation between the diocesan bishop and local presbytery, a presbyter may be licensed (permitted) by the appropriate Ecclesiastical Authority to serve under the following guidelines.

The limited orderly exchange process begins with the identification of a ministry needed by the appropriate Ecclesiastical Authority of the inviting body and the identification of a presbyter from the sending body who may serve in that ministry setting.

The Ecclesiastical Authority of the inviting body initiates the process of the limited orderly exchange between the placement or ecumenical ministry to be served and the presbyter. The presbyter does not initiate the process of exchange.

The inviting body shall consult with the appropriate Ecclesiastical Authority of the presbyter to determine the suitability of the potential service and to receive the concurrence of the sending body. The presbyter remains accountable to the sending church for the continuation of ministerial status.

Both The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) agree that experience in and knowledge of one's own tradition is seen as necessary before serving in a different tradition. Therefore, the limited orderly exchange of minister's opportunities are only open to presbyters who have been ordained for at least three years and active within the ministry of their denomination.

Presbyters serving in a limited orderly exchange position shall be temporary under this agreement. The service of presbyters should ordinarily be for a two- to four-year period, which may be renewed. Should a presbyter of one church intend to serve permanently in another church then the process of the transfer or reception of ministerial status should be followed according to the rules of the receiving Church.

Should a disciplinary process be necessary, the presbyter remains under the jurisdiction of the sending body, but the inviting body may be asked to participate as necessary.

Pension and medical coverage is through the church of ecclesiastical membership.

Functions

When a presbyter is licensed or commissioned by the appropriate Ecclesiastical Authority, the presbyter is authorized to:

- to exercise pastoral or administrative responsibility;
- lead public worship as a presbyter under the direction of diocesan bishop or presbytery;
- preach the Gospel;
- celebrate and administer the sacraments within the guidelines specified below;
- prepare persons for Baptism, Confirmation, Reception, and the Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows, and shall function under the direction of diocesan bishop or presbytery;
- and present the good news of Jesus Christ in such a way that people are led to receive Christ as Savior and follow Christ as Lord in the fellowship of the Church, assisting with the diocese or presbytery's ministry of evangelism partnership.

While a presbyter serves a particular placement or ecumenical setting because we do not yet have reconciliation and full interchangeability of ordained ministries, as stated in the current agreement, all authorization for these special opportunities must conform to the Book of Common Worship and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the Book of Common Prayer and the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church. What this means explicitly is that:

- Presbyterian presbyters will use the authorized or commended worship resources of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) unless authorized by the diocesan bishop to use Episcopal worship resources (with the exception of Eucharist prayers);
- Episcopal priests will use the authorized or commended worship resources of The Episcopal Church unless authorized by the presbytery to use Presbyterian worship resources;
- Priests and presbyters are bound to the Eucharist liturgies of their respective prayer books and denominational resources when they preside;
- Both priests and presbyters may use authorized or commended worship resources of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in which both churches are in full communion, including the Eucharist liturgies, with the authorization of the "inviting" Ecclesiastical Authority.

Training, Examination, and Oversight

A presbyter who serves under the terms of this Agreement on Limited Orderly Exchange of Ministers shall receive such preparation and instruction, or formation, as determined by the diocesan bishop or presbytery to be appropriate to the particular placement or ecumenical setting and length of time shall be determined by the Ecclesiastical Authority's own rule.

The presbyter shall be examined by the appropriate Ecclesiastical Authority as to personal faith, motives for seeking to serve, and the areas of instruction determined by diocesan or presbytery.

The presbyter authorized under the terms of this Agreement shall work under the supervision of the diocesan bishop or presbytery. The diocesan bishop or presbytery may at any time withdraw this authorization for reasons it deems good and sufficient. A presbyter shall be assigned as a mentor and local supervisor.

An authorization may be for no more than four years, and no less than two. Within an appropriate time before the expiration of the commission, the presbyter shall review the covenant relationship with the diocesan bishop and presbytery. The commission may be renewed with the consent of all interested parties (i.e. diocesan bishop and presbytery, presbyter, authorized representative(s) of a particular placement or ecumenical ministry).

A presbyter who has been authorized and later ceases to serve in the specified ministry may continue to be listed as available to serve but is not authorized to perform the functions specified above until commission is renewed in order to serve in placement or ecumenical setting by the appropriate Ecclesiastical Authority.

Celebration of an Ecumenical Ministry

When the diocesan bishop or presbytery is satisfied with the qualifications of a presbyter to serve a particular placement or ecumenical ministry providing the services described above, it shall commission and institute/install the presbyter to service as designated by the diocesan bishop or presbytery while also abiding by the following:

Both diocese and presbytery will be invited to the Service.

The inviting diocesan bishop or presbytery moderator shall, at the time of such celebration, read this preface to the Service:

The Ecclesiastical Authority of this Diocese/Presbytery is satisfied that A.B. accepts the Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship of this Church and desires to serve this Church in full accord to [the Episcopal Presbyterian Agreement]. We are about to confer upon A.B. the grace and authority of Holy Orders/ordered ministry as this Church has received them and requires them for the exercise of the ministry of a presbyter.

The certificates of the commission shall contain the words:

Acknowledging the ministry which A.B. has already received and hereby adding to that commission the grace and authority of Holy Orders/ordered ministry as understood and required by this Church for the exercise of the ministry of a presbyter.

Following the rites of each church for instituting or installation, the presenters present the presbyter saying

In baptism, N. was clothed with Christ. N. was ordained a presbyter by Bishop N. of the Diocese of N./the Presbytery of N., and is now called by God through the voice of the church to serve as _____.

The people respond

We remember with joy our common calling to serve Christ, and we celebrate God's call to N., to serve among us as .

The sending bishop or presbytery moderator asks the candidate to reaffirm their particular ordination in regard to a priest or a presbyter.

The inviting bishop or presbytery moderator addresses the presbyter, saying

While affirming and upholding your ordination vows as a presbyter in The Episcopal Church/Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), while you labor in covenant relationship with the Diocese of N./Presbytery of N., will you honor the doctrine, discipline, and worship of Christ as this Church has received them? And will you, in accordance with the Constitution/canons of this Church, obey the ecclesiastical authority of the bishop and presbytery, and other ministers who may have authority over you and your work during this covenant relationship?

Answer

I am willing and ready to do so, and I solemnly declare that I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation; and I do solemnly engage to conform to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Episcopal/Presbyterian Church as required in order to be commissioned to labor as under covenant agreement of our two churches.

At the appropriate time during the service of the institution or installation, the presbyter kneels facing the people and is surrounded by the bishop, presbytery moderator, and all other priests and presbyters. With the bishop and presbytery moderator's hands laid on the presbyter, as well as the other priests and presbyters, one of the following³, or a similar prayer, is said aloud

³Prayers adapted from Catholic Church, International Committee on English in the Liturgy, *Ceremonial of Bishops: Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and Published by Authority of Pope John Paul II* (Revised), "Rite of Ordination of Presbyter". Liturgical Press, 1989.

by the inviting bishop or presbytery moderator

Come to our help, Lord, Holy Father, almighty and eternal God; you are the source of every honor and dignity, of all progress and stability. You watch over the growing family of humanity by your gift of wisdom and your pattern of order. When you had appointed high priests from among the people of Israel to lead your people, you also chose others to serve with them and to help them in their task; and so there grew up the ranks of presbyters and the offices of Levites, established by sacred rites.

In the desert, you extended the spirit of Moses to seventy wise men who helped him to rule the great company of his people. You shared among the sons of Aaron the fullness of their father's power, to provide worthy priests in sufficient number for the increasing rites and worship, and elders to care for the spiritual and temporal welfare of God's people. With the same loving care you gave companions to your Son's apostles to help in teaching the faith: they preached the gospel to the whole world. Lord, grant also to us such fellow workers, for we are weak and our need is greater. Provide for us presbyters who will provide for the worship and care of your people as we seek to be the body of Christ in the world.

Almighty Father, strengthen by your Holy Spirit this servant of yours the dignity of your eternal priesthood in Christ, as a servant of servants. Renew within him/her/them the Spirit of holiness. As a co-worker with bishops, pastors and fellow presbyters may he/she/they be faithful to the ministry that he/she/they receives from you, Lord God, and be to others a model of right conduct. May he/she/they be faithful in working with your people, as well as ordered deacons, fellow presbyters and pastors, so that the words of the Gospel may reach the ends of the earth, and the family of nations, made one in Christ, may become God's one, holy people. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

OR

O God, the source of all holiness, whose grace is ever effective, whose blessing is ever fulfilled, pour out on these servants of yours the gift of your blessed Holy Spirit. By their noble and exemplary lives let them prove that they are elders of the people, true to the Gospel of Christ our Lord and to the norms for presbyters as laid down by Paul to Timothy and Titus. Let them meditate on your law day and night, so that they may believe what they have read, teach what they have believed, and practice what they have taught. May justice, constancy, mercy, courage, and all the other virtues be reflected in their every way of life. May they inspire others by their example, and hearten them by their admonitions. May they keep pure and spotless the gift of their calling. For the worship of your people may they celebrate the mystery of Holy Communion and living a sacramental life in community. May they through persevering charity mature in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, reflecting Christ clearly, and rise on the day of the Resurrection with a good conscience, true faith, and the full gifts of the Holy Spirit. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen.

Followed by a declaration similar to

N., you are instituted/installed to service in this church as in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through him.

Following the service of institution or installation, the Eucharistic celebrant shall be the bishop in Episcopal settings, and ordinarily the authorized presbyter in PC(USA) settings.

RATIONALE

Participants

Representing the Episcopal Church: the Rt. Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton (co-chair), the Rev. Canon Elise Johnstone (co-vice chair), Dr. Michael Booker, Elizabeth Ring, the Rev. Dr. Joseph Wolyniak, and Richard Mammana and the Rev. Margaret Rose serving as staff.

Representing the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): Ruling Elder Anne Bond (co-chair), the Rev. Dr. Neal Presa (co-vice chair), the Rev. Terri Ofori, the Rev. Dr. Christian Boyd, the Rev. Robert Foltz-Morrison, the Rev. Brooke Pickrell, the Rev. Brian Entz, and Ruling Elder Dr. Dianna Wright serving as staff liaison.

PREAMBLE: The Urgency of the Times

Such a Time as This

The Book of Esther recalls a time of great challenge. Likewise, our current time finds our world amid many challenges, including a global pandemic with still yet unknown overall effects on the Church. The global Christian Church around the world has found itself in a season of reinvention and redefinition. The events of 2020 have called us to ask ourselves what it truly means to be Christian.

Individual congregations have been challenged to adapt to a changing world in ways that have shattered our links with the past and old ways of doing church. In so doing, we have focused on the core duties of being Christ in the world. This has created both challenges and opportunities.

Global Pandemic and Racial Endemic

Our time stands in particular need of unity. Both the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Episcopal Church acknowledge the historical and present reality of sin of racism and white supremacy that denies the impartiality of God, the reconciling work of Christ, the gift of the Holy Spirit poured forth into all persons. Both bodies acknowledge their complicity and that they are called to end all racial discrimination, repenting and ministering to those injured by it. We cannot remain silent about this divisiveness, nor did Jesus: “Recognizing what they were thinking, Jesus said, ‘Any country that divides itself into groups which fight each other

will not last very long.” (Matt 12.25, GNT). Reform always comes from the margins, whether it be that prophetic voice crying in the wilderness or activists on city streets protesting the death of another person of color as if Black lives do not matter.

Accordingly, there is a present and historical urgency borne in this agreement is to move both churches toward that unity in mission. The triune mission of God is the foundation of the church’s unity and its mission in the world. It is among the last of Jesus’ prayers: “That they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” (John 17.21, ESV) This document represents the culmination of many decades of dialogues between the Episcopal Church in America and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).⁴

The Church, guided by God’s wisdom, can embrace this opportunity and examine how ecclesial bodies can work together.

Tearing Down Ecclesiastical Barriers

Old walls had prevented mission and ministry together, and in this time of notable change, the participants of the bi-lateral dialogue between the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) invite our ecclesial bodies to consider this limited exchange agreement on the local sharing of ministries for passage at the General Convention 2021 and General Assembly 2022.

The old walls preventing work together have been torn down through a vastly changing world and church context. With the foundation of the 2008 Episcopal Presbyterian Agreement, our common full communion partners of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Moravian Church (Northern and Southern Provinces), our work together through Churches Uniting in Christ, work together in public witness as well as numerous collaborative local ministries, a pathway has been created for continued mission and ministry together, toward the unity that God calls us to.

Thus, the Presbyterian/Episcopal Dialogue requests our respective authorizing bodies to consider the following Agreement; to continue the Dialogue with future deliberations; and that both of our Heads of Communion commit themselves publicly to this effort and to consider a public celebration of our progress to date and our hope for the future.

Psalm 133:1 Oh, how good and pleasant it is, when kindred live together in unity! (St. Helena Psalter)

INTRODUCTION⁵

The Church does not live for itself. It is called into being by the Gospel of Jesus Christ to

⁴The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have been in ecumenical dialogue since the 19th century.

⁵ Adapted from *For the Sake of the Gospel: Mutual Recognition of Ordained Ministries in the Anglican and Uniting Churches in Australia*, 2001.

serve the mission of the triune God in the world. ‘The Church belongs to God. It is the creation of God’s Word and the Holy Spirit. It cannot exist by and for itself.’⁶ The mission of God is a single, all-embracing mission which confronts the Church with a range of complementary tasks. Impelled by the joyful duty of giving praise and thanks to God for all the blessings of creation and redemption, the Church seeks to serve God by making known the Good News of salvation and by meeting human need wherever it finds it. In accordance with God’s purpose to ‘gather up all things in Christ’ (Eph. 1:10), the Church is called to embody in an anticipatory way the reconciliation and communion of all people.

The Church knows well that its mission is compromised at every point by its disunity, which continues at many levels despite the great ecumenical achievements of the last century. How can the Church credibly proclaim the unity of humankind when it is too fractured to recognize a common baptism and to gather around one eucharistic table in the one apostolic faith? We have institutionalized divisions in the Church and come to accept them as normal, forgetting that they are a stumbling-block and a barrier to faith for many. We overlook the fact that they stand in conflict with the will of Christ and amount to a refusal of the unity which is his gift.

The witness of the Church – its service of the mission of God – will be greatly enhanced by the overcoming of historic divisions between the churches.⁷ The removal of barriers between our two churches, The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), while not providing an instant or complete solution to the problems and challenges confronting the Church, will be a step of great importance, especially when seen together with other comparable steps being considered by our churches. In many places in rural and urban parts of the United States, for example, our churches have diverse communities that have benefited greatly from the sharing of ordained ministries. Missionally, our two churches could expand in joint planting of new worshipping communities, as well as a partner in union or federated parishes which are referred to as *ecumenical congregations*.⁸ The matter is not less urgent, nor are the advantages less significant, in the deepening of our covenant relationship in order to establish new eucharistic communities and mission projects which feed the body, mind, and souls of God’s people.

The proposals in this paper have been formulated out of our obedience to the Gospel and the better discharge of our call to mission. Unity is for the sake of mission. Changes in the socio economic pattern of life in the U.S. in recent years provide an opportunity to develop the unity between our two churches. When Christians demonstrate in their lives that the barriers which divide the rest of society do not divide the Church, the Gospel is proclaimed. We may be certain that we are called, together, to grow in mission, the mission of the Church, within the mission of the triune God.

⁶*The Nature and Purpose of the Church*, Faith and Order Paper No. 181 (Geneva: WCC, 1998), §9.

⁷See The Book of Common Prayer p 855: “The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.”

⁸See *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*. Edited by Jooseop Keum (Geneva: WCC, 2013).

AFFIRMING THE CURRENT ECUMENICAL AGREEMENT

This group affirms the current Episcopal Presbyterian Agreement of 2008. Among these were:

- We acknowledge one another's churches as churches belonging to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church;
- We acknowledge that in our churches the Word of God is authentically preached and the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist are duly administered;
- We acknowledge one another's ordained ministries as given by God and instruments of grace, and look forward to the time when the reconciliation of our churches makes possible the full interchangeability of ministers;
- We acknowledge that personal and collegial oversight (episcopate) is embodied and exercised in our churches in a variety of forms, episcopal and non-episcopal, as a visible sign of the Church's unity and continuity in apostolic life, mission, and ministry.
- We agree that The Episcopal Church will invite members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to receive Holy Communion in their churches and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will invite members of The Episcopal Church to receive Holy Communion in their churches. We encourage the members of our churches to accept this Eucharistic hospitality and thus express their unity with each other in the one Body of Christ.

In short, we recognize and affirm the validity of one another's churches which provide for their covenant communities word and sacrament, ordered ministries, as well as the embodiment and exercise of the ministry of oversight (communally, collegially, and personally). However, due to the divergence in our equally valid ecclesiastical polities, and to some extent, existing church traditions and customs limit interchangeability of ordered ministers, and thus full communion, at this time. Despite this recognition, this group believes it has prayerfully discerned a way forward through which our two churches may continue to journey together in a complementary manner and enriching each other as we participate in the mission of God.

PRESBYTERIAN GLOSSARY

***Apostolic function of episkopé** –The apostolic function of those who oversee the ministry of the church, as reflected in various New Testament texts, is the function exercised by the apostles in spreading the Gospel and exists so that the Church maintains its witness to Jesus Christ.

***Apostolic succession** – Continuity with the ministry of the early church, especially the disciples of Jesus. Reformed and Roman Catholics believe that there is an apostolic succession, though they locate that succession differently.

***Apostolic era** –The period of the history of Christianity when the original apostles of Jesus were still alive.

The Book of Common Worship (BCW) – A liturgical resource in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) consisting of various liturgies and prayers consistent with the *Directory for Worship* section of Book Two of the Constitution, *The Book of Order*. The BCW’s most recent edition was published in 2018.

***Catholicity** – As described in the baptismal catechesis of Cyril of Jerusalem, refers not simply to geographic extension but also to the manifold variety of local churches and their participation in the fullness of faith and life that unites them in the one community.

Church – The one holy catholic apostolic church in every time and in every place. Depending on context, may also refer corporately to an ecclesial communion/denomination, e.g. The Episcopal Church, The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Churches – Fellowship of ecclesial communions/denominations, e.g. Churches Uniting in Christ, World Council of Churches, World Communion of Reformed Churches.

church (lowercase “c”) – The local expression of an ecclesial communion/denomination, i.e. congregation, parish.

Commissioned Pastor (also known as commissioned ruling elder) – A ruling elder authorized by a presbytery to limited pastoral service assigned by a presbytery for a limited time. Commissioned pastors may be authorized by the presbytery to moderate session, administer the sacraments, and officiate marriages where permitted by state law.

Commissioning – An act of God through the voice of the Church whereby a council of the Church authorizes, blesses, and entrusts to an individual, usually one who is in ordered ministry, to discharge the duties and responsibilities of a particular ministry.

***Communion(s)** – The community fellowship gathered at the table together. Since we have not yet realized the goal of all churches being in communion with each other –essentially recognize our being one Church as Christ prayed we would be –we are different communions gathering at different tables with only imperfect unity in Christ.

Constitution of The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) – The governing documents that frame the ecclesial life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The Constitution consists of two parts: Book One is *The Book of Confessions*, expressing in twelve creeds, catechisms, confessions, and statements of faith what Presbyterians believe; and Book Two is *The Book of Order*, expressing how Presbyterians live out their confessional belief with respect to governance, church discipline, and principles of worship.

Councils – Duly constituted gatherings of ruling and teaching elders for discernment and decision-making for the spiritual welfare of the church. The councils of the church are the session, presbytery, synod, and General Assembly. Each council is distinct but mutually related to one another, the action of one council is understood to be an action on behalf of the whole and the whole church’s act through that appropriate council, with the larger part of the church, or a representation thereof, governing the smaller. The session consists of all teaching

elders serving in a local congregation and active ruling elders. Presbytery, synod, and General Assembly consist of an equal number of teaching and ruling elders. (adapted from *The Book of Order*, F- 3.0203)

Covenant Partnership - An ecclesiastical and ecclesial relationship whereby each participating communion acknowledges that it is undertaking a serious commitment, one that involves actions as well as words. Covenant partnership cannot be achieved without awareness of existing differences and similarities among the partners; it will demand dedication to walking and working together in ways that may, at times, represent a break with the past. Walking together involves not only the likelihood, but also the certainty of mutual challenge and change; because of this commitment, each body will eventually be different in ways that presently cannot be seen. The partner churches commit themselves to this new relationship with seriousness of intent, and full assurance that the One who calls us to greater visible unity is faithful and worthy of trust. (*Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Covenant Agreement with the Moravian Church*, p. 9)

***Diakonia** – The ministry of service. Many churches ordain deacons, in others deacons are officers of the church but not ordained.

***Ecclesiology** –The theology of the nature and purpose of the church.

***Ecumenicity** –The character of being ecumenical –being concerned with the unity of the churches.

***Episcopacy** – The office of oversight of the church and its ministry. Every church has some way of overseeing the church, keeping it faithful to the Gospel, fostering its unity, and overseeing the work of the ministry and the work of the church in service to the world. In this dialogue, we have focused on episcopacy as a central ecumenical issue. Thus in this document the meanings of episcopacy are somewhat different in each communion.

***Episkopé** – A Greek word meaning “oversight” from which we get the English word “episcopal,” indicating reference to a bishop or governance by bishops. In ecumenical dialogue, the use of the word episkopé has become the standard way to refer to the ministry of oversight, which includes, but is not limited to, the office of bishop. This use of episkopé has also become a way to invite those churches that have not retained the episcopal office to recognize that the ministry of that office is nevertheless present in and vital to their churches.

Executive Presbyter/General Presbyter – A chief administrative staff member employed and called by a presbytery to help provide pastoral care and guidance, administrative functions, and other such duties as determined by a presbytery in order to effectively support the mission and ministries of congregations, validated ministries, and teaching/ruling elders in that presbytery.

***Feast of Eucharist** – The Lord’s Supper, the word “Eucharist” means “thanksgiving,” the feast of the Lord’s Supper is a meal of thanksgiving. Also known as Holy Communion to

denote that in the feasting of the bread and cup, the assembled community is in communion with the triune God and with the Church universal in every time and in every place.

Full Communion – An ecclesiastical and ecclesial relationship between churches characterized by the following: recognition of each other as churches in which the gospel is rightly preached and the sacraments rightly administered according to the Word of God; withdrawal of any historic condemnation by one side or the other as inappropriate for the life and faith of our churches today; continuation of recognition of each other's Baptism and authorize and encourage the sharing of the Lord's Supper among their members; recognition of each other's various ministries and make provision for the orderly exchange of ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament; establishment of appropriate channels of consultation and decision-making within the existing structures of the churches; commitment of themselves to an ongoing process of theological dialogue in order to clarify further the common understanding of the faith and foster its common expression in evangelism, witness, and service; pledge themselves to living together under the Gospel in such a way that the principle of mutual affirmation and admonition becomes the basis of a trusting relationship in which respect and love for the other will have a chance to grow. (*A Formula of Agreement Between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ on Entering into Full Communion on the Basis of "A Common Calling," p. 1*)

Holy Orders – Also known as ordered ministry, these designate ordained offices into which women and men are called by God and confirmed by councils of the church to serve the people of God. These offices include bishop/priest, pastor, elder, and deacon.

Interchangeability – Mutual recognition and mutual exchange of ordained ministers between two communions who have been duly authorized and commissioned by their respective ecclesiastical authority (diocesan bishop or presbytery).

Installation – A liturgical service whereby a council of the church officially places an ordinand in a particular ministry. An installed ordinand is ready to be commissioned with specific responsibilities and duties.

***Koinonia** – A Greek word meaning community, communion, or fellowship.

***Legitimate diversity** – Legitimate diversity is diversity that does not violate a legitimate norm. Churches differ in what they consider legitimate diversity to include. "The Unity of the Church: Gift and Calling--The Canberra Statement" of the World Council of Churches, 1991 states that, "Diversity is illegitimate when, for instance, it makes impossible the common confession of Jesus Christ as God and Saviour the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8); salvation and the final destiny of humanity as proclaimed in Holy Scripture and preached by the apostolic community."

Moderator – A constitutional office of the various councils of the church whose origin is from the Church of Scotland, representing the unity of the Church in council. The office of moderator is to preside over the proceedings of the appropriate council, guiding the council to discern the

will and mind of Christ, ensuring that such deliberation is done “decently and in good order.” (1 Corinthians 14:40) The moderator of a session is usually a teaching elder of a local congregation, or a commissioned pastor authorized by a presbytery, or another presbyter authorized by a presbytery. The moderators of a presbytery, synod, and General Assembly are elected by that respective council. The Moderator/Co-Moderators of the General Assembly is an ambassador of the Assembly, representing the “sign of the bond of unity, community, and mission in the life of the church.” (*Organization for Mission*, IV.A.2, pp. 6-7)

Ordered Ministry – Christ’s ministry and authority exercised through the ministry of the whole people of God, from whom certain women and men are specially called to particular functions in specific offices. The New Testament describes two primary ordered offices and their ordered ministry: the office of deacon to the ordered ministry of *diakonia* and the office of presbyter to the ordered ministry of Word and Sacrament (in the case of teaching elder) and the ordered ministry of shared governance (in the case of ruling elder).

Ordinands – Individuals who are inquiring or candidates for ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacrament and who are under care by a session and a presbytery.

***Presbyterian and presbyterian** – Presbyterian refers to a form of church organization in which the governance of the church is in the hands of the elders (presbyteros, oin Greek). Presbyterian with a capital P is the name of particular churches, which characterize themselves by their presbyterian polity and subscribe to the Reformed theological tradition.

Presbytery – A governing council in Presbyterian polity consisting of an equal number of teaching elders (ministers of Word and Sacrament) and ruling elders commissioned by the sessions of local congregations in a designated region.

***Recognition** – “Accept[ing] the legitimacy and authenticity of other churches as the Church in the dialogical process towards fuller communion.” (Timothy T. N. Lim, *Ecclesial Recognition with Hegelian Philosophy, Social Psychology, and Continental Political Theory* [Boston: Brill, 2017], 5.)

Reformed – A Protestant theological tradition that is “in continuity with the classical Reformed theologians of the sixteenth century like Calvin and Bullinger, for example, and with the confessions of that tradition” (Jane Dempsey Douglass, “What is Reformed Theology?” *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 11, no. 1 (1990): 4.)

Ruling elder – Active members in a local congregation who have been elected by a local congregation, and ordained and installed by that congregation’s session to exercise shared spiritual leadership in the session and councils of the church with teaching elders.

Sacraments – “The Word of God enacted and sealed in the life of the Church, the body of Christ. They are gracious acts of God, by which Christ Jesus offers his life to us in the power of the Holy Spirit. They are also human acts of gratitude, by which we offer our lives to God in love and service. The Sacraments are both physical signs and spiritual gifts, including words

and actions, surrounded by prayer, in the context of the Church's common worship. They employ ordinary things—the basic elements of water, bread, and wine—in proclaiming the extraordinary love of God. The Reformed tradition recognizes the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper (also called Eucharist or Holy Communion) as having been instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ through the witness of the Scriptures and sustained through the history of the universal Church." (*The Book of Order*, W-3.0401)

Session – A local governing council in Presbyterian polity consisting of the pastoral staff and ruling elders of a local congregation.

Stated Clerk/Clerk of Session – A constitutional office of the various councils (called a clerk of session in the case of a session) who preserves and defends the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), with the moderator of the appropriate council interpret the actions of that council, and insures the accurate recording of the appropriate council's deliberations. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly is understood to be the head of communion, and together with the Moderator/Co-Moderator of the General Assembly represents the unity of the Church. The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly is the chief ecumenical officer of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and is the chief executive officer of the Office of the General Assembly, one of six national agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Synod – “The intermediate council serving as a corporate expression of the church throughout its region. It shall consist of not fewer than three presbyteries within a specific geographic region.” (*The Book of Order*, G-3.0401)

Teaching elder (also known as a minister of Word and Sacrament) – An ordained office in Presbyterian polity to exercise spiritual leadership in and through the councils of the church by the ministries of preaching and teaching the Word, administering the Sacraments, and attending to the health of ecclesial life in a ministry context.

World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) – A global fellowship founded in 2010 with the merger of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Reformed Ecumenical Council consisting of 233 member churches in 110 countries representing 100 million Christians from the Reformed, Presbyterian, United, Uniting, Congregational, and Waldensian theological traditions. The WCRC secretariat's headquarters is in Hanover, Germany, and is governed by a General Council that meets every seven years, and between General Councils is governed by an Executive Committee.

World Council of Churches (WCC) – A global fellowship founded in 1948 consisting of 350 member communions in 110 countries representing over 500 million Christians worldwide. The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are founding members of the WCC. The WCC secretariat's headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland and is governed by an Assembly that meets every seven years, and between Assemblies is governed by a Central Committee.

*From the “Glossary” section of *The One Body Of Christ: Ministry In Service To The Church and The World*, Roman Catholic –Reformed Dialogue of the United States, Round Eight: 2012- 2017. pp. 4-5.

EPISCOPAL GLOSSARY

+**Anglican Communion** - Churches in communion with the See of Canterbury throughout the world. Member churches exercise jurisdictional independence but share a common heritage concerning Anglican identity and commitment to scripture, tradition, and reason as sources of authority. The Episcopal Church is the embodiment of the Anglican Communion in the USA and several other countries.

+**Anglicanism** - This way of life is the system of doctrine, and approach to polity of Christians in communion with the See of Canterbury (the bishop/diocese that is the ecclesiastical center for England and eventually all of the Anglican Communion). The term derives from the word which, in a variety of forms, refers to the people of the British Isles, and especially the English.

****Archdeacon** - A clergy person with a defined administrative authority delegated by the diocesan bishop.

#**Bishop** - One of the three orders of ordained ministers in the church, bishops are charged with the apostolic work of leading, supervising, and uniting the church. They stand in the historic succession, maintaining continuity with the ministry of the early Church and between Christian communities today. Bishops serve as chief pastors of the church, exercising a ministry of oversight and supervision. They are consecrated bishops for life. Since the bishop's ministry is a ministry of oversight, the term "episcopal" (derived from the Greek episcopos, "overseer") is applied to matters pertaining to bishops. An "episcopal" church is a church governed by bishops, and "episcopal" services are led by bishops.

****Bishop – Assistant** - A bishop, ordinarily a full-time member of the diocesan staff, who is appointed rather than elected and assists in carrying out the episcopal ministry of the diocese.

****Bishop – Assisting** - In common usage, a bishop who aides the diocese by providing additional episcopal services on a temporary basis. Appointed by, and serves at the pleasure of, the diocesan bishop, or the Standing Committee if there is no bishop.

****Bishop Coadjutor** - The elected bishop, with the right of succession upon the resignation of the diocesan bishop, who serves with the diocesan bishop.

****Bishop, Diocesan** - Also known as the Ordinary of a diocese. A diocesan bishop, as distinct from a suffragan, assistant, or coadjutor bishop. The term apparently springs from the understanding of "ordinary jurisdiction" which is held in canon law to be the jurisdiction "permanently and irremovably annexed to" the office of bishop. By canon, a bishop may not resign jurisdiction without the consent of the House of Bishops. A bishop must resign from all jurisdiction at the age of seventy-two.

****Bishop, Presiding** - Chief Pastor and Primate of the Episcopal Church.

****Bishop Provisional** - If a diocesan bishop resigns with no bishop coadjutor (who has the right of succession) a diocese may call a bishop provisional who serves as the bishop, with

full authority, for an interim period of up to three years, until the consecration of a new diocesan bishop.

****Bishop Suffragan** - A bishop who does not automatically succeed a diocesan bishop. Elected by the diocese to serve indefinitely at the direction of the diocesan bishop.

+ ***The Book of Common Prayer*** - Official book of worship of the Episcopal Church. The BCP provides liturgical forms, prayers, and instructions so that all members and orders of the Episcopal Church may appropriately share in common worship. Anglican liturgical piety has been rooted in the Prayer Book tradition since the publication of the first English Prayer Book in 1549. The current and defining edition of *The Book of Common Prayer* for the Episcopal Church was ratified in 1979.

****The Book of Occasional Services** - Book of optional services and texts prepared by the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music.

****Canon** - The word has several different meanings in the church.

- 1) The canon of scripture
- 2) Church law
- 3) As an ecclesiastical title, a canon may be a member of the clergy or laity on the staff of a cathedral, diocese or other institution
- 4) In liturgy, the fixed portion of the Great Thanksgiving

****Canon to the Ordinary** - Clergy or lay person who serves as assistant to the diocesan bishop.

****Canonical Residence** - Clergy serving under the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical authority of a diocese are canonically resident in that diocese. Clergy may move from jurisdiction to jurisdiction pursuant to canonical procedures.

Church – The one holy catholic apostolic church in every time and in every place. Depending on context, may also refer corporately to an ecclesial communion/denomination, e.g. The Episcopal Church, The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Churches – Fellowship of ecclesial communions/denominations, e.g. Churches Uniting in Christ, World Council of Churches.

church (lowercase “c”) – The local expression of an ecclesial communion/denomination, i.e. congregation, parish.

Churches Uniting in Christ – A covenant relationship among eleven Christian Communion-- mainline American denominations (including both predominantly white and predominantly black churches), and was inaugurated on January 20, 2002 in Memphis, Tennessee on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel. It is the successor organization to the Consultation on Church Union.⁹

****Commission on Ministry (COM)** - Pursuant to Title III, Canon 1, each diocese is

⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Churches_Uniting_in_Christ

required to establish a COM to assist the bishop in determining the present and future needs for ministry in the diocese.

Consultation on Church Union (COCU) - Was an effort on the part of several ecclesial bodies towards church unity in the United States, that began in 1962 and in 2002, it became Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC).

Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church - The Constitution and Canons is the official set of governing rules for The Episcopal Church's bodies (*General Convention: House of Bishops and House of Deputies*). *The Book of Common Prayer (BCP)* is a part of the *Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church*.

****Curate** - The term typically refers to an assisting priest in a parish.

****Cure** - The pastoral and geographical responsibility and charge of a member of the clergy.

****Deacon** - One of three offices to which people can be ordained in the Episcopal Church, along with priests and bishops. The deacon's vocation lies in serving – especially the weak, the poor, the sick, the lonely – and in interpreting to the church the needs and hopes of the world. The sign of the office of deacon is a stole worn over the left shoulder and fastened under the right arm. In the Eucharist, deacons read the gospel, lead the Prayers of the People, introduce the confession, prepare the altar, assist with the distribution of the bread and wine, perform the ablutions, and dismiss the people.

****Diocese** - A geographical area that serves as the primary unit of organization in the Episcopal Church. A bishop and a legislative body—a convention or council—oversee each diocese.

****Diocesan Convention** - Annual meeting of lay and clerical representatives from the congregations of a diocese to elect members of diocesan committees and deputies to General Convention, make decisions about diocesan policy, conduct other diocesan business (e.g., budget, program) and from time to time, elect a bishop for the diocese.

****Diocesan Transition Minister** - The clergy or lay member of the diocesan staff responsible for assisting the bishop, worshipping communities and individuals in transition.

Ecclesial body - A religious fellowship whose congregations are unified in their observance to its beliefs and traditions.

****Ecclesiastical Authority** – The responsible individual or body in a church institution. In a diocese, this authority rests with the diocesan bishop. Should the episcopate be vacant or the bishop be incapacitated, the responsibility falls upon the Standing Committee or other bishop

The Episcopal Church – A Christian ecclesial body made up of 111 dioceses or convocations in the United States and 17 countries. The Episcopal Church is a member of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

****Episcopal Church Center** - The churchwide ministries office of the Episcopal Church housing the office of the Presiding Bishop, his or her staff, and other church-related offices. Located in New York City.

****Executive Council of the Episcopal Church** - The national body that administers the program and policies adopted by the General Convention.

Ecumenical congregations – A congregation comprising of at least two or more ecclesial bodies.

Episcopal/episcopal – Episcopal refers to being of the Episcopal Church; episcopal is a term referring to bishop, from the Greek *episkopos*, meaning ‘overseer’. As above, an "episcopal" church is a church governed by bishops, and "episcopal" services are led by bishops.

Episcopal Presbyterian Agreement of 2008 - The Agreement between the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was approved by the 218th General Assembly (2008) and ratified by presbyteries in 2009. The 76th General Convention of the Episcopal Church approved the Agreement in 2009. Both churches authorized another round of dialogue to continue to address theological and missional issues.

****General Convention** - The national legislative body of the Episcopal Church. It consists of a House of Bishops and a House of Deputies (four lay persons and four clergy persons from each diocese). Convention meets every three years.

****House of Bishops** - Part of the two-house legislature of General Convention. All diocesan, suffragan, coadjutor, assistant, and most resigned and retired bishops are members of this body, which also meets periodically between General Conventions.

****The Hymnal 1982** - The collection of hymn texts, tunes, and service music authorized for use in the Episcopal Church. Also widely used: *Lift Every Voice and Sing II (LEVAS)*; and *Wonder, Love and Praise*.

Institution – Occurring in a service of Celebration of a New Ministry, a bishop shares a letter of institution conferring the responsibilities of a priest in charge of a parish.

****Office for Transition Ministry** - A church-wide office that maintains a database of Episcopal and other clergy and lay professionals in Communion with the Episcopal Church, and the worshipping communities of the Episcopal Church. OTM has a website that allows clergy and lay leaders to search for worshipping communities that are themselves in search, using each other’s gifts, skills and experiences to identify possible opportunities for ministry together in order to assist the church to live into God’s mission in the world.

****Pastor** (as used in the Episcopal Church) - Term for a member of the clergy. It evokes one aspect of the priestly role, which is that of pastoral ministry: caring and protective responsibility for the sick, the grieving, the needy, and those in pain. It is a term especially appropriate for bishops, since they are ordained to “feed and tend the flock of Christ,” who is the Good Shepherd. (It does not normally mean a clergy person in charge of a parish as in

the ELCA.) The laity shares in the pastoral role of the clergy, and a growing number of parishes have lay pastoral care teams.

+Priest or presbyter - From the Greek presbyteros, "elder." In the NT, "presbyter" indicates a leader of the church. The English word "priest" is derived from "presbyter," and used as a synonym for presbyter. After the Reformation, some churches began to use the term "presbyter" for the minister who preaches the word and administers the sacraments. The Anglican Church used the term "priest" for this order of ministry. The 1979 BCP, and thus the Episcopal Church, uses both terms. For example, directions for the Ordination of a Priest require that "at least two presbyters must be present". The Catechism notes that "the ministry of a priest or presbyter" is "to represent Christ and his Church, particularly as pastor to the people; to share with the bishop in the overseeing of the Church; to proclaim the gospel; to administer the sacraments; and to bless and declare pardon in the name of God."

****Priest, related terms:**

Priest-in-Charge - Practices vary widely among dioceses. In a parish without a rector, the priest in-charge generally contracts with the vestry, in consultation with the bishop, to perform many of the functions of a rector.

Rector – Elected by the vestry of a parish in consultation with the bishop and serves as the leader of the parish with respect to its spiritual life and mission. In charge of liturgy, music, education, outreach, and pastoral care, the rector has full use of the parish property to carry out his or her office, hires and supervises lay and clerical staff, and is generally entitled to preside at all vestry and parish meetings.

Vicar – The title applies to the priest-in-charge of a mission congregation, serving at the pleasure of and representing the bishop.

****Primate** - The chief bishop in an Anglican Province is called a primate. The term relates to primacy, which in ecclesiastical terms is the status of being first, or presiding, among other bishops.

****Province**

1) An internal division of an autonomous national church of the Anglican Communion. There are nine provinces in the Episcopal Church, including overseas jurisdictions.

2) An autonomous national church member of the Anglican Communion.

Sacrament – From the Catechism of the 1979 BCP: an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given by Christ as sure and certain means by which we receive that grace. In The Episcopal Church there are two great sacraments: Holy Baptism and the Holy Eucharist. There are five sacramental rites: confirmation, ordination, holy matrimony, reconciliation of a penitent, and unction.

****Standing Committee** - A body that shares the ecclesiastical authority of the diocese with the bishop in certain defined areas (e.g., clergy discipline, property of parishes, ordination). In the absence of a bishop it sometimes becomes the sole ecclesiastical authority. Its members are elected by the diocesan convention. It also serves as the bishop's council of advice.

+Vestry - The vestry is the legal representative of an Episcopal parish with regard to all matters pertaining to its corporate property. The number of vestry members and the term of office varies from parish to parish. Vestry members are usually elected at the annual parish meeting. The presiding officer of the vestry is the rector.

+Warden - Officers of a parish. Two wardens are typically selected to serve with members of the vestry. The wardens are generally ranked "senior" and "junior." The senior warden is usually the primary elected lay leader of the congregation, and serves as a principal liaison between the parish and the rector. The junior warden is often given responsibility for the upkeep of the parish buildings and grounds.

+Glossary definitions used or adapted from "An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church, A User Friendly Reference for Episcopalians," Church Publishing, New York, 2000, Don S. Armentrout and Robert Boak Slocum, editors.

**Glossary definitions used or adapted from the Episcopal Glossary of "Principles for the Orderly Exchange of Clergy between the Episcopal Church and the Moravian Church in America, Northern and Southern Provinces" from 2009/2010.

The Assembly Committee on Ecumenical and Interfaith Partnerships approved Item ECU-05 by 45/0. The 226th General Assembly (2024) approved Item ECU-05 by consensus.

For the full report on ECU-05, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/search/3001207>

PMT PJC Comments on the Episcopal/Presbyterian Agreement

Presently the Episcopal and Presbyterian churches have an agreement concerning service by ministers of each church in positions of missional partnership with the other group. The proposed amendment deepens the current relationship between the churches. The amendment is carefully written and deals in depth with definitions of offices, duties of officers, and emphasizes points of agreement. In the spirit of brotherhood and ecumenical cooperation the adoption of this amendment will further the work of the church and will allow greater cooperation with fellow Christians.

**ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE
REPORT TO THE PRESBYTERY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE
FEBRUARY 8, 2025**

INFORMATION

- The Administrative Committee ordinarily meets on the fourth Thursday of each month, hybrid format in person and via Zoom, at 5:00 pm following the meeting of the Finance Committee.
- The Administrative Committee receives regular reports from the Executive Presbyter, the Stated Clerk, and the Treasurer.
- The Administrative Committee welcomed Erin Howton-Angel, TE, First Allardt, and Kathy Corlew, RE, First, Murfreesboro, and thanked Elinor Foster, RE, First, Lewisburg , for her service during her term on the committee.

ADMIT TO RECORD

1. The Administrative Committee approved the agenda for the stated meeting of February 8, 2025: it will be held in person at First, Shelbyville, moderator and co-moderator will be installed, the Rev. Evelyn Graham will preach, the offering will go to the Guatemala Team, the Leadership Visioning Team will lead the second of three listening sessions, and the proposed amendments to the *Book of Order* will be considered.
2. The Administrative Committee received a request from the Leadership Visioning Team to purchase Mission Insight. The Committee referred the matter with a request to the Visioning Team for specifics to the Finance Committee who can work with Visioning Team using the previously designated Transition funds.
3. The Administrative Committee accepted with thanks the offer from the Nueva Vida Food Bank to draft a profile of the Presbytery for posting in the Giving Matters portal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Administrative Committee recommends that the Nominating Task Force be asked to form a search committee to begin the process of finding an installed executive presbyter. This committee will be elected at the May 3, 2025 Stated Meeting and charged with working in concert with the Visioning Team so that the search for leadership is informed by the work and recommendations of the Presbytery as relayed through the Visioning Team.

**STATED CLERK
REPORT TO THE PRESBYTERY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE
FEBRUARY 8, 2025**

INFORMATION

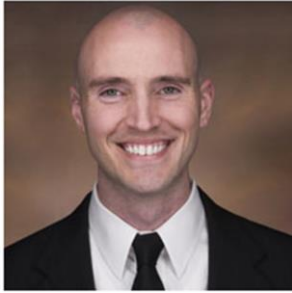
1. Annual Statistical Reports are underway. Each clerk of session of record with PMT has received information. The portal for statistics entry by clerks closes on February 15; clerks may send their information to the Stated Clerk by February 27 to be entered by her.
2. Supplemental reports are in the meeting packet; please read them, as they contain important information about the work of the presbytery committees, commissions, and taskforces.
3. The Stated Clerk, with the Operations Coordinator and the Executive Presbyter, held a Committee Orientation via Zoom on January 11, 2025. The event was well attended, and all committees have begun their work.
4. The Presbytery needs an invitation from a member church or churches to host the August Stated Meeting.
5. The Presbytery will host an educational webinar on Thursday, March 6, 2025 at 2:00 pm CST by Zoom open to all within the Presbytery who wish to learn more about property issues including the exemptions clause and the Trust Clause. Information will be available on the PMT website.
6. Attached to the Stated Clerk's report is information from the Presbytery's Board of Pensions Church Consultant, Keenan Rodgers. Mr. Rodgers will join us at the May 2025 Stated Meeting to talk further about the 2025 initiatives.

ADMIT TO RECORD

1. The Stated Clerk has received the minutes of the Commission to Install the Rev. Jule Nyhuis as pastor of Hillwood Presbyterian Church, Nashville. The members of the commission were: The Rev. Jane Herring, Emmanuel PC, Cynthia Driver, RE, Hillwood PC, The Rev. Carrie Fraser, PMT member-at-large, The Rev. Stacy Rector, PMT validated minister, Deb. O'Brien, RE, First, Nashville, Frank Wade, RE, Westminster, Nashville, and the Rev. Brice Thomas, UCC [*minutes to be included in permanent record*]
2. The Stated Clerk was informed of the death of Honorably Retired TE the Rev. Bill Barger on December 25, 2024.
3. The following congregations participated in a review of 2023 minutes: Calvary of Big Lick, Downtown, Eastminster, Ellis Grove, First, Clarksville, First, Columbia, First, Cookeville, First Fayetteville, First Franklin, First, Hendersonville, First, Lawrenceburg, First, Lebanon, First, Lewisburg, First, McMinnville, First, Pulaski, First, Shelbyville, First Tullahoma, Harpeth, Historic Franklin, New Creation, Normandy, Northminster, Priest Lake, Second, Westminster, Fairfield Glade, Westminster, Nashville, Bellevue, Donelson, Emmanuel, Milldale, Trinity, First, Petersburg. The review of 2024 minutes will take place in the coming months.

Recommendations

1. The Stated Clerk, with the endorsement of both the COM and the Administrative Committee, recommends that a Permanent Administrative Commission be charged with authority to walk with congregations discerning dissolution or other form of ministry such as merger, yoke, joint witness, or collaboration. The charge is attached.



Keenan Rodgers
Church Consultant

m: 215-341-8143

krodgers@pensions.org

January/February 2025

We at the Board of Pensions are working hard to serve our churches, ministers, and employees of the Presbyterian Church (USA). I am here to support you and your congregation should you have any questions about the Board's benefits and programs. I look forward to our continued partnership in the new year.

The Board of Pensions is a national agency of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), offering a broad range of benefits to PC(USA) churches, agencies, and mid councils, as well as affiliated employers.

Member/Employer Services: 800-773-7752, M-F 8:30 am to 6:00 pm ET

Shared Ministry Program

The new Shared Ministry Program encourages two or more Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations to covenant to create sustainable pastoral positions for ordained ministers. Participating congregations enter into a five-year dues subsidy program with the Board to receive a subsidy of the cost of benefits for pastors. Shared Ministry is not a merger of churches; rather, it is multiple, individual congregations sharing a minister with a living wage and benefits that helps ministry flourish and be sustained for the long term. [Learn more about the program](#), including key considerations and how to get started.

Assistance Program Updates

As part of our commitment to mutual care and wholeness, the Board of Pensions continues to expand access to grants through the Assistance Program to serve more ministers, employees, retirees, and surviving spouses who have financial need. In 2024, the Assistance Program distributed over 2,500 grants for a total of approximately \$8.5 million in funds. [Read about potential grant opportunities.](#)

Other important information:

Employee Assistance Plan (EAP): Effective Jan. 1, 2025, Spring Health replaced Cigna as the provider for the EAP. Spring Health offers mental health care navigation with a broader network of providers in addition to the EAP services with which members are familiar. [Learn more about Spring Health.](#)

Remember to update Effective Salaries for the new year: Any changes to effective salaries must be reported to the Board of Pensions via Benefits Connect within 30 days of the effective date. Details about forms of compensation included in effective salary are found in [Understanding Effective Salary.](#)

Call to Health well-being program begins a new year: Call to Health is a well-being program that focuses on self-care in all areas: spiritual, health, financial, and vocational. It offers members in the medical plan the opportunity to reduce their medical deductible(s) and earn Tango cards, which can be redeemed for gift cards or used to make charitable donations. [Learn more](#) and start today.



MINUTES
Installation Commission for The Rev. Dr. Jule M. Nyhuis
Hillwood Presbyterian Church
Nashville, Tennessee

Saturday, 16 November 2024, 2:00 P.M.

The Installation Commission appointed by the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee to install the Teaching Elder **The Rev. Dr. Jule M. Nyhuis** as Pastor met at the Hillwood Presbyterian Church of Nashville, Tennessee, on 16 November 2024 at Hillwood Presbyterian Church at 2:00 P.M. Members present were:

Teaching Elders

The Rev. Jane Herring, Pastor of Emmanuel Presbyterian Church of Nashville
The Rev. Stacy Rector, Presbytery of Middle TN Minister Member at large
The Rev. Carrie Fraser, Presbytery of Middle TN Minister Member at large

Guest Pastor: The Rev. Dr. Brice Thomas, Minister with Standing, Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ

Ruling Elders

Cynthia Palmer, Hillwood Presbyterian Church of Nashville
Frank Wade, Westminster Presbyterian Church of Nashville
Deb O'Brien, First Presbyterian Church of Nashville

Invitation to sit with the Commission:

The Rev. Dr. Brice Thomas, Minister with Standing, Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ

The Commission was called to order by the Chair of the Commission Jane Herring and Cynthia Palmer was appointed Clerk of the Commission by the Chair. The Chair offered the opening prayer. The Order of worship for this Installation Service was reviewed with the constitutionally required elements for such a service found to be in place. By common consent the Order of Worship was adopted, and a copy of the printed program will be attached to these minutes.

The Commission recessed to the Sanctuary for the Service of Worship with the Chair presiding. The Sermon was preached by The Rev. Stacy Rector. The constitutional Questions were propounded to The Rev. Dr. Jule M. Nyhuis by the Chair and they were answered in the affirmative. The Constitutional Questions were propounded to the Congregation by the Clerk of the Commission and answered in the affirmative by the Congregation. A prayer was offered by Deb O'Brien.

The Rev. Dr. Jule M. Nyhuis was duly installed as Pastor of Hillwood Presbyterian Church, Nashville

A Charge was delivered to the pastor by The Rev. Carrie Fraser and Frank Wade charged the congregation. The Service was closed with the Benediction pronounced by The Rev. Dr. Jule M. Nyhuis. The Commission was adjourned at the benediction of the worship service.

Respectfully submitted:

Cynthia Palmer, Clerk of the Commission



Connect · Renew · Serve

Hillwood Presbyterian Church is:

Serving God by Serving Others!

Our mailing address:

6220 Hickory Valley Road

Nashville, TN 37205

#615-352-6310

www.hillwoodpc.org



H.G. Hill Middle School ~ Receives Trader Joe's Belle Meade Neighborhood Shares Flowers



Fall Equinox Forest Walk on the Grounds of HPC

Hillwood Presbyterian Church's support of H.G. Hill Middle School has allowed us to grow in ways unimaginable. Your commitment to our Rolling Hills students is a gift as the Hill Pantry Annex at the church building supports our families with food boxes and immediate resources. We also are so thankful for your connection to Trader Joes, which has brought so much joy to our community through the Neighborhood Shares flower distributions. In large ways and small, like the encouraging notes for teachers made by your on-site mission partners, Hillwood Pres always shows out for us and does exactly what churches are called to do: to be a support and connection to the community. We look forward to the further exploration of new ways to grow our partnership and continue blessing our students, families, staff, and neighbors. The biggest of "Thank You" from H.G. Hill Middle School!

Kara Ellis

Site Manager, Family & Community Partnerships ~ Community Achieves

I have spent the past year wandering with Pastor Jule, the congregants, and our neighbors on these thoughtfully tended grounds – opening ourselves to the nature that surrounds us. In this space held by Pastor Jule I have encountered safety, hospitality, and encouragement. And for that I am endlessly grateful! I celebrate the continuation of this partnership between myself, Pastor Jule, and the community of Hillwood PCUSA. ~ Sarah Champion, Forest Walk with Me www.forestwalkwith.me

16 November 2024
Celebration of the Ministry of Hillwood PCUSA
& Installation of The Rev. Dr. Jule M. Nyhuis

2:00 p.m.

~~~~~  
\* indicates to stand as able

***WELCOME ALL!!! IT IS GOOD TO BE TOGETHER TODAY!!!***

*As you find a seat, welcome those around you – introduce yourself to any whom you do not yet know. See the Light of God alive in others.*

*All are welcome here!*

***Gathering Together***

**Welcome & Announcements**

Cynthia Palmer, Clerk of Session Hillwood PCUSA

**Igniting the Light & Grounding in Place**

*from* Sarah Champion, Forest Walk with Me

**Prelude**

*Perfect Praise*

Dr. Sonja Rosse  
HPC Minister of Music

**Greetings from Presbytery of Middle TN & Declaration of Intent**

The Rev. Jane Herring  
Emmanuel PCUSA

**\*Call to Worship**

Cynthia Palmer

*To Celebrate this Ministry ~ written by JMN*

Leader: Beloved of God, we come together to celebrate!

**All: Gratefully we proclaim: God has been working mightily!**

Leader: As followers of the Way, we proclaim God to be Love – embodied in Jesus, the Christ!

**All: We have directed our lives according to the Way of Love. We take these moments together to celebrate and re-commit!**

Leader: Representing the voice of Hillwood Presbyterian, I want you each to know that we express thanksgiving for all who celebrate together today! Friends, family, colleagues, and partners – here now, or present through prayer: thank you for your involvement, encouragement, guidance, and support!

**All: When the work of Love expands through any individual life, hope in all the world increases! Celebrations like this urge us all along the path!**

Leader: For years of walking together, working together, caring together, and readying ourselves for all that lies ahead; we praise God!

**All: We praise God! For energy to face the challenges of each day! For steady Presence that gives us courage! For grit to keep going as followers of the Way no matter visible circumstances!**

Leader: Together we surely can proclaim:

**All: God, o God! How excellent is the work of Love throughout all the earth!**

Leader: Alleluia! Let us worship God!



**\*Song of Praise**

*All Creatures of Our God and King*  
Glory to God #15

Alex Bonyata  
HPC Musician

**Centering Prayer**

Kali Wheeler, Small World Yoga

### ***Receiving God's Word***

**Prayer for Illumination**

The Rev. Dr. Brice Thomas  
Minister with Standing, Southeast Conference  
of the United Church of Christ

**A Presentation of Scripture**

Mark 2:13-22

The Rev. Dr. Brice Thomas

**Scripture Reading**

Genesis 32:22-32  
*Common English Bible*

Nick Silvidi  
HPC AV Tech & Young Adults

Leader: The word of God for the people of God.

**All: Thanks be to God!**

**Sermon**

The Rev. Stacy Rector  
Executive Director, Tennesseans for  
Alternatives to the Death Penalty

### ***Responding to God***

**Music**

*Order My Steps*

Noel Bradley  
HPC Vocalist

**Installation of The Rev. Dr. Jule M. Nyhuis to Service**

**Sentences of Scripture**

Cynthia Palmer

Leader: As in one body we have many parts and each part has its own function, so all of us together with Christ are one body, and we belong to each other.

**All: We have different gifts according to the grace God has given us.**

Leader: If your gift is to hear God's Word,

**All: Speak it out in faith.**

Leader: If your gift is service,

**All: Live to serve others.**

Leader: If your gift is the heart of a teacher,

**All: Teach what is true.**

Leader: Let preachers preach with conviction, and givers give freely;

**All: Let leaders work diligently for the people, and let those who serve the poor, serve gladly.**

Leader: Let us not lack for enthusiasm, but be ardent in spirit,

**All: Serving the LORD, rejoicing in hope, being patient in suffering and constant in prayer, supporting one another, and welcoming all.**

**Statement on Ordination & Installation**

Frank Wade, Ruling Elder Westminster Nashville



### **\*Profession of Faith**

The Rev. Stacy Rector

Leader: As God calls some to particular forms of ministry . . . stand as you are able to re-make these baptismal vows. Trusting in the gracious mercy of God, do you turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil and its power in the world?

**One: I do.**

Leader: Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Lord and Savior, trusting in his grace and love?

**One: I do.**

Leader: Will you be Christ's faithful disciple, obeying his Word and showing his love?

**One: I will, with God's help.**

Leader: With the whole church, let us confess the Christian faith. Do you believe in God the Father?

**All: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

Leader: Do you believe in Jesus the Christ, the Son of God?

**All: I believe in Jesus the Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

Leader: Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

**All: I believe in God, the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

### **Thanksgiving for Baptism**

The Rev. Carrie Fraser, Therapist & Spiritual Director  
& The Rev. Dr. Brice Thomas

Leader: The LORD dwells in you.

**All: And also in you.**

Leader: Let us give thanks to the LORD our God.

**All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Leader: Holy One . . .

### **Constitutional Questions to the Installed**

The Rev. Jane Herring

### **Constitutional Questions to the Congregation**

Cynthia Palmer

Leader: Do we, the members of Hillwood Presbyterian Church, accept Jule as our pastor, chosen by God through the voice of this congregation to guide us in the way of Jesus Christ?

**All: We do.**

Leader: Do we agree to pray for her, to encourage her, to respect her decisions, and to follow as she guides us, serving Jesus the Christ, who alone is Head of the Church?

**All: We do.**

Leader: Do we promise to pay her fairly and provide for her welfare as she works among us; to stand by her in trouble and share her joys?

**All: We do.**

Leader: Will we listen to the Word she preaches, welcome her pastoral care, and honor her authority as she seeks to honor and obey Jesus Christ our Lord?

**All: We will.**

**Prayer of Installation & the Lord’s Prayer**

Deb O’Brien, Ruling Elder First Nashville

Leader: . . . as Jesus has taught us to pray together saying:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**Declaration of Installation & Welcome**

The Rev. Jane Herring

**Charge to the Newly Installed**

The Rev. Carrie Fraser

**Charge to the Congregation**

Frank Wade

**Moment for Mission**

Erin Murray, *Flourish!* Project Manager

**Receiving the Offering**

The Rev. Dr. Jule M. Nyhuis

**Offertory**

*Jesus Loves Me (based on Clair de Lune)*  
*arr. Fred Bock*

Spencer McKee  
HPC Musician

A Special Offering will be received today in support of HPCs new vocational wellness & holistic human flourishing ministry called *Flourish!* Offerings given today can be **written as checks to Hillwood Presbyterian Church and mark on the memo line: *Flourish!*** These will be held in a reserve account to launch & implement *Flourish!* Offerings can be given by sending them in the mail to the church office at 6220 Hickory Valley Road, placing them in the offering plate when passed, or giving at: [www.hillwoodpc.org](http://www.hillwoodpc.org) (choose *Flourish!* line).

***Follow Erin after worship for a tour of phase one of Flourish! – opening SOON!!!***  
[flourish@hillwoodpc.org](mailto:flourish@hillwoodpc.org)

**\*Doxology**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Christ, all people here below;  
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;  
Praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen.

Glory to God #607

**\*Prayer of Dedication**

The Rev. Dr. Jule M. Nyhuis

**\*Charge and Benediction**

The Rev. Dr. Jule M. Nyhuis

**Song of Discipleship**

*God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me*

Glory to God #543

**Postlude**

*A Bluegrass Medley*

Alex Bonyata  
HPC Musician

***Go Forth to Love like Christ***

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*ALL ARE INVITED TO CONTINUE THE CELEBRATION AT A RECEPTION IN THE PARLOR!*

To complete our guest card, turn in your prayer requests, get to know our paid staff, be linked to our website's online giving or weekly announcement sign-up, and MORE; point your camera app below to scan our QR code!  
(or go to: <https://Hillwoodpc.churchtrac.com>)

### Give online here



Follow us on:



[www.hillwoodpc.org](http://www.hillwoodpc.org)



**Brookdale Belle Meade Crossings Residents Onsite for Mission with HPC!**

My name is Paige Holbert and I work at Brookdale Belle Meade Senior Living. Hillwood Presbyterian Church and Pastor Jule have had a great partnership with us! The group that I work with has early stages of Dementia. Pastor Jule first came in and with Hillwood members, helped provide flowers for our community. The residents loved getting together and making flower arrangements. We then wanted to try to do a volunteer opportunity with the residents. We now are in the Hill Pantry Annex at Hillwood PCUSA each month to pack bags for children in need of food. Pastor Jule & one of Hillwood's musicians also come to us each month. Pastor Jule shares a devotion and communion, then she and the musician sing hymns with our residents. Pastor Jule has given us many opportunities that other organizations won't give us the time of day to do because of the cognitive decline of our residents. We appreciate it! Best Wishes on this Day! ~ Paige



**HPC @ Brookdale Belle Meade Crossings Worship & Music Mission!**



## Upcoming Ministries – All invited!

- HPC's *Pause for Peace* podcast releases every Sunday! Full video-cast available weekly on HPC's YouTube channel; *Pause for Peace* Playlist. Audio-cast available on Spotify, Amazon Music, & IHeart Radio. Check [www.hillwoodpc.org](http://www.hillwoodpc.org) for details.
  - **Episode 9 of *Conversations for Peace*** released recently with **Delmarie Brownridge**, Lead Teacher of Christies Beach High School Flexible Learning Program in Adelaide, Australia. Find it as a part of the *Pause for Peace* podcast
- **Saturday, 16 November:** 2 p.m. in person & via livestream Celebration of HPC Ministry & Installation of Pastor Jule ~ followed by reception in parlor
- **Monday, 18 November:** Friends Life Community – onsite mission in Art Room 2:15 – 3:30 p.m.
- **Monday, 18 November:** Hill Pantry Annex Food Delivery meet at HPC at 3:30 p.m. to go deliver snack bags to families of H.G. Hill Middle School
- **Tuesday, 19 November:** Dream Work Circle, 7 p.m. via Zoom
- **Wednesday, 20 November:** Brookdale Belle Meade Crossings on-site Mission in Hill Pantry Annex 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
- **Wednesday, 20 November:** Yoga 1:00 p.m.
- **Saturday, 23 November:** The launch of *Ding Ding Music & Art* class for Children! 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. in children's Music & Art rooms downstairs. Registration via HPC's website limited so sign up now! Next date: 14 December. Led by Mr. Greene & Ms. Beth (previous Playcare music & art teachers)
- **Sunday, 24 November:** Worship 10:30 a.m. in person and via livestream, A Celebration of the Reign of Christ

*Further details at [www.hillwoodpc.org](http://www.hillwoodpc.org)*

With questions about *Flourish!* or to become a charter member of *Flourish!*, contact Erin at [flourish@hillwoodpc.org](mailto:flourish@hillwoodpc.org)







Wednesday Yoga by Small World Yoga ~ OUTSIDE!

# BREAK IT DOWN | AUM OR OM THE AUM SYMBOL | EITHER WORKS!

## PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

The sound of AUM connects us all.  
A: the waking state of the mind  
U: the dream state of the mind  
M: the deep sleep part of the mind

## THE SOUND OF AUM

It's often said to be the sound of the universe. Its universal vibration connects us all.

## REDUCE STRESS

Chanting AUM focuses your mind on here and now, bringing you into your breath.

## CONTROL EMOTIONS

Redirect your mind to help manifest positive thinking by chanting AUM.



## INCREASE ENERGY

Chant AUM for a few minutes to increase energy levels and feel refreshed.

## MANIFEST

Use the mantra AUM to manifest positive things in your life.

## STRENGTHEN

Research shows chanting AUM, specifically the "a" sound, can strengthen your spinal column.



**Friends Life Community Partners Gift YOU today!!!  
Pick up a *Friendship Bracelet*, made with LOVE for YOU to  
remember this special celebration!**



**Friends Life Community is onsite for mission in HPC's Art Room weekly!**

**HPC Children's Time!**



**Rolling Hills Food Delivery**



**Trader Joe's Belle Meade  
Neighborhood Shares Flowers**



**Weekly Yoga by Small World Yoga**



**HPC Young Adult Ministry**





*Go Forth to Love like Christ*

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ALL ARE INVITED TO CONTINUE THE  
*CELEBRATION*  
AT A RECEPTION IN THE PARLOR!!!

## Permanent Administrative Commission for Congregational Change

The Presbytery of Middle Tennessee (PMT) recognizes that more of our congregations are facing hard realities of declining membership and scarce resources. Sessions and congregations are exploring options that range from merger, yoking, or joint witness to dissolution and termination of ministry.

PMT further recognizes the exciting challenges and opportunities for new ministries as the Holy Spirit moves among congregations and the Presbytery in a connectional walk to further the Kingdom. PMT also acknowledges that in these times of transition and continuing ministry in different forms, congregations find themselves needing outside perspectives and experience, particularly if disposition of property (real, tangible, intangible, and personal) is required. PMT wishes to provide resources and support to congregations as they enter these times of transition, such as members of Presbytery who can offer perspective, guidance, and experience.

Therefore, the Commission on Ministry (COM), with the concurrence of the Administrative Committee, recommends that the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee create a Permanent Administrative Commission (PAC) to offer such guidance, including walking alongside in cases of dissolution, merger, yoke, or other means of continuing ministry. Congregations may request assistance in coordinating mergers/yokes, joint witness, or other alternative ministry, or they may request dissolution. Congregations may be considered extinct if they have abandoned their work under G-4.0205.

This PAC shall consist of no fewer than five individuals and no more than nine. They shall serve staggered terms of 3 years, and they may be re-elected to succeed themselves. The individuals will serve the following terms:

- Class of 2025: three individuals
- Class of 2026: at least two individuals and no more than three
- Class of 2027: at least two individuals and no more than three

These individuals shall be a mix of Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders and shall ensure diversity in demographics, geography, and congregation size.

When a congregation and its session either ask for assistance in deliberating a different method of ministry or considering dissolution, or the COM determines that a congregation may be extinct, the COM shall ask the PAC to convene. The PAC shall convene to select at least three and no more than four of its members to fulfill the PAC charge as set forth. These members shall assume the title of "PAC Team for [insert name of congregation]." Further, if COM perceives that tension exists between a pastor, the congregation, the session, and/or the Presbytery, it ordinarily sends the Mediation Team to visit and discern whether the team can resolve the matter. If the Mediation Team reports that it cannot create a resolution, the COM may ask the PAC to convene and select a team to begin work with the congregation. The Stated Clerk shall gather the PAC Team to review its responsibilities and procedures. The PAC Team shall elect its Moderator and Clerk, and that Clerk shall provide updates to the Presbytery through the Stated Clerk at each Stated Meeting. In all



circumstances, the PAC Team shall be in contact with members and clergy of the congregation so that the perspective of the congregation is presented. In certain circumstances, the PAC Team may invite specific individuals to serve with it in an ad hoc capacity with voice but not vote through the process. In all situations, the PAC Team shall work to execute its responsibilities in consultation with the Session in question where possible and/or appropriate. Should a PAC member's home church be in question, that member shall recuse himself/herself/themselves but may be invited to serve in an ad hoc capacity with voice but not vote.

### **Charges to the PAC and its Teams:**

If the PAC Team and the session determine that an alternative means of ministry is the Holy Spirit's urging for the congregation, the PAC Team shall report to COM and work with the COM leadership and congregational liaison to complete this process with another similarly led congregation or other initiative as appropriate.

1. If the PAC Team and the session determine it is in the best interest of the church to close, it shall walk alongside the session to:

#### **a. Provide pastoral care and honor the ministry of the congregation:**

- Plan, in consultation with the members of the church in question, a closing worship service to honor the life, ministry, and witness of the church. Members shall also be invited to a Presbytery Stated Meeting, where the ministry and history of the congregation shall be acknowledged, and prayers of thanksgiving shall be offered. This includes a checklist and suggested attributes of a closing service. The congregation is not dissolved until the conclusion of its final, Presbytery-approved closing worship service, and the Presbytery votes to do so at a Stated or Called Meeting. A sample service template is included in the Appendices, though not required.
- Provide or arrange pastoral care for members and assist them in winding up the affairs of the church, including transferring members according to the Book of Order. Transfers before dissolution shall be facilitated by the Clerk of Session, and transfers after dissolution shall be facilitated by the Stated Clerk.

#### **b. Process and facilitate the disposition of records:**

- Receive all session records, including but not limited to minutes, rolls/registers, congregational meeting minutes, Board of Deacons minutes, and legal/financial records. These records will be deposited with the Stated Clerk of Presbytery, who shall transmit them to the Presbyterian Historical Society.

#### **c. Assist in dissolving the corporation:**

- Ensure compliance with Tennessee Secretary of State and Department of Revenue regulations to terminate the corporation.

#### **d. Secure legal rights to property:**

- Work to obtain clear title and determine restrictions, stipulations, and liens, transferring the title to the Presbytery.

**e. Assume original jurisdiction if necessary:**

- Following Book of Order requirements, assume session powers and immediately notify the Presbytery through the Stated Clerk.

**2. Property Management:** Under G-4.02, all church property is held in trust for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The PAC Team shall:

**a. Secure physical property:**

- Change locks if keys are widely distributed.
- Update utility billing as necessary.
- Arrange caretaking services (e.g., landscaping, housekeeping).
- Collaborate with the Stated Clerk and Finance Committee to secure appropriate insurance coverage, terminating congregational insurance at the appropriate time.

**b. Address financial records:**

- Conduct a financial review of the Treasurer's records from the past 12 months.
- Identify all accounts, including checking, savings, investments, and endowments, and close them appropriately. Designate at least two PAC members as signatories if necessary.
- Determine any outstanding debts or obligations and oversee their discharge.
- Ensure issuance of tax receipts for current-year contributors.
- Transfer ownership of any financial instruments to the Presbytery or liquidate them in consultation with the Finance Committee.
- Transfer remaining balances to the Presbytery and close accounts following Presbytery financial policies, available on the Presbytery website

**3. Disposition of property:**

- Consult with the session regarding equipment, memorials, and other personal property (e.g., furnishings, communion ware, hymnals).
- Work in collaboration with the Finance Committee regarding property disposal, ensuring alignment with Presbytery initiatives. Property proceeds shall be used according to Presbytery financial policies, available on the Presbytery website as well as the priorities and initiatives of the Presbytery. The PAC shall also work to address the needs associated with columbariums and cemeteries.

- Any sale/disposition of property of \$25,000 or less may be approved by the PAC; transactions above \$25,000 require the approval of the Presbytery.

#### **4. Policies:**

The PAC will work in coordination with the Finance Committee to assure the Presbytery property policies are current and relevant to situations encountered by congregations and the PAC.

#### **5. Educational Opportunities:**

- Provide educational sessions on mergers, yoking, or alternatives to dissolution in coordination with the Commission on Ministry and the Committee on Leadership Excellence.

#### **6. Reporting:**

- Submit updates at every Stated Meeting while dissolution work is ongoing.
- Provide a final report upon completing the dissolution process. Disband the PAC Team, retaining members for future needs.

#### **Membership Recommendations:**

- **Class of 2025:** Melinda Sanders, RE, Woodland  
Allen Kennedy, RE, First Nashville
- **Class of 2026:** Greg Glover, TE, First Clarksville  
Debbie Fraley, RE, First, Fayetteville
- **Class of 2027:** John Hinkle, TE, First, Murfreesboro  
George Crawford, RE, Westminster, Nashville

Succeeding classes shall be nominated by the Nominating Task Force and elected by the Presbytery.

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#### **Appendices:**

- A. The Closing Service of a Dissolving Congregation
- B. Thoughts on Church Closures

Items to consider when planning the closing service celebrating the life and ministry of the congregation.

1. Set the date and the time for the service and determine possible inclusion of:
  - a. celebration of the Lord's Supper
  - b. use of the service for the "Vacating of a Church Building (including the Dissolution of a Church) in the *Book of Occasional Services*, a supplement to the *Book of Common Worship* or such other service as the AC and the congregation desire (attached)
  - c. former pastors, members of session, and/or members of the AC as worship participants; identify person to give sermon
  - d. familiar and favorite music of the congregation, including hymns, other special music, instrumentalists, and/or choirs or soloists.
  - e. a brief history of the church, including the reason/s for the dissolution of this congregation.
2. With the session, determine where the proceeds from the Offering will go (often a local mission with a connection of some sort to the congregation)
3. If necessary, assist the session in arranging for ushers, elders to serve Communion, and parking lot assistants, designing and printing bulletins, preparing communion elements, and arranging for cleaning of the facility.
4. If appropriate, assist the session as needed if a reception or other hospitality is planned around the closing worship service. Typically, an AC does not have financial resources to assist with such an event, but the Presbytery feels strongly that the congregation and its ministry should be honored in whatever way they desire. If at all possible, the Presbytery will endeavor to contribute financial and human resources toward such an event.

**A SERVICE OF WORSHIP ON THE OCCASION OF  
VACATING A CHURCH BUILDING  
[INCLUDING THE DISSOLUTION OF THE CONGREGATION]**

When a congregation moves from a former building into a new place for worship, or when there is a dissolution of a church, a service may recall the memories and gifts of God that, for a time, have been attached to a particular building. God's promised presence is not bound by space or time. God's promise is realized in particular ways, however, within our bounded existence. While sorrow may accompany the departure from a cherished building, the occasion calls for thanksgiving for God's gracious gifts, past, present, and future.

Appropriate portions of the service should be conducted by the authority of the presbytery with the moderator or moderator's representative presiding. This liturgy is intended as a resource; for congregations and presbyteries, and should be adapted to the normal worship patterns of the congregation.

It is appropriate for elders, deacons, and others within the congregation to share in the leadership of the entire service.

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

*The moderator of the presbytery addresses the congregation:*

As we gather for worship,  
let us acknowledge with solemn joy  
God's gift of this place,  
remembering with gratitude  
all who have worshiped here,  
the faith professed at this font,  
the gospel proclaimed from this pulpit,  
the assurance received at this table.  
Let us also reaffirm our faith  
in our sojourning God  
as this building is now transferred to other uses.  
That which we have received from God  
let us now return to God with thanksgiving.

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

**GREETING**

*The presiding minister greets the people:*

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**

#### SENTENCES OF SCRIPTURE

The Lord God says:  
For as the rain and snow come down from heaven  
and do not return there, but water the earth.  
making it bring forth and sprout,  
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

**so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,  
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,  
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. [Isaiah 55:10,11]**

#### PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of power,  
may the boldness of your Spirit transform us,  
may the gentleness of your Spirit lead us,  
may the gifts of your Spirit be our goal and our strength,  
now and always.  
**Amen.**

#### HYMN OF PRAISE, PSALM, OR SPIRITUAL

*Among the appropriate selections are:*

*Holy God, We Praise Your Name  
Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken  
I Greet Thee, Who My Sure Redeemer Art  
All People That on Earth Do Dwell*

#### CONFESSION AND PARDON

##### CALL TO CONFESSION

The Proof of God's amazing love is this:  
While we were sinners  
Christ died for us.  
Because we have faith in him,  
we dare to approach God with confidence.  
In faith and penitence,  
let us confess our sin before God and one another.

##### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Merciful God,  
we confess that we have sinned against you  
in thought, word, and deed,  
by what we have done,  
and by what we have left undone.  
We have not loved you  
with our whole heart and mind and strength.  
We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.  
In your mercy forgive what we have been,  
help us amend what we are,  
and direct what we shall be,  
so that we may delight in your will  
and walk in your ways,  
to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

*KYRIE ELEISON*

#### DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

The mercy of the Lord  
is from everlasting to everlasting.  
I declare to you, in the name of Jesus Christ,  
you are forgiven.  
May the God of mercy,  
who forgives you all your sins,  
strengthen you in all goodness,  
and by the power of the Holy Spirit  
keep you in eternal life.  
**Amen.**

#### THE PEACE

Since God has forgiven us in Christ,  
let us forgive one another.  
The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all.

*The congregation may exchange signs of peace and reconciliation*

#### THE WORD

##### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Lord, open our hearts and minds  
by the power of your Holy Spirit,  
that as the scriptures are read  
and your Word is proclaimed,  
we may hear with joy what you say to us today.  
**Amen.**

## READINGS FROM SCRIPTURE

## SERMON

## AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

*The Nicene Creed or the Apostles' Creed*

## HYMN

*Among the appropriate selections are:*

*The Church's One Foundation*

*Christ is Made the Sure Foundation*

*Behold the Goodness of Our Lord*

*God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending*

## THE EUCHARIST

*Communion should be celebrated in the congregation's normal manner.*

*Following the Communion of the People, the moderator of presbytery, elders, deacons, and other representatives of the congregation shall gather at the table.*

*All may stand.*

## LITANY OF PRAISE

*The moderator leads the litany:*

Eternal God,  
whom the highest heaven cannot contain,  
much less a building made by human hands,

**hear our prayer.**

For the Church universal,  
of which this building has been a symbol,

**we praise you, O God.**

For all the saints who,  
in times past and present,  
have formed a congregation of your people  
and have met in this place  
to offer their prayers and praise to you,

**we praise you, O God.**

For those who have been made your children  
by adoption and grace,  
who in this place were cleansed of sin,  
buried with Christ in the waters of baptism,  
and raised to new and eternal life,

**we praise you, O God.**

For your presence  
whenever your Word has been proclaimed and  
your sacramental gifts of bread and wine received,



**we praise you, O God.**

For your blessing  
upon each of your children,  
welcomed and nurtured here,

**we praise you, O God.**

For all who came  
to ask your blessing in marriage,  
seeking to love with your love,

**we praise you, O God.**

For faithful stewards  
who have lived for others,  
serving you by loving neighbors,

**we praise you, O God.**

For all who were gathered from this place,  
having lived this life in faith,  
who now live eternally with you,

**we praise you, O God.**

For the knowledge that your church  
and your ministry among us  
will continue today, tomorrow, and forever,

**we praise you, O God,**

through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

*When the congregation is being dissolved, the remaining members of the congregation may stand and be recognized.*

*The moderator may direct the clerk of session to transfer their membership to another congregation, releasing the official records and rolls of the church to the presbytery.*

*The moderator continues:*

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
and by the authority of the Presbytery of N.,  
I declare this building vacated  
by the congregation of N. Church  
[and the congregation dissolved].

HYMN(S)

*Among the appropriate selections are:*

*Psalm 23*

*Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*

*Lift High the Cross*

*My Hope is Built on Nothing Less*

*The moderator leads a procession from the building during the singing of a hymn(s). Furnishings, including the pulpit or lectern Bible, baptismal and communion vessels, and paraments may be removed and carried out by ministers, elders, and members of*

*the congregation.*

*All gather outside the building for the charge and blessing.*

*The moderator continues:*

#### CHARGE

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord,  
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

#### BLESSING

*The presiding minister gives God's blessing to the congregation:*

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit  
be with you all.

**Amen.**

Portions of this service are adapted from *Book of Occasional Services* © 1999 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation, for the Office of Theology and Worship, and from *Book of Common Worship* © 1993 Westminster John Knox Press, and are reprinted by permission.

Thoughts on Church Closures from Dr. Christian Boyd, OGA ACC member and Stated Clerk,  
Presbytery of Milwaukee

Studies show that as the various denominations after WWII experienced the baby boom and expansion of congregations in the new suburbs, many congregations were overbuilt and structured with the idea that the population would decrease and did not fathom that the church membership would normalize back to pre-WWI, which per capita is historically the number of active members of a congregation since 1789. The path since the 80s has been to work harder and capture more of the market... using a business lens to evaluate success and the attraction model. I have also found that part of the root of existing congregations is not being supportive of new church developments or worshipping communities, and a siloing of congregations is unwilling to work with each other, let alone discuss mergers. To do so would mean fewer market shares and possibly a sense of failure. So, many congregations just tried to keep doing what they were doing, like a store with a product to sell.

The pandemic was the catalyst that quickened the life span of many congregations and highlighted the ones who have realized that they cannot keep up with the expectations of church growth, let alone sustainability. There are also not enough people with energy or interest post-pandemic to try something new and take risks. So, it is easier to dissolve a congregation than to recreate the organization, especially if the culture is set.

We will be dissolving many existing congregation in the next 10 years. There are many congregations that have inherited a campus that is too much for them to sustain, and they are reluctant to sell property and move to a space more appropriate and geared toward mission and ministry in a context (outward focused, and equipping disciples for everyday active ministry).

With that said, I am also reminded of what Rev Nadia Bolz-Weber told our presbytery when we had her for one of our meetings. Only the church has the Word and sacraments, and is the body of Christ in the world. There will always be the Church. How she is manifested changes through the generations. We just have to be willing and able to adapt.

Like when Jesus went to the fishers by the sea mending their nets, Jesus said, "Follow me." They had a choice to drop their nets and leave their boats behind and follow Jesus. What are our nets and boats, and are we willing and able to take the risk and drop them in order to follow Jesus... willing to "try to show the love and justice of Jesus Christ" in the here and now?

This is the transition within liminality, the "death" before resurrection as a "new creation".

## Presbytery of Middle Tennessee

### Excerpt from PMT Finance Policies (proposed)

**Property:** The Finance Committee, in conjunction with the Stated Clerk, maintains a list of all property held by the churches within its bounds, current debt obligations of each church, whether church property has been encumbered as collateral for loans, the approximate value of the property, and whether Presbytery is a co-signer or guarantor of the loan and thus contingently liable in case of a default. Unless exempted pursuant to G-4.0208, all churches must obtain Presbytery approval before buying, selling, or encumbering real property. The process to be followed is set out in Presbytery's Church Property Sale Policy (Appendix G). The policy contains a list of churches that were eligible and took advantage of the G-4.0208 exemption.

However, even churches that are exempt must abide by the requirements of the Trust Clause in the Book of Order since the exemption does not nullify the effect of the Trust Clause for any church. The Presbytery recognizes the churches in the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee that are exempt hold their property under the provisions of Chapter 6 of The Book of Church Order (PCUS, 1982-1983), which specifies that all property is held in trust for the benefit and use of the denomination and that upon dissolution of the congregation all property reverts to control of Presbytery. The Presbytery also recognizes that the laws of Tennessee regarding property held in trust apply to all churches, whether exempt or not, and that secular courts, such as the Chancery Court of the State Tennessee, do have the authority over congregations' transactions if that congregation should dissolve or seek to leave the denomination.

Churches, whether exempt or not, may not make any other council (such as the Presbytery) liable for their debts or obligations. Furthermore, all congregations are required to include a clause in their encumbering transaction documents which specifically gives higher councils the right to unilaterally terminate any transaction, such as a long-term lease, if the property reverts to the higher council under the Trust Clause. Furthermore, all churches, whether exempt or not, must report all transactions involving property to the Presbytery one month prior to the congregational meeting to approve the transaction.

Churches that are exempt are subject to all rules about how decisions are made, reviewed, and corrected by the Presbytery, but are not required to seek consent or approval of any counsel above the level of the particular church in order to buy, sell, or mortgage the property of that particular church in the conduct of its affairs as a member church of the PC(USA). A copy of the full provisions of Chapter 6 (Property) of *The Book of Church Order* (PCUS, 1982-1983) is available on the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee web site.