

**MINUTES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-FIFTH STATED MEETING OF THE  
PRESBYTERY OF ARKANSAS  
JUNE 3, 2017**

**CALL TO ORDER/OPENING PRAYER**

The 135th Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Arkansas was called to order at 9:50 a.m. in the sanctuary of Second Presbyterian Church, Little Rock on Saturday, June 3, 2017 by Ruling Elder Ruth Hamilton, Moderator of the Presbytery. She lit the Christ candle and prayed.

**REPORT OF ENROLLMENT/DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

Temporary Stated Clerk Teaching Elder Leslie Smith Belden declared a **quorum present, 42 TEs and 43 REs, total of 85 present at the gavel.**

**TEACHING ELDERS (who checked on sign-in sheet):** DC Adams, Karen Kokles Akin, Bill Bailey, Leslie F. Belden, Blake Brinegar, Robert Brian Brock, Janet B. Butin, Carol Clark, Mark Clark, Katie Cummings, Kade Curry, Fern M. Davis, Ruskin Falls, Paul Fulks, Susan Gray, Steve Hancock, “Chip” Hatcher, Young Doo Kim, Courtney Bacon-Latina, Frank LeBlanc, Marie Mainard-O’Connell, Jeff Price, Rebecca Purcell, Dennis Ritchie, Dari Rowen, Ward Rudolph, Anne Russ, Cindy Saul, William Seitz, Lacy Sellars, J. Stewart Smith, Michael Vinson, Lindy Vogado, Jeremy Wilhelmi.

**HONORABLY RETIRED ACTIVE TEACHING ELDERS:** Catherine L. Allsbury, William W. Branch, David H. Dyer, Richard Frothingham, Gordon F. Garlington III, Howard H. Gordon, Sally Stockley Johnson, Lance Jones, David S. King, John E. King, Richard Shinkle, Rita Wilson. **Honorably Retired Non-Active Teaching Elders:** Bill Galbraith.

**RULING ELDER COMMISSIONERS FROM CONGREGATIONS (who signed in):** West End, Arkadelphia, Patricia Wright; Memorial, Atkins, Mark Murdoch; First, Batesville, Betty Adams; Presbyterian Church of Bella Vista, Patty Cloyd and Burnis Leavens; First, Benton, Kate Reecer; First, Bentonville, Sue Redfield and Darlene Thibodeaux; First, Conway, Teryl Brooks; First, Dardanelle, Cathy Baker; First, Eureka Springs, Katie Johnsonius; Kirk of the Hills, Fairfield Bay, Phyllis Young; First United, Fayetteville, Claudia Driver and Sabra Martin; Graham Memorial, Forrest City, Kim Danehower; Central, Fort Smith, Charles Cook; Good Shepherd, Greenwood, Kathy Middleton; First, Heber Springs, Scott Rezabek; Holiday Island, Roxanne Royster; Faith, Horseshoe Bend, George Jackson; First, Hot Springs, Becky Summer; Westminster, Hot Springs, Terry Young; Kirk in the Pines, Hot Springs Village, Barron Gage and Jerral Johnson; First, Huntsville, Wendy Kurry; Allison, Little Rock, Wynona Bryant-Williams; First, Little Rock, Libby Ingram; Grace, Little Rock, Judy Conley; Pulaski Heights, Little Rock, Marian Dyer; Second, Little Rock, Becky Farrow, Russ Jackson, Janet Nelson; Westover Hills, Little Rock, Marianne Estes; First, Malvern, Marion Burris; Barr Memorial, Norman, Noah Williamson; First, North Little Rock, Joseph Yancey; Park Hill, North Little Rock, Judy Steen; Mount Vernon, Pea Ridge, Ron David; First, Prairie Grove, Pat Lyle; First, Rogers, David Webb; Central, Russellville, Garrie Kellam; First, Springdale, Vicky Rogerson and Hartley Allen.

**AT-LARGE COMMISSIONERS:** Ex-Officio Members of Coordinating Team, Bob Boehmler, treasurer; Ruling Elder Members of Coordinating Team, Ted Belden, Jan Enke, Karene Jones, Mary Shaw. Moderators of

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Presbytery Ministry Areas, Committees, Subcommittees, CRE Kelly Pearson, Church and Its Mission; RE Leah Shell, Future of the Church Ministry Area. Ruling Elder Commissioners to General Assembly 222, Gail Murdoch; Co-Moderator, Presbyterian Women, Cathy Rogers; Moderator of Presbytery, RE Ruth Hamilton.

**COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS:** G. Hartley Jones, Barr Memorial, Norman; Chuck Olson, Memorial, Atkins; Ed Wilkinson, Good Shepherd, Greenwood.

**CERTIFIED CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS:** Kristi Button, Jeannie Ford, NiAnn Thompson; Nancy Irving Smith, retired. **Certified Associate Christian Educators:** Theresa Spragins. **Christian Educators in Particular Churches:** None.

**VISITORS TO THIS MEETING:** 15 signed in.

**CORRESPONDING MEMBERS:** John Landis, American Baptist, serving First, Pine Bluff.

**TEACHING ELDERS WITH EXCUSED ABSENCES:** Nancy Benson-Nicol, Philip W. Butin, Joy Carrington, Lance Clemmons, Kris Crawford, Lewis R. Donelson IV, James J. Farley III, Steven Frazier, Debra Carl Freeman, Elizabeth Gabbard, Robert Hadley, Al Henager, Marion A. Humphrey, Jennifer Lord, Robert Lowry, Ray McCalla, “Mike” McCracken, Leslie Bethell Roper, Susan Rose, Georgia Senor, Shauna Silmon, Rebecca Spooner, Marci Ward, Susan Carter Wiggins, Robert Williamson, Harry Young.

**HONORABLY RETIRED ACTIVE TEACHING ELDERS WITH EXCUSED ABSENCES:** Ben H. Bateman, Donald K. Campbell II, Danny Daniel, Joyce Daniel, Frederick A. Taylor.

**TEACHING ELDERS ABSENT WITHOUT EXCUSE:** Phillip Blackburn, Tasha Blackburn, Bryan Bond, Clifton P. Ford, John Gibson, Clare Martin Kelley, Jai Kwak, Libby Lizarraga, Jeff Parker, Timothy C. Reeves, David Schaller, Patricia Schaller, Terry Tallent, Michael Ulasewich, Elizabeth R. (Liz) Wagner, Daniel Wooley.

**HONORABLY RETIRED ACTIVE TEACHING ELDERS ABSENT WITHOUT EXCUSE:** Milton B Davis, Guy Delaney, Heinrich B. Eiler, Alan Ford, Orin M. Frank, David E. Gill, William F. Henning, Mark Lenneville, “Bo” Lewis, Terry McLellan, James B. Miller, Richard H. Miller, Jerry Rice, C. Michael D. Seitz, W. Kennedy Upham, Don Wardlaw, Darwin Wolfe.

**SESSIONS WITH EXCUSED ABSENCES:** Vaughn, Bentonville; Holly Grove Presbyterian; Westminster, Little Rock.

**SESSIONS ABSENT WITHOUT EXCUSE:** First, Alma; Alpine, Amity; First, Arkadelphia; First, Beebe; First, Brinkley; Presbyterian Church of Bull Shoals; Cane Hill Presbyterian; First, Clarksville; Harmony, Clarksville; Elkins Federated; Mt. Comfort, Fayetteville; First, Fort Smith; One-O-One, Gamaliel; First, Gravette; First, Gurdon; Spring River, Hardy; First, Harrison; First, Helena; Woodlands, Hot Springs Village; First, Jacksonville; First, Jonesboro; First, Lincoln; fourth commissioner, Second, Little Rock; Trinity, Little Rock; First, Lonoke; First, McGehee; First, Mena; First, Morrilton; Hopewell, Morrilton; First, Mountain Home; Mountainburg Presbyterian; First, Newport; First, Ozark; First, Paragould; Central, Pine Bluff; Faith, Pine Bluff; second commissioner, Central, Russellville; First, Searcy; First, Stuttgart; First, Van Buren; First, Walnut Ridge; Cleburne Avenue, West Helena; Wynne Presbyterian; First, Yellville.

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**AT-LARGE MEMBERS ABSENT WITH EXCUSE:** Ruling Elder Members of Coordinating Team, Justin Clark, Ken Coker, Patty Minga; Moderators, RE Ledridge Davis, Committee on Representation.

**AT-LARGE MEMBERS ABSENT WITHOUT EXCUSE:** Ruling Elder Members of Coordinating Team, Peg Falls-Corbitt and Marty Shepherd. Ruling Elder Commissioners to General Assembly 222, Jessie Rancifer.

**COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS ABSENT WITH EXCUSE:** Commissioned Ruling Elders, Carolyn Beane, Barr Memorial, Norman; Claire and Kenneth Rhodes, West End, Arkadelphia.

**COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS ABSENT WITHOUT EXCUSE:** Commissioned Ruling Elders, K.C. Chanthorn, Laotian—First, Ft. Smith; Rita Manske, Cane Hill Presbyterian; Harlis Wright, Faith, Pine Bluff.

**CERTIFIED CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS ABSENT WITH EXCUSE:** Certified Christian Educators, Lynn King, retired; **Certified Associate Christian Educators**, Lynn Condra, retired, Susie Wright.

### **ADOPTION OF THE DOCKET**

Temporary Stated Clerk moved the adoption of the docket without changes. **The docket was adopted as printed.**

### **SEATING OF CORRESPONDING MEMBERS AND GRANTING OF PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR/VOICE**

Seated as corresponding member with privilege of the floor and voice was Rev. John Landis, American Baptist, serving First, Pine Bluff. Temporary Stated Clerk moved to extend privilege of floor to Ashley Nipp, young adult volunteer who will preach, youth being commissioned, and Rev. Stephen Copley. **Motion was seconded and approved.**

### **WELCOME TO FIRST-TIME COMMISSIONERS**

Moderator asked for first-time commissioners to stand and name their home congregation. Sixteen ruling elders were welcomed from Holiday Island, Hot Springs Village, Westminster in HS, FUPC, Second, Bentonville, First in HS, Springdale, Prairie Grove, and Greenwood.

### **INTRODUCTION OF PRESBYTERY STAFF**

Moderator introduced the following: General Presbyter Stewart Smith, Temporary Stated Clerk Leslie Belden, Resourcing Director and Recording Clerk NiAnn Thompson, Director of Mission Kenneth Rich, Staff for Mission Discernment Michael Vinson, Youth Staff Britton Varn, as well as presbytery Moderator Hamilton, Vice Moderator TE Leslie Roper in absentia, moderator of Coordinating Team TE Lacy Sellars, and Treasurer Bob Boehmler.

### **WELCOME FROM HOST**

TE Lindy Vogado, associate pastor of Second Presbyterian, brought greetings, gave directions and thanked their volunteers.

**APPOINTMENT OF TELLERS AND LEAVES OF ABSENCE COMMITTEE**

Moderator appointed the following to serve during the meeting:

Tellers: RE Garrie Kellam, Central, Russellville; RE Kate Reecer, First, Benton; TE Kade Curry; TE Marie Mainard-O'Connell.

Leaves of Absence Committee: TEs Anne Russ and Dari Rowen.

**ADOPTON OF CONSENT AGENDA**

Temporary Stated Clerk TE Belden moved the following, with removal of item #2 to be considered during the Stated Clerk's report, and that all others be approved:

- 1. That the presbytery approve the minutes of the 134<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Arkansas, February 17-18, 2017, held at the University of the Ozarks, Clarksville, AR.**
- 2. That the presbytery receive the final report of the Siloam Springs Administrative Commission, which referred the dispersal of funds received from First Presbyterian Church of Siloam Springs to the Future of the Church Area, and dismiss the members of the Administrative Commission with thanks. This item was removed to the Stated Clerk's report and reworded.**
- 3. That the presbytery receive the final report of the Chenal Property Administrative Commission and dismiss the members of the Administrative Commission with thanks.**
- 4. That the presbytery approve the following to serve on the Board of Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center: Martin Kasten, Class of 2018 and TE Becky Purcell, First, Prairie Grove, Class of 2019.**
- 5. That the presbytery receive the final report of the Carpathian Basin Water/Solar Project Governing Board, included below, and dismiss the members with thanks, keeping the account open for maintenance of existing systems.**

**Section A - Exhibit 1**

**CARPATHIAN BASIN WATER/SOLAR PROJECT**

The Carpathian Basin Water/Solar Project in Ukraine was the result of the Presbyterian Women Global Exchange (GX) to Eastern Europe in 2008. Arkansas Presbytery PW Mary Beth Lysobey, and other members of that group, could not forget the terrible conditions of the Roma (Gypsy) population they visited and the fact that only 2 of the 108 villages in this southwestern area of Ukraine had safe drinking water. After much prayer, a plan evolved, and today 10 of the 108 villages now have one well where citizens can get jugs of clean water at least 5 days a week, thanks to the Presbyterian outreach of Solar under the Sun (SUTS) and Living Waters for the World (LWW) and to Reformed Church (our Presbyterian first cousins) leaders in these small Ukrainian villages.

Mary Beth and David Lysobey, Kathy and Joseph Angi, PCUSA mission workers in Hungary, and two Ukrainian Reformed Church leaders have taken the SUTS and LWW classes and Mary Beth raised funds by sharing the need for clean water for the people in the Carpathian Basin to Presbyterian Women throughout the

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Synod of the Sun. Including a \$5000 grant from Synod of the Sun, since March 2011 Presbyterian Women from throughout our synod and across the USA have raised over \$71,000. This money was used to install eleven water systems and one solar system and some funds to maintain them in this “third world” country in Europe. A core group was also trained to install the water systems and to maintain them. The Lysobeys from Arkansas and the Angis now living in Ohio were on site for the first 8 systems’ installation.

The AR Presbytery Carpathian Basin Water/Solar Project Governing Board asks to be dissolved. However, the Presbytery of AR will keep the account open because money will always be needed for maintenance (\$465 in account). And other groups may be led to continue this ministry.

Send donations to Presbytery of AR, 9221 N. Rodney Parham Road, Little Rock, AR 72227. Designate that it is for the Carpathian Basin Water Project. For further information, contact Mary Beth Lysobey, Barr Memorial Presbyterian Church in Norman at 870-223-2724. [lysobeym@windstream.net](mailto:lysobeym@windstream.net)

## **CARPATHIAN BASIN WATER/SOLAR PROJECT**

### **March 2011-November 2014**

Kigyos: Reformed Church Elementary School March 2011 – LWW System

Fornos: Public School March 2011 – LWW System

Bulcsu: Reformed Church Nursing Home October 2011 - LWW System

Csonkapapi: Public School April 2012 – LWW System

Szernya: Reformed Church Roma Primary School April 2012 LWW System

Beregszasz: Roma Health Center near “Village of the White Wall”: dug well, installed hot water heater and building heating system, May 2013 LWW System

Mezovari: Reformed Church Roma Primary School May 2013 LWW System

Nagydobron: Reformed Church Nursing Home May 2013 **SUTS** System and hot water heater for bathing of residents

Rat: Reformed Church Conference Center/Summer Camp and nearby Reformed Church Kindergarten School June 2013 LWW System

Nagydobron: Gezi Neni’s Roma Kindergarten School LWW System funded by Winnetka Presbyterian Church, Winnetka, Illinois June 2013

Nagydobron: Orphanage; a new building to house orphans who are about to get too old to be in the regular orphanage. This transitional home prepares them to live in the real world and to get jobs. LWW System Nov. 2014 (This system was paid for out of the Carpathian Basin Water/Solar funds, but was planned, built, and will be maintained by Reformed faith people from the community. (The leaders were trained in the USA at LWW and SUTS.)

Mezőgecse: Reformed Faith pre-school in a village located on the Tisza River. The water is contaminated in all the village wells, except for this one; the LWW system was planned, installed and will be maintained by the Ukrainian people, the system being paid for out of Carpathian Basin Water/Solar Fund. LWW System Nov. 2014.

**Consent agenda was approved.**

## **OPENING WORSHIP**

Young Adult Volunteer Ashley Nipp of Stillwater, OK gave the sermon, and youth who are going on the presbytery-sponsored mission trip to Memphis this summer were commissioned. Other worship leaders were TEs Stewart Smith and Anne Russ, YAVs Katie McGee and Chris Utterback. Dr. Bevan Keating, director of Music; Adam Savacool, organist, and choir led music. The worship offering benefitted the travel expenses of youth attending the presbytery-sponsored trip to the Montreat, NC Youth Conference.

## **REPORT OF THE GENERAL PRESBYTER**

General Presbyter Stewart Smith reported on leader formation program he is participating in as a new GP and a particular session on adaptive change (deeper and substantive), noting change is being forced upon us. He reported on yesterday's workshop led by TE Michael Vinson, and the next one is second in a series of three. He applauded the Young Adult Volunteer programs and partnerships with multiple entities. Opportunities in the wider church include Nov. 3-4 mission at Synod office, Synod Sunday observed on August 27, Kevin Keaton from Board of Pensions being in NWA Aug. 3 and in Little Rock Aug. 4, Big Tent in St. Louis July 6-8 including Face to Face for congregations seeking pastors. Financial help is coming Sept. 25-27 from Stewardship Kaleidoscope, and church leader grants are available to help people attend.

## **GREETINGS FROM INTERFAITH ARKANSAS**

Rev. Stephen Copley, executive director, brought greetings. A United Methodist minister, he referenced their display off the narthex, thanked presbytery for financial support over the decades, and named the three PCUSA ministers on their board. Doing ecumenical and interfaith work, Interfaith Arkansas involves 12 Christian denominations and four world religions.

## **REPORT OF THE STATED CLERK**

Temporary Stated Clerk Belden gave the following report:

The exercise of voice and vote at a meeting of the Presbytery of Arkansas has been given by vote to those commissioners listed in Section 1.C Membership of the *Organization and Structure* section of the Ministry Manual of the Presbytery of Arkansas as follows:

“The membership of the Presbytery includes all Teaching Elders enrolled by the presbytery and all congregations within its boundaries. Ruling Elders elected as General Presbyter, Stated Clerk, Assistant Stated Clerk, or Treasurer; Commissioned Ruling Elders in current service; members of the Coordinating Team, or current commissioners to General Assembly shall be enrolled as members of the presbytery during the term of elected service. Ruling Elders who are Certified Christian Educators as defined by the most recent edition of the *Book of Order of the PC(USA)* may be enrolled as members of the presbytery.”

Also exercising voice and vote are the following, per *Organization and Structure* Section 3.D.3.g.: “Moderators of CCM, CLD, Future of the Church, Administration, Y/YA/C, Mission of the Church, Nominations and Representation who are Ruling Elders shall be enrolled as members with voice and vote if not otherwise members of the presbytery.”

**For Action:**

1. The Administrative Commission charged with working with Walnut Grove Presbyterian Church, Farmington, and Cane Hill Presbyterian Church, Cane Hill, brings the following recommendation to the presbytery for action:

**The Administrative Commission recommends that the funds from the sale of the Walnut Grove Presbyterian Church building and grounds be invested in a fund to be named the “Walnut Grove Commissioned Ruling Elder Fund” for the purpose of assisting with the training and support of Commissioned Ruling Elders.**

See APPENDIX. AC member RE Ted Belden, First United Presbyterian Church, Fayetteville, spoke. Sale will be completed later this month, and presbytery would control this fund. Discussion: TE Ruskin Falls asked why these funds were not to be given as they had often been in the past to the former CC&D committee and suggested waiting to determine funds recipient until after task force on finances makes a final report. TE Anne Russ spoke in favor of support for CREs as part of current church revitalizing. Funds would not be going to the former recipient but instead to the actual future of the church. TE John King, HR, another member of the AC, pointed out that on church closing at Berryville the AC established a fund for development in Carroll County and so favored this motion. Stated Clerk explained that ACs have different powers related to use of funds from church closing and that this AC recommended this use. **Motion was approved.**

2. Remove #2 from the Consent Agenda and replace it with the following motion:

**The Administrative Commission charged with working with First Presbyterian Church, Siloam Springs recommends that the presbytery (note: this church was dismissed to ECO with financial settlement spread over several years):**

- receive the final report of the Siloam Springs Administrative Commission,
- refer the dispersal of funds received from First Presbyterian Church of Siloam Springs to the Future of the Church Area,
- and dismiss the members of the Administrative Commission with thanks. There were no questions or discussion. **Motion was approved.**

3. Recommendation to form an Administrative Commission for One-O-One Presbyterian Church, Gamaliel, with the following members and authority, and the responsibility to report to the Presbytery of Arkansas:

**a. Members:**

- TE Elizabeth Gabbard; First Presbyterian Church, Arkadelphia
- TE Dick Shinkle, HR; CCM representative
- TE Blake Brinegar; First, Yellville
- RE Evelyn Mills; First, Harrison
- RE Don Crapnell; First, Mountain Home
- TE Leslie Belden, Temporary Stated Clerk (ex-officio)

**b. Charged with the responsibilities and authority to:**

- Determine the financial situation of the church;

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- Consult with the congregation and its session, advising it of the provisions of the Book of Order, presenting options for the resolution of the conflict;
  - Sell or encumber any real property;
  - Assume original jurisdiction of the church, if necessary;
  - Advise the congregation and its session of polity requirements should the congregation wish to withdraw from the PC(USA).
- c. **Reporting:** The AC shall communicate to the Stated Clerk all actions taken on behalf of the presbytery. Actions shall be reported within two weeks of having been taken. (Email is a satisfactory way to report actions taken). Written reports of the AC's actions shall be submitted no less than 30 days prior to each stated meeting of the presbytery.
- Motion from the Temporary Stated Clerk was seconded, and motion was approved.

**For Information Only: Report on the Administrative Commission working with First Presbyterian Church, Ozark, TE Brian Brock, Moderator**

The Administrative Commission has approved the sale of the property owned by First Presbyterian Church of Ozark, and that sale is pending. The offer is for \$26,000, of which 20% (\$5,200) will go to the Presbytery of Arkansas and 80% will be designated to repair the church building, as approved at the October 22, 2016 presbytery meeting. (This is vacant land. See excerpt from the meeting below.)

“A request was received from the Ozark church for permission to sell vacant land and use the proceeds to make essential repairs to the church building. The AC assigned to Ozark agreed with the request. Following lengthy conversation about the context of the situation including Ozark's financial position and the fact that the congregation is pursuing dismissal from the PC(USA), a motion was made and seconded to:

- Approve the sale of the property with proceeds earmarked for repairs to the church building.
- Require that any sale be approved by the Ozark Presbyterian Church Administrative Commission prior to sale. “

The Session of First Presbyterian Church of Ozark is in conversation with the Covenant Presbyterian Denomination about transferring to that denomination. The Administrative Commission will continue to work with the Session and congregation to accomplish the requirements of the “Policy for Schismatic Churches,” as approved by the presbytery in June, 2012 and General Committee on June 6, 2015.

**For Information:**

1. New business for this presbytery meeting was received by Temporary Stated Clerk until 8 p.m. Friday, June 2, 2017. None was submitted.
2. Since the presbytery packet was put on-line we have received notification that the Session records of additional churches have been reviewed and they are alphabetically inserted in the later list.
3. There was a box to collect signed documents and payment for background checks at the Registration Table in the Narthex of Second Presbyterian Church at the June 3, 2017 presbytery meeting. Teaching Elders, Commissioned Ruling Elders, and Certified Christian Educators must turn in signed Background Check forms, checks to pay for the background checks, and signed documentation of receipt of the Sexual Misconduct Policy by June 10, 2017.



All active members of the Presbytery of Arkansas, which means Ministers of the Word and Sacrament, Commissioned Ruling Elders, and Certified Christian Educators who are Ruling Elders, as well as Certified Christian Educators who are not Ruling Elders, and other ministers serving within the bounds of the presbytery with the exception of non-active honorably retired clergy are subject of the presbytery’s Sexual Misconduct Policy and are included in the Presbytery of Arkansas’s Background Check Policy. This means that everyone in these categories must sign the acknowledgement of the Sexual Misconduct Policy and must also sign the Disclosure and Release Form and submit \$10 to the presbytery to cover the cost of the background check. **There are 45 members of presbytery from whom office had not received forms on the date that this report was posted to the presbytery’s website.**

4. The Temporary Stated Clerk completed filing the presbytery’s annual reports with the Office of the General Assembly as required by GA rules (the Governing Body Costs Report, the Salaries and Benefits Report, and the Summary of Church Changes Report were reported prior to the February 17-18, 2017 meeting of the Presbytery of Arkansas):

**a. Minister Summary**

|                                         |     |
|-----------------------------------------|-----|
| i. Necrology                            | 2   |
| ii. Dismissed to another Presbytery     | 8   |
| iii. Dismissed to another Denomination  | 0   |
| iv. Other Removals                      | 0   |
| v. Ordained                             | 0   |
| vi. Received from another Denomination  | 0   |
| vii. Restored                           | 0   |
| viii. Received from another Presbytery  | 4   |
| ix. Minister Total as of 1/1/2016       | 148 |
| x. Losses                               | -10 |
| xi. Gains                               | +4  |
| xii. Ministers on Roll as of 12/31/2016 | 142 |
| xiii. In Transit                        | 4   |

**b. Per Capita Apportionment 2016**

Total           \$95,543.28\*

\* Presbyteries in the Synod of the Sun do not report their “per capita” in the same manner as presbyteries in other synods. AR reports the total amount the presbytery pays rather than the amount paid per congregation member.

**c. Meeting Dates for 2017**

- i. February 17-18, 2017; 6:45 pm – 9 pm Friday evening, 9 am – 3 pm Saturday; University of the Ozarks, Clarksville, Arkansas
- ii. June 3, 2017; 9 am – 4 pm Saturday; Second Presbyterian Church, Little Rock, Arkansas
- iii. October 6-7, 2017; 6:30 pm – 9 pm Friday evening, 9 am – 3 pm Saturday; Graham Memorial Presbyterian Church, Forrest City, Arkansas

5. Per recommendation from the Committee on Representation, the Temporary Stated Clerk will prioritize encouraging congregations to send in their statistical reports to General Assembly for 2017. The percentage

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of congregations turning in statistical reports for 2016 was dismally low: 42%. Clerks of Sessions can begin compiling information late in the year knowing that reports are due the first part of February.

6. RE NiAnn Thompson, the presbytery's Resourcing Director/Recording Clerk, assisted the Temporary Stated Clerk by submitting the 2016 Minutes of the Meetings of the Presbytery of Arkansas, indexed, with a table of contents and appendix, to the Synod of the Sun for their review on April 5, 2017. NiAnn Thompson's work on behalf of the Presbytery of Arkansas in the area of assistance to the Temporary Stated Clerk is to be commended by the presbytery.
7. The Temporary Stated Clerk attended training for the Synod Permanent Judicial Commission and presbytery stated clerks on March 29-30, 2017 at the Synod of the Sun office in Irving, Texas. The Temporary Stated Clerk attended training for new stated clerks by the Office of the General Assembly on April 3-5, 2017 at the Presbyterian Center in Louisville, Kentucky. The Temporary Stated Clerk attended the Synod of the Sun's Event on Civil Conversations on April 20-21, 2017 at Woodhaven Presbyterian Church in Irving, Texas.
8. In the near future the Presbytery Ministry Manual will need to be edited to reflect recent changes in the presbytery. For instance, the presbytery was reduced from five to four regions, and Part I, Organization and Structure, states that the Coordinating Team shall have between 12 and 17 members, but at no time may more than three members come from the same region. With only four regions that would mean that the maximum number on the Coordinating Team could be limited to twelve, making it difficult to fulfill all of the other necessary criteria for membership on the CT, including representation from various ministry areas and committees.
9. The General Assembly records show that the following were transferred or removed by the former Stated Clerk:
  - TE Jeff Cranton to Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery
  - TE Chris Jones to Cherokee Presbytery
  - TE Rachel Jenkins Shepherd to West Virginia Presbytery
  - TE Breck Castleman has been removed
10. The General Assembly records show that the following were enrolled by the Presbytery of Arkansas:
  - TE Jeremy Wilhelmi, as Chaplain at the University of the Ozarks
  - TE Terry McLellan, HR
  - TE Jai Kwak, as Pastor of Central Presbyterian Church, Pine Bluff
11. TE Liz Wagner, Associate Pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Bella Vista, was named by the Committee on the Church's Ministries to serve on the Administrative Commission working with First Presbyterian Church of Clarksville, replacing TE Phil Butin.
12. The Presbyterian Women's report was in the final packet for this meeting and with the retreat flyer are in APPENDIX.

13. Stated Clerk's office has received notification that the Session records of the following congregations have been reviewed. Please notify Temporary Stated Clerk Leslie Belden if your records have been reviewed and no record is shown of it.

First, Arkadelphia  
West End, Arkadelphia  
Presbyterian Church of Bella Vista  
First, Bentonville  
Vaughn, Bentonville  
Cane Hill Presbyterian, Cane Hill  
First, Clarksville  
Harmony, Clarksville  
First, Conway  
First, Dardanelle  
Kirk of the Hills, Fairfield Bay  
First United, Fayetteville  
Central, Fort Smith  
First, Fort Smith  
First, Heber Springs

Holly Grove Presbyterian Church  
Kirk in the Pines, Hot Springs Village  
First, Hot Springs  
First, Huntsville  
Grace, Little Rock  
Pulaski Heights, Little Rock  
Second, Little Rock  
Westover Hills, Little Rock  
Barr Memorial, Norman  
Park Hill, North Little Rock  
Mount Vernon, Pea Ridge  
First, Rogers  
First, Springdale  
Cleburne Avenue, West Helena

Only 29 of 83 reported review. Multiple ways to review will be offered by the Temporary Stated Clerk this year.

14. The following honorably retired teaching elders who are members of the Presbytery of Arkansas have earned and chosen the status of HR active, and all others within and beyond the bounds have the status of HR non-active for 2017.

Catherine L. Allsbury  
Ben H. Bateman  
William W. Branch  
Ira "Ike" Brighton  
Donald Campbell III  
Danny Daniel  
Joyce Daniel  
Milton B. Davis  
Guy Delaney  
David H. Dyer  
Heinrich B. Eiler  
Alan Ford

Orin M. Frank  
Richard Frothingham  
Gordon F. Garlington III  
David E. Gill  
Howard H. Gordon  
William F. Henning  
Sally Stockley Johnson  
Lance Jones  
David S. King  
John E. King  
Mark Lenneville  
"Bo" Lewis

Terry McLellan  
James B. Miller  
Richard H. Miller  
Jerry Rice  
C. Michael D Seitz  
Richard Shinkle  
Frederick A. Taylor  
W. Kennedy Upham  
Don Wardlaw  
Rita Wilson  
Darwin Wolfe

Belden read list of those who have privilege of vote. Commissioners moved to the Great Hall at 11:30.

#### **ORDER OF THE DAY**

#### **"Really Welcome: A Conversation on Children, Safety, and Responsibility"**

TE DC Adams presented the Order of the Day, distributed handouts and answered questions. He prayed God's blessing on the lunch.

**LUNCH IN GREAT HALL AT 12:30 P.M.**

**BUSINESS SESSION #2**

Commissioners moved back to the sanctuary for the rest of the meeting. Moderator called commissioners back into session at 1:15 p.m.

**REPORT OF THE TREASURER**

Treasurer RE Bob Boehmler gave the report, pointing out the financial reports in the late packet (APPENDIX).

He commented on year to date revenue vs. expenses with a \$25,000 deficit, and the budget for the year. He continued with analysis that last year there was no need for a transfer from investments due to good discipline and watching expenditures, and appreciated benevolences from presbytery's churches, knowing there are issues in local church giving. He pointed out balance sheet, and pay off of loan for presbytery's pledge to Ferncliff campaign at end of February 2017, which greatly helps the outlook. Boehmler said presbytery is blessed to have investment accounts in Texas Presbyterian Foundation of over \$4,000,000 with a return of 5.2% this year.

Belden announced that morning's worship offering totaled \$1,169.85. Moderator asked for evaluations to be filled out and deposited in a basket outside sanctuary door.

**REPORT OF THE COORDINATING TEAM**

Coordinating Team Moderator TE Lacy Sellars gave the report.

**For Information:**

The Coordinating Team met on April 1, 2017 to discuss planning future presbytery meetings, and at their regularly scheduled meeting on May 6, 2017 adopted the following general guidelines

1. Continue to meet at our PC(USA) Universities (Lyon and the University of the Ozarks) normally on the second or third weekend in February for Friday/Saturday meetings.
2. Continue to have a summer meeting.
3. Ordinarily alternate the Summer meeting between First Presbyterian Church of Conway and Second Presbyterian Church of Little Rock, but the presbytery would accept an invitation from another centrally located church as appropriate.
4. Loosen the language in our policies and procedures concerning the location of our Fall meeting so that we could lift up the possibility of meeting at Ferncliff but also leave it open so that an invitation in a different part of the state could be considered.
5. Plan meetings around general themes but be flexible in what the themes will be.
6. Those planning presbytery meetings will have the flexibility to plan breaking out into educational opportunities within the context of a meeting, rather than usually before a meeting as a pre-presbytery workshop.
7. Give the lead of planning worship for presbytery meetings to the host church with the presbytery assisting in making sure that elements that the presbytery may need (such as a candidate preaching or the installation of the Moderator) are incorporated. When Ferncliff is hosting a partner congregation, or congregations, could plan worship.
8. Reduce the number on the Presbytery Meeting Planning Team to the Moderator, Stated Clerk (and/or Assistant Stated Clerk), Representative of the Host Institution (could be the pastor, but could be someone else), General Presbyter, and Moderator of the Coordinating Team (5).

The Coordinating Team took the following actions on behalf of the presbytery at their regularly scheduled meeting on May 6, 2017

1. Designated the offering during worship at the 135<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting on June 3, 2017 to help with travel expenses of our presbytery's youth delegation attending this summer's national Presbyterian youth conference at Montreat, North Carolina.
2. Designated the October 2017 presbytery offering toward the capital campaign underway at Presbyterian Village in Little Rock, specifically to help with the challenge matching grant recently received from the Mabee Foundation to help the Village renovate and upgrade the facilities that serve its aging residents; renovations not just updating the physical appeal of the campus, but also allowing the Village to enhance and expand services and programs offered to its residents, most importantly licensed care for those with Alzheimer's Disease/dementia.
3. Invited PC(USA) Stated Clerk Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson to speak at the February 2018 meeting at Lyon College, with the date to be determined by the calendars of Lyon College and Rev. Dr. Nelson.
4. Planned to have a theological discussion on how to have civil discourse within the church at the 137<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Arkansas, February 2018 meeting at Lyon College.
5. Edited the presbytery's Disclosure Authorization and Release Form to reflect a background check only national and state criminal records, as approved by the presbytery. (included at the end of Section C as Exhibit 1) APPENDIX. Sellars held up #5, 6 and 7 from this report and encouraged all to do their documents in this, the 5<sup>th</sup> year as prescribed by the policy.
6. Edited the presbytery's Background Check Policy to be consistent in covering the same individuals covered by the presbytery's Sexual Misconduct Policy. APPENDIX
7. Approved the correction of typographical errors and omissions in the presbytery's Sexual Misconduct Policy. APPENDIX
8. Added TE Dennis Ritchie to the First Presbyterian Church of Rogers Administrative Commission, replacing TE Leslie Belden.
9. Added RE Ronnie Prevost, Presbyterian Church of Bella Vista, to the La Comunidad Hispania Administrative Commission, replacing TE Leslie Belden.
10. Approved establishing a general guide for electing moderators and choosing vice-moderators of committees and ministry areas which resembles the model of the presbytery's moderator and vice-moderator, with the former moderator serving in an advisory role the third year.
11. Approved establishing staggered terms of moderators of committees/ministry areas so that the majority of moderators don't rotate off at the same time.
12. Approved having the Moderator of the Nominating Committee, or designee, serve as an ex-officio member of the Coordinating Team.
13. Adopted criteria to guide the Nominating Committee in the selection of nominees for General Assembly Commissioners and Youth Advisory Delegates. APPENDIX
14. Appointed an Administrative Commission for First Presbyterian Church, Clarksville, with the members listed, and authority granted, as reported following:

**First Presbyterian Church, Clarksville, Arkansas  
Administrative Commission**

On May 6, 2017 the Coordinating Team of the Presbytery of Arkansas, with the authority of the presbytery, formed an Administrative Commission with the following members and authority, and the responsibility to report to the Presbytery of Arkansas:

1. Members:
  - a. TE Clare Kelley, First Eureka Springs and Holiday Island
  - b. TE Phil Butin, First United Fayetteville; CCM representative (to be changed to TE Liz Wagner, Presbyterian Church of Bella Vista pending approval of the presbytery)
  - c. TE Rita Wilson, HR, First Huntsville
  - d. RE Melissa Fontaine, Second Little Rock
  - e. RE Ted Belden, First United Fayetteville; Future of the Church representative
  - f. RE Jeff Roper, First Batesville
  - g. RE Charlotte Scott, First Fort Smith
  - h. TE Leslie Belden, Temporary Stated Clerk (ex-officio)
  - i. TE Erin Kaye, Pines Presbytery, Representative from the Synod of the Sun (ex-officio)
  - j. Advisor Melanie Gibson, Grace Little Rock (ex-officio)
2. Charged with the authority to:
  - a. Determine the financial situation of First Presbyterian Church, Clarksville;
  - b. Counsel the Session of First Presbyterian Church, Clarksville, Arkansas, in the Session's discernment of the financial needs of the church;
  - c. Counsel the Session and membership of First Presbyterian Church, Clarksville, Arkansas, in the Session's and congregation's deliberations and actions toward the "selling of real property" (G-1.0503d);
  - d. Counsel the Session of First Presbyterian Church, Clarksville, Arkansas, in their prayerful discernment and conversations with the University of the Ozarks about the potential for mutual ministry;
  - e. Serve as the presence of the Presbytery of Arkansas in conversations with the University of the Ozarks;
  - f. Serve as the presence of the Presbytery of Arkansas in the development of any covenant between the University of the Ozarks and First Presbyterian Church, Clarksville, Arkansas.
  - g. Sell or encumber any real property;
  - h. Enter into a covenantal relationship with the University of the Ozarks and First Presbyterian Church, Clarksville, Arkansas, and any other partner who may be deemed appropriate;
  - i. Assume original jurisdiction of the church, if necessary.
3. Reporting: The AC shall communicate to the Stated Clerk all actions taken on behalf of the presbytery. Actions shall be reported within two weeks of having been taken. (Email is a satisfactory way to report actions taken). Written reports of the AC's actions shall be submitted no less than 30 days prior to each stated meeting of the presbytery. Prior to dissolution, minutes of all meetings of the AC shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk.

#### **For Action**

1. **Motion to return the name of the "Committee on the Church's Ministries" to the "Committee on Ministry."** This is a proposed change to the *Presbytery Ministry Manual Part 1 Organization and Structure* and requires a 2/3 vote of the presbytery to be able to suspend the rules of requiring thirty-days written notice of this proposed change allowing the vote on Motion #1 and #2. There was no discussion. **Motion to suspend rules was approved.** Motion to change name itself requires a 3/5 majority vote to be approved. Discussion: TE Dennis Ritchie asked about term of service, TE Dari Rowen said AR is only presbytery to have changed name. **Motion to return name was approved.**

*Rationale: "The Church and Its Ministries Area" is made up of two committees: the Committee on Leadership Development and the Committee on the Church's Ministries. That the name of one of the committees is so similar to the ministry area under which it exists causes confusion within the presbytery. Within our own Manual, the name of the committee is misnamed in various places, including line 275, where it is called "Ministries of the Church." Members, congregations, and sessions throughout the presbytery are confused about who they should contact, and ordinarily say, "You know, the committee that used to be the COM." The Presbytery of Arkansas is one of the few presbyteries of the PC(USA) that changed the name of this committee formerly mandated by the Book of Order, also making it confusing among the other presbyteries in the denomination when communicating between presbyteries. When the Presbytery of Arkansas changed its structure, it changed the responsibilities of most committees, necessitating the changing of their names. The responsibilities of the CCM/COM did not change to the degree that a change in name was needed.*

2. **Motion to delete the words "A majority of members shall be selected from the non-Caucasian racial ethnic groups within the body and," from the Membership section under the Committee on Representation from Presbytery of Arkansas Manual Part 2 Ministry and Committee Duties, so that the paragraph would read (the words in parentheses are the words to be omitted): (this change requires only a majority vote)**

"Presbytery shall elect an eight (8) member COR whose membership shall consist of equal numbers of men and women. Normally, at least one member from each region shall be elected. **(A majority of members shall be selected from the non-Caucasian racial ethnic groups within the governing body and)** The total membership shall include persons from each of the following categories:

- a. Majority male membership
- b. Majority female membership
- c. Racial ethnic male membership
- d. Racial ethnic female membership
- e. Youth male and youth female membership
- f. Persons with disabilities"

Discussion: TE Marie M-O'Connell asked when other language in this section will be addressed. Sellars replied he will ask Nominating Committee to consider. **Motion was approved.**

*Rationale: The Nominations and Representation Committees believe that mandating race as the determining criteria for the majority of members diminishes the importance of representation of other minority groups not determined by race. In a presbytery/denomination so heavily dominated by Caucasians it is difficult to find people of color who also represent other minority groups, including those with disabilities. It has also been stated that it is insulting to people of color for race to be the criteria that the majority equates with the need for representation.*

3. **Motion to fill the following immediate vacancies:**

- a. **Committee on the Church's Ministries, Class of 2018: TE Bill Branch, HR of Walnut Ridge and Newport, replacing TE Leslie Belden**
- b. **Ministry Area on Youth, Young Adults, and Campus Ministry, Class of 2017: TE Jeremy Wilhelmi, Chaplain of the UofO, Clarksville, replacing TE Ray McCalla**
- c. **Committee on Leadership Development, Class of 2017: TE Jeff Price, Trinity, LR (at his own request Jeff is moving from the Future of the Church Ministry Area), replacing RE Mike Easley**

d. **Committee on Leadership Development, Class of 2018: TE Susan Gray, Vaughn, Bentonville, replacing RE Sherry Miller.** Moderator asked for nominations from floor for each position. There were none. **Nominees were elected.**

4. **Motion to elect TE Marion Humphrey, Allison, Little Rock, Region 3, (2018) and RE Keith Burt, First, Bentonville, Region 1 (2017), to serve on the Nominating Committee.** Nominees were solicited from floor. There were none. **Nominees were elected.**

### **REPORT ON COMMITTEE ON REPRESENTATION**

In absence of COR moderator, Temporary Stated Clerk Belden drew attention of commissioners to the following report:

The Presbytery's Committee on Representation examines and compares the statistics of who is serving in elected positions to the statistics reported to General Assembly by local churches of their membership and makes commendation and recommendations for wider inclusion and closer representation.

**Only 35 of the 83 congregations in the presbytery (42%) submitted statistical reports** to General Assembly for 2016 by the February 2017 deadline. Therefore, comparison of ages, genders, races, and disabilities "in the pews" to those elected to serve cannot be accurately done this year. (Note: if a church does not submit statistical reports, General Assembly "brings forward" that church's statistics on membership, age, gender, race and disability from the last year a local church report was submitted. For most churches, this inflates their membership and may skew the age, gender, race and disability of their membership.)

The Presbytery's Committee on Representation met by conference call on Monday, May 1, 2017 with 6 of 8 voting members present to examine the following statistics:

#### **1. Number of positions filled by people serving Presbytery as of April 1, 2017:**

188 (5 fewer, compared to 193 last year). Active members reported by those churches which actually reported to G.A. by deadline (or their 2015 number brought forward if the church did not report) totaled 12,138 and grand total of 12,532 adherents, which number includes baptized (not confirmed) and other participants for the presbytery report.

Persons counted as elected have been nominated by the Committee on Nominations and approved by presbytery, or nominated to commissions by committees as officers, members of committees or commissions of the Presbytery or to fulfill specific tasks of the Presbytery. (Ferncliff Board and Presbyterian Women Coordinating Team, self-perpetuating groups; Youth Advisory Team, filled by application process; and all subcommittees which are populated by invitation are not included.)

Eight (8) Administrative Commissions are in place this year as compared to 9 Administrative Commissions, one task force, and one support committee (for the General Presbyter) this time last year.

This number (188), of positions filled by people serving the Presbytery, includes thirty-five **(35) persons who serve in more than one position (and some in several positions)**. They are counted multiple times – once for each chair each fills. (This number of people serving in multiple positions (35) is four fewer than last year's 39 persons in dual or more roles. **There are 137 different people participating**, 3 fewer than 140 last year.) It should be noted here that restructuring requires 10 people elected to ministry areas or committees to serve also on the Coordinating Team as representatives of those groups, so by definition those 10 must serve in two positions simultaneously.



The 35 persons counted above filling more than one position include sixteen (16) active Teaching Elders, fifteen (15) Ruling Elders and four (4) laypeople.

**2. Number of different churches represented by persons elected:** 51 of 83 churches.

This is nine fewer churches than participated last year. However, one church was dismissed in 2016. Eight administrative commissions are also working with 6 churches at their request, and some of these are struggling churches, of which a couple may be dissolved in the future.

61% of churches within the presbytery bounds are participating in the work of the Presbytery. This is 9% less than the percentage which participated last year.

30 churches that do not have any staff or members serving (four more than last year) are as follows, followed by region numbers and AC (Administrative Commission, if they are assigned):

- |                                    |                                   |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a) Amity, Alpine (Region 2)        | p) HSV, Woodlands (2) -- AC       |
| b) Arkadelphia, West End (2)       | q) Huntsville, First (1)          |
| c) Beebe, First (4)                | r) Little Rock, First (3) -- AC   |
| d) Bentonville, Vaughn (1)         | s) Lonoke, First (3) -- AC        |
| e) Brinkley, First (4)             | t) Marianna, First (4)            |
| f) Cane Hill (1) – AC              | u) McGehee, First (3)             |
| g) Clarksville, First (2)          | v) Mountainburg (2)               |
| h) Elkins Federated (1)            | w) Newport, First (4)             |
| i) Eureka Springs, First (1)       | x) Ozark, First (2)               |
| j) Fayetteville, Mount Comfort (1) | y) Paragould, First (4)           |
| k) Gamaliel, 101 (4)               | z) Pine Bluff, First (3)          |
| l) Gurdon, First (2)               | aa) Stuttgart, First (4)          |
| m) Hardy, Spring River (4)         | bb) Walnut Ridge, First (4)       |
| n) Helena, First (4)               | cc) W Helena, Cleburne Avenue (4) |
| o) Holiday Island (1)              | dd) Yellville, First (1)          |

Note: Five (5) of the above churches are under Administrative Commissions. 18 of the churches above are pastorless.

**3. Age Groups:**

There was a slight increase in the 25 and under age group and slight decreases in the 26-35 age group and in the 36-55 age group from previous year--64% of the elected persons, 1% more than last year, are age 56 or older.

Observation: The Youth Advisory Team, a 40-member subcommittee of presbytery's Committee on Ministries with Youth, Campus and Young Adults comprised predominately of young adults and youth, is not in this count since subcommittees are appointed, not elected. YAT is, however, invited to submit names to Committee on Nominations.

| <u>Age Group</u> | <u># of Persons Elected</u> | <u>% of Total Elected</u> | <u>Comparison to Report from Churches</u> |
|------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 25 & Under       | 7                           | 5%                        | 11%                                       |
| 26 - 35          | 7                           | 5%                        | 15%                                       |
| 36 - 55          | 36                          | 26%                       | 9%                                        |
| 56 - 64          | 42                          | 31%                       | 17%                                       |
| 65 and Up        | 45                          | 33%                       | 48%                                       |

While divided differently, those elected from under 25 through age 55 total 36% and reported in the churches total 35%. Again divided differently, those elected age 56 and up total 64% and reported in the churches, 65%.

**4. Genders of persons and percentage of elected group:**

| <u>Gender</u> | <u># Elected</u> | <u>% of Total Elected Group</u> | <u>Comparison to Report from Churches</u> |
|---------------|------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Male          | 68               | 49.6% of those elected          | 45% of reported members                   |
| Female        | 69               | 50.4% of those elected          | 55% of reported members                   |

There is miniscule change from the last two years' percentages of 49% male and 51% female. If we want to "mirror" the statistics from our churches, more females need to be elected.

**5. Ethnic Heritage of elected persons and percentage of group compared to reported members:**

| <u>Ethnicity</u>                                | <u># Persons Elected</u> | <u>% of Elected Group</u>       | <u>% of Reported Members</u> |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| African American/Black                          | 6                        | 4.5% (1/2% more than last year) | 1%                           |
| Caucasian/White                                 | 129                      | 94% (1% less than last year)    | 97%                          |
| Hispanic                                        | 2                        | 1.5% (1/2% more than last year) | 2% (all others               |
| Asian, Native American, Middle Eastern, African | 0                        |                                 | combined)                    |

Note: Of the presbytery's churches that did report to General Assembly earlier this year about their 2016 statistics, racial ethnic breakdown included: Asian, Middle Eastern, Native American, White, Black/African American, African, Hispanic.

**6. Type of Ordination represented by number of persons and percentage of elected group:**

| <u>Ordination</u>                      | <u># Persons</u> | <u>% of Total Elected Group</u> |
|----------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|
| Teaching Elder                         | 50               | 36% (3% less than last year)    |
| Ruling Elder                           | 71               | 52% (3% less than last year)    |
| Non ruling elders (deacons or members) | 16               | 12 % (6% more than last year)   |

(This is a change from last year's 54 TEs, 77 REs and particularly only 9 deacons or members. This is due to the election of numerous young people who have not yet served as RE.)

**7. Number of persons with Disabilities who are elected:**

This category is defined as hearing, sight, and mobility disabled.

- **Eleven (11) persons** elected to serve have a disability: 5 related to hearing, 5 to mobility, and 1 to sight. This is 8% of the people elected, two % more than last year.

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- Comparison to disabilities reported by local churches: 938, 8% of total membership, reported disabilities. (COR believes that this determination is made by those preparing the report rather than by the members themselves. It is also unclear whether churches are reporting those with “managed” disabilities.)

The percentage of disabled elected persons mirrors the percentage reported or brought forward by local church statistics.

### **Summary:**

1. Disappointingly low percentage of churches submitted 2016 statistical report to G. A. by deadline, making comparison to statistics on those elected to serve very difficult.
2. Beyond required double service on Coordinating Team, it is still a hope to have one person filling one position rather than one doing 2 or 3 jobs. The practice of 1 person/1 position involves more and different people.
3. Most of statistics are in line with previous years except for low percentage of teaching elders serving.

### **Recommendations were highlighted by Temporary Stated Clerk Belden:**

1. Many approaches should be offered to get those statistical reports in: start email reminders early, offer to input their data if computer use is problem, offer workshop at October presbytery meeting to help pastors or clerks, put deadline, helps and encouraging video on presbytery website, explain pluses of reporting and minuses of not reporting through different media including Banner and Facebook page. Percentages must go up.
2. Nominations is doing a good job and is encouraged to invite more women and teaching elders to serve. Please use the list of unrepresented churches and seek Native American, African, Middle Eastern and Hispanic people from all congregations to involve.
3. All committees are encouraged to meet when younger working people can participate and advertise Zoom and phone conferencing rather than travel.

Note: Statistics on disability of elected persons are for information only. Report was submitted by committee moderator RE Ledridge Davis.

## **REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS**

In absence of Nominations moderator, Belden gave the report, encouraging commissioners to use the form in the packet to provide names of qualified persons to serve on presbytery committees, subcommittees or ministry areas or as alternates to General Assembly commissioners.

## **REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON THE CHURCH'S MINISTRIES**

Committee moderator TE Dari Rowen gave the report.

### **For Presbytery Action:**

1. **Motion to approve the call of TE Kade Curry as pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Springdale, effective June 6, 2017 with the following terms of call:**

| <b>Effective salary:</b> |                 | <b>Reimbursable Expenses</b> |                     |
|--------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Cash salary</b>       | <b>\$34,000</b> | <b>Automobile</b>            | <b>\$3,000</b>      |
| <b>Housing</b>           | <b>\$28,000</b> | <b>SECA</b>                  | <b>\$4,743</b>      |
|                          |                 | <b>Cont. Ed.</b>             | <b>\$1,200</b>      |
|                          |                 | <b>Other (Cell)</b>          | <b>\$1,200</b>      |
|                          |                 | <b>Moving</b>                | <b>Actual Costs</b> |

**Full medical, pension, disability and death, Board of Pensions**

|                           |                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Paid Vacation</b>      | <b>Four (4) weeks</b> |
| <b>Paid Continuing Ed</b> | <b>Two (2) weeks</b>  |

**Motion was approved.**

**And the following to serve on the Installation Commission for Sunday, August 6th at 4pm at FPC Springdale:**

**TE Stewart Smith, General Presbyter**

**TE Bill Henning, Honorably Retired**

**TE Kris Crawford, Member at Large**

**RE Susan Anderson, First, Springdale**

**RE Ruth Hamilton, Moderator, Presbytery of Arkansas to moderate the commission**

**RE Jeremy Hightower, First, Searcy**

**and to grant permission for TE Janice Six, from First Central Presbyterian Church, Abilene, TX (Palo Duro Presbytery), to be allowed to sit with the commission and participate in the service, with the offering to benefit Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center. Motion was approved. Curry thanked the congregation at Searcy, and Springdale people stood.**

#### **For Information:**

##### **Honorable Retirement**

TE Robert Hadley was granted Honorable Retirement status effective June 1, 2017.

##### **Necrology**

TE John T. "Jack" Rorex, HR, died at his home in Little Rock on December 23, 2016. Born in Maryville, TN, he attended school in the mining camps, completed his bachelor's degree at Maryville College and his M. Div. degree from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. He pastored churches in Texarkana, AR, Midland, TX and in this presbytery Paragould and Little Rock before serving as an Army chaplain during the Vietnam War. After further education he was the director of Delta Hills Health System Agency in Batesville, administrator of The Meadowcreek Project in Fox, and manager of Heifer International Ranch in Perryville. Retiring in 2006, he assisted in his wife's catering business and served as a chaplain with Arkansas Hospice. Jack is survived by his wife of 44 years, Nancy Leggett Rorex, two daughters, two sons, eight grandchildren and two great grandchildren. The service was at Trinity Presbyterian, Little Rock on Dec. 29, 2016.

TE Dr. Hugh Geraint "Gary" M. Jones, HR, 91 died on March 27, 2017 in Hot Springs. Born in Bargoed, Wales, he served in the British Royal Navy in World War II before immigrating to the United States. Jones earned a degree from Arkansas College, now Lyon College, Master of Divinity from Union Theological

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Seminary in Richmond, and Doctor of Divinity from Vanderbilt before being ordained in 1954. He pastored churches in VA, TX, TN, and El Dorado, AR, moderated two presbyteries, before retiring in 1990. In 1994 he became a member of this presbytery and served on the Board of Trustees at Lyon College. Rev. Jones is survived by his wife of almost 65 year, Joan Creason Jones, a son and daughter, and four grandchildren. The celebration of his life was held on April 1, 2017 at First Presbyterian Church, Hot Springs.

TE Duane Udell Farris, HR, 97, died in Mountain Home on April 30, 2017. He was an honorably retired minister member of the presbytery. Born in Bellefonte, AR, Farris attended the University of the Ozarks, Clarksville (then College of the Ozarks) and graduated from the University of Nebraska at Omaha and Princeton Theological Seminary. He served churches in CA and TX, retired in 1986 and was received by AR Presbytery in 2007. He is survived by one son, two granddaughters, four great grandchildren and preceded in death by his wife Joy Farris and one son. His service was held on May 5 at First Presbyterian, Mountain Home, where he attended, with Rev. Michael Clark officiating.

**Pastoral Leadership Changes for information only**

Renewed the covenant of TE Susan Gray as Stated Supply at Vaughn Presbyterian Church, Bentonville.

Approved the covenant of Rev. Michael Qualls, Cumberland Presbyterian Pastor, effective April 20, 2017 as the Pulpit Supply at Graham Memorial Presbyterian Church, Forrest City.

| Effective Salary                        |         | Reimbursible Expenses |          |
|-----------------------------------------|---------|-----------------------|----------|
| Cash Salary                             | \$5,000 | Automobile            | \$4,000  |
| Housing                                 | \$6,000 | Professional          | \$1,500  |
|                                         |         | Travel                | \$500    |
|                                         |         | Cont. Ed.             | \$500    |
| Medical/Pension (not Board of Pensions) |         |                       | \$10,500 |

Approved the covenant of John Landis, a pastor in the American Baptist denomination, as the Pulpit Supply of First Presbyterian Church, Pine Bluff, effective May 2, 2017 through April 30, 2018, with the following terms of call:

|                              |                    |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Salary                       | \$36,000           |
| Housing                      | \$18,000           |
| Pension and Medical Benefits | 0                  |
| Moving Expense               | 0                  |
| Vacation                     | 1 week per quarter |

He stood and was welcomed. Rowen acknowledged the three ministers remembered in necrology with a moment of silence.

**REPORT OF FUTURE OF THE CHURCH MINISTRY AREA**

Area Ministry moderator RE Leah Shell gave the report with these highlights. Presbytery website is being revamped. Staff member TE Michael Vinson led workshop yesterday of “Fostering Life Nurturing Environment for Change to Thrive” attended by 23 congregations. Camera for Zoom room has been purchased. The

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following information was in the written report:

### **March 28<sup>th</sup> - Meeting Details**

- 1) MOTIONS INCLUDING THE MEETING AGENDA, MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING, AND APPROVAL OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS WERE APPROVED.
- 2) Ted Belden and Peg Falls-Corbitt gave a report on the Coordinating Team
- 3) Anne Russ gave a report on the Social Media Seminar which was held on March 7, 2017 at First Presbytery Church, Conway. The Future of the Church Committee was the sponsor of this seminar.
- 4) THE COMMITTEE VOTED TO FUND THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE PRESBYTERY WEBSITE. Funding will come from the Technology account within Future of the Church.
- 5) LYON COLLEGE SUBMITTED A PROPOSAL TO THE COMMITTEE FOR FUNDING OF A PORTION OF THE RENOVATION COST FOR THE BROWN CHAPEL. A lengthy discussion was held around supporting Lyon and the relationship with both Lyon and University of the Ozarks. A MOTION WAS MADE AND SECONDED TO DENY FUNDING OF THIS REQUEST. MOTION PASSED. PEG FALLS-CORBITT THEN MOVED THAT THE COMMITTEE INVITE LYON TO REDRAFT THEIR REQUEST AND RESUBMIT IT TO THE COMMITTEE. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED AND FAILED 6 TO 4.
- 6) A MOTION WAS MADE AND SECONDED TO EXPLORE USING ZOOM TO HOLD COMMITTEE MEETINGS. The committee voted to begin using zoom at the May 16<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **May 16<sup>th</sup> - Meeting Details**

- 1) MOTIONS INCLUDING THE MEETING AGENDA AND MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING WERE APPROVED. THE FINANCIALS DID NOT SHOW FUNDING SUPPORT AND WERE NOT APPROVED. THE FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED WHEN THEY ARE CORRECTED.
- 2) The meeting held on May 16, 2017 was the first meeting which used Zoom. Three members of the committee successfully participated from remote sites, while the remainder of the committee met in person at First Presbyterian Church in Conway.
- 3) A MOTION WAS MADE BY ANNE RUSS SECONDED BY STEVE FRAZIER TO DIVIDE THE COMMITTEE DUTIES INTO TWO CATEGORIES: TACTICAL AND STRATEGIC. THE MOTION PASSED. The division of duties will be implemented during our August committee meeting. The committee expressed their personal preference for tactical and strategic work.
- 4) Becky Purcell gave the committee a report on the progress of the Grant Guidelines workgroup. They continue working on policy and documents and will have the grant application process completed before January 3, 2018.
- 5) Peg Falls-Corbitt and Ted Belden gave a report on the Coordinating Team.
- 6) Anne Russ brought the committee up to date on the progress of the new website. The website project team will be staffed by members of the technology subcommittee and Presbytery staff.
- 7) Mike Vinson provided an update of the seminar that he will lead on Friday prior to the June Presbytery meeting. The seminar will be held at Ferncliff. ANNE RUSS MADE A MOTION WHICH WAS SECONDED FOR THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH TO FUND DINNER FOR SEMINAR ATTENDEES. THE TOTAL COST OF THE DINNER WILL BE NO MORE THAN \$500. The motion passed. After dinner the Presbytery will host a trivia night at Ferncliff. Mike desires to have a group work with him on logistics planning the next workshop.
- 8) A MOTION WAS MADE AND SECONDED TO SUPPORT MARIE MAINARD-O'CONNELL IN EXPLORING A MULTI-ETHNIC CHURCH IN ARKANSAS. THE MOTION PASSED.

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- 9) Peg and Anne gave a report on the CRE Task Force. The task force will continue working on reimbursement forms and policy for funding requests. A MOTION WAS MADE BY TED AND SECONDED TO REIMBURSE DAVID CLARK \$750 FOR CRE TRAINING.
- 10) A MOTION WAS MADE AND SECONDED TO DENY FUNDING FOR A REQUEST FOR RETREAT FUNDING FOR MAX HILL, INQUIRER UNDER THE CARE OF THE PRESBYTERY OF ARKANSAS.

### REPORT OF THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH AREA

Area moderator Commissioned Ruling Elder Kelly Pearson gave the report. He particularly pointed out financial support for local churches' new or continuing ministry projects and grants for Big Tent. Following is their written report.

The "Mission of the Church" ministry area has had two regular meetings since the February Presbytery Meeting: February 23 and May 11. The earlier meeting had a review of policies and responsibilities for our ministry-area related to (adult) education and missional ministries. In the two meetings, reports and minutes of the several entities and the permanent subcommittee, Disaster Preparedness and Response whose report is below, have been received.

Much of the discussion and planning by the Mission of the Church and a task-force of this ministry-area have been regarding the October 6-7, 2017 presbytery meeting. We are anticipating a theological discussion/lecture related to "Reformed Spirituality" by Dr. David Johnson of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary on both Friday and Saturday, and an addition discussion/lecture on Saturday by Rebecca Spooner, MWS, Director of Wellspring Renewal Center on the subject of "spirituality as a caregiver at any age."

The worship offerings for both the June and October presbytery meetings have been suggested and approved by the Coordinating Team: June--travel expenses for youth attending Montreat this summer, & October--toward the capital campaign of Presbyterian Village to be applied toward the matching-grant of the Mabee Foundation.

A discussion to which we return periodically is how to more efficiently and effectively disseminate information on the work of the presbytery to the pews of our congregations, particularly for this area, to share grant emphases to meet possible financial needs. *The Banner* may be getting no farther than the persons involved directly in the life of the presbytery: pastors, commissioners, committee and ministry-area members. Church secretaries and pastors are encouraged to forward *The Banner* on to their memberships, especially to their email recipients, and their sessions.

Some of the more recent allocations of the Mission of the Church budget have been: Ferncliff Camp & Conference Center-\$12,000 for summer programs, first installment; University of the Ozarks-\$1000; Lyon College-\$1000; \$1500 *Good360*, a program to exchange/sell goods to non-profits for a fraction of costs, by way of Ferncliff; Presbyterian Village-\$500; Family Promise of Pulaski County-\$2000 for fuel of client-transporting van; Two grants to assist with attendance at NEXT Church-\$100(\$50 each); and Presbyterian Pilgrimage-\$1000, first installment. And as the year goes by, watch for announcements of additional allocations.

**Grants of \$50 to individuals remain available to help with expenses to St. Louis for the Big Tent event of July 6-8. As well, Unified Mission grants, to assist with ministries to/with the most vulnerable--young and old, may be sought. For either, apply to Kelly Pearson, [ktpearson@suddenlink.net](mailto:ktpearson@suddenlink.net).**

#### Subcommittee on Disaster Preparedness and Response

A written report from the permanent Subcommittee on Disaster was included in the presbytery meeting packet

APPENDIX. TE “Ike” Brighton, moderator, invited volunteers to serve on mucking out or sheet-rocking crews in any of the 40 counties affected by recent flooding.

## **ORDER OF THE DAY: OVERTURE TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON EXCLUDING CAMPAIGNING IN THE CHURCH**

RE Noah Williamson, Barr Memorial Presbyterian, Norman spoke on the following overture and moved its adoption:

**The Session of Barr Memorial Presbyterian Church in Norman, Arkansas respectfully asks the Presbytery of Arkansas to approve forwarding the following overture to the 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly:**

### **Overture: On excluding campaigning in the church**

The Presbytery of Arkansas respectfully overtures the 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly (2018) to include language in the *Book of Order* in Chapter Four, The Church and Civil Authority, creating a new section G-4.04 titled Separation of Church and State, which would read:

In keeping with the Constitution of the United States of America and the theological conviction of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to encourage diversity within its unity, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affirms its commitment to excluding any and all campaigning within the church for or against any individual seeking a position at any level of public government.

### **Rationale**

With the possibility of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) of the United States of America changing its rule prohibiting non-profit organizations from endorsing or opposing candidates seeking a public office, it is imperative that Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations maintain neutrality concerning elections for the peace and unity of the church. If churches would not lose their non-profit status by campaigning for or against candidates there could be many congregations and denominations which would include those activities as an integral aspect of their public witness. And yet in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) we maintain that, “The Church is to be a community of witness, pointing beyond itself through word and work to the good news of God’s transforming grace in Christ Jesus its Lord.” (F-1.0301). So our witness to the good news of God’s transforming grace in Christ Jesus precludes our witness to the political viewpoints of any one individual, or individuals.

In addition, the church is a place where individuals are encouraged to worship and serve our Lord Jesus Christ together in spite of differences in viewpoints. Indeed, in the PC(USA) we encourage diversity within our unity, holding that, “The Church seeks to include all people and is never content to enjoy the benefits of Christian community for itself alone,” (F-10302a) and that, “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, disability, geography, or theological conviction.” (F-1.0403)

For as much as we proclaim, “That ‘God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to his Word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship.’”(F-3.0101a) we also insist that the members of congregations and its councils be free from theological divisions that campaigning for political candidate or candidates would create.



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In addition to the above written report, Williamson gave the background of relevant laws, the thought that campaigning on one's own but not from/for the church would prevent the church from becoming a political action committee. He detailed one church that lost its tax-exempt status in 1992, asked that commissioners vote their conscience and suggested a townhall presentation in churches of all candidates.

Lengthy discussion followed: RE Claudia Driver, FUPC, Fayetteville, suggested amending the overture. TE Frank LeBlanc spoke against the overture because of its wording and said that faith translates to political action. TE Paul Fulks spoke in favor of amending the overture for language change and mentioned divisions in congregations. TE Howard Gordon, HR spoke against overture, suggesting presbytery not concur with this. TE Ruskin Falls spoke about not concurring, citing language that was too broad, the problem of speaking about a candidate elsewhere than the pulpit and affirmed the "freedom of the pulpit" but liked the push for diversity. TE Sally Johnson, HR recommended not concurring and asked for a committee to work on this overture and bring it to the Oct. presbytery meeting.

**TE Jeremy Wilhelmi moved to table the overture and ask for revision by sending it back to the Barr Memorial session.** Motion was seconded. Discussion: TE Katie Cummings asked if it would come back in the same form. TE Falls asked how it would come back. Moderator asked if motion maker wanted to specify method or revise motion, and he declined. **Motion failed.**

TE Howard Gordon, HR commended the Session of Barr Memorial and stated he believed in the Johnson Amendment and that the church should vigorously discuss this issue. TE Marie Mainard-O'Connell asked to whom, which committee, this overture could be referred. Temporary Stated Clerk Belden answered that the polity committee, composed of the most recent commissioners to General Assembly, would be appropriate committee. RE Driver continued to work on an amendment, perhaps changing campaign concern to endorsement and political party. **TE Rita Wilson, HR moved that the overture be referred to the Polity Committee to bring it back to the Presbytery.** Motion was seconded. TE Fulks suggested that Polity Committee take into consideration suggested new language. **Motion to refer was approved.**

TE Gordon suggested this as a theological discussion for a future presbytery meeting and wants a statement from this presbytery. Belden shared that a discussion on civil discourse is planned for a future presbytery meeting. Moderator prayed.

## **REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

Committee Moderator TE Kade Curry gave the report. The committee meets by Zoom and were thanked for their work as liaisons to inquirers and candidates. He voiced appreciation to Sessions, home pastors and families on getting their paperwork finished and especially lauded the United Campus Ministry, Fayetteville.

### **For Information:**

The Committee on Church Leadership Development met via video conference on Saturday March 11<sup>th</sup> and interviewed 2 Inquirers, Max Hill and Jordan Akin, to simply touch base and ensure that they were feeling supported in their preparation process. Committee Members present were Moderator Kade Curry, Debbie Freeman, David Clark, Susan Anderson, Sarah Leer, Bill Henning and Kathy White.

The Committee on Church Leadership Development then met Saturday April 29<sup>th</sup> via video conference at 930am with members Kade Curry, Debbie Freeman, David Clark, Sarah Leer, Bill Henning, Kathy White, Lynn Condra and Susan Anderson present to interview 2 applicants for inquiry, 2 applicants for candidacy and to hold 1 final interview.

Keith Dove was officially endorsed by the session of Central Presbyterian Church of Russellville and applied to be recommended to come under care as an inquirer. Keith was interviewed by the committee upon which a motion was made that he be recommended to the Presbytery for the Covenant Agreement of Inquirer, motion was seconded and vote was made in favor of the motion.

LaWanda Harris was officially endorsed by the session of Pulaski Heights Presbyterian Church in Little Rock and applied to be recommended to come under care as an inquirer. LaWanda was interviewed by the committee upon which a motion was made that she be recommended to the Presbytery for the Covenant Agreement of Inquirer, motion was seconded and vote was made in favor of the motion.

Stacey Hammons, who is currently under the Covenant Agreement of Inquiry, was officially endorsed by the session of Second Presbyterian Church of Little Rock and applied to be recommended to come under care as a Candidate. Stacey was interviewed by the committee upon which a motion was made that she be recommended to the Presbytery for the Covenant Agreement of Candidacy, motion was seconded and vote was made in favor of the motion. The committee discussed the fact that the New Form of Government no longer places a minimum time limit on the Inquiry phase, and while Stacey still has significant coursework, ordination exam study and general preparation left to do, the committee felt that due to her educational background and her current work in the Presbytery, she technically fit the definition of Candidate much better than that of Inquirer. Thus, the decision to recommend her to the Presbytery for Candidacy.

Stephen Moody, who is currently under the Covenant Agreement of Inquiry, was officially endorsed by the session of First Presbyterian Church of Little Rock and applied to be recommended to come under care as a Candidate. Stephen was interviewed by the committee upon which a motion was made that he be recommended to the Presbytery for the Covenant Agreement of Candidacy, motion was seconded and vote was made in favor of the motion. The committee discussed the fact that the New Form of Government no longer places a minimum time limit on the Inquiry phase, and while Stephen still has significant coursework, ordination exam study and general preparation left to do, the committee felt that due to his educational background and his current work in the Presbytery, he technically fit the definition of Candidate much better than that of Inquirer. Thus, the decision to recommend him to the Presbytery for Candidacy.

Lastly the Committee on Church Leadership Development had the honor of interviewing Brittany Fiscus Van Rossum from First Presbyterian Church in Jacksonville for her final interview. Brittany was interviewed and in such interview, she was able to communicate her growth and full preparation for the Call of Ordained Teaching Elder, having exceedingly met all of the committee's requirements a motion was made and seconded upon which a unanimous vote was had in favor of releasing Brittany to seek an ordained call. Brittany will remain under care of the committee until such call is made. Curry announced she was entering a Ph.D. program.

**For Action:**

**1.Motion that Keith Dove of Central Presbyterian in Russellville come under care of the Presbytery of Arkansas in the Covenant Agreement as an Inquirer. He was absent. Motion was approved.**

**Statement of Faith**

I believe that God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit exist together as the three parts of the one Triune God. I believe that God is the creator of heaven and earth. Out of love, God became incarnate in order for all of creation to be redeemed. I believe that Jesus Christ was God Incarnate, both fully human and fully divine. In his life, Christ taught us how to love God and each other. Through his death, Christ experienced complete separation from God, yet he overcame that separation and was resurrected to once again exist in perfect union with God. Through the love of Christ, we have hope that all of creation will be redeemed. The Holy Spirit guides us, sways us, and influences us so that we can show God's love to others and act according to God's will. Through Christ, I can have a relationship with God here and now. The Holy Spirit guides me, so that I may be able to constantly grow closer to God. With specific reference to being Presbyterian, I affirm that I am allowed to ask questions and have doubts. Both as a Presbyterian and a follower of Christ, love is something that I do, rather than just talk about. Being Presbyterian means that I welcome all people, from all walks of life, as the children of God that they are, and that I am a child of God too. As a Presbyterian, I am a proponent for social justice and ethical stewardship of creation. Presbyterians value education and academic work, rather than shying away from it. Being Presbyterian also means that I will work with others as a community to discern God's will instead of having one leader telling me what God's will is.

**2.Motion that LaWanda Harris of Pulaski Heights Presbyterian Church in Little Rock come under care of the Presbytery of Arkansas in the Covenant Agreement as an Inquirer.** She was introduced and talked about her diverse interests as a nurse, pointing her toward chaplaincy in a hospital, jail or school. TE Ward Rudolph asked for more information on the phrase in her statement on “straightforward lives” and she responded. **Motion was approved.** Her pastor TE Ruskin Falls offered a prayer for her, and members of Pulaski Heights stood in support of her inquiry.

#### **Statement of Faith**

I believe the love that God and Jesus has for us is unconditional and cannot be duplicated by any living human being. I believe the Holy Spirit is a presence within and around everyone. God uses the Holy Spirit to lead us where he wants us to go. God created us to live lives that are not straightforward. I believe we are sometimes at odds with the Holy Spirit, but the love of God will never part from us. I believe that Jesus lived on earth and showed us how to become closer to God. I accept that no one is perfect and it is impossible to walk exactly in Jesus’ footsteps. I also think that God gave each of us strengths to utilize during this time on earth. God made no two people alike. We all have unique gifts that bring not only ourselves, but others closer to the love of God. I believe the relationship between God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and humans is a mysterious thing. I do not accept my denomination as the only correct or highest religious group. The Holy Spirit dwells among us in many different ways. No one can be accurately sure any of what we understand today is fact. I do know the God I worship will love me no matter what. The grace of God is one of the greatest blessings that all of us receive, no matter our race, religion, or personal character. God gave his son to be my savior and to guide me through my imperfect life. I will not be who I am without faith and trust in God.

**3.Motion that Inquirer Stacey Hammons of Second Presbyterian Church Little Rock come under care of the Presbytery of Arkansas in the Covenant Agreement as Candidate.** Curry explained that she has not been an inquirer for a year as required under former system, but that CLD can do more for candidates than for inquirers. Hammons was introduced and spoke of where she is in the process as chaplain at Presbyterian Village. Curry invited questions on her statement of faith, and DC Adams asked her theology of sacraments

(who is host at Lord's Supper and what the water does in baptism). She replied and was escorted from sanctuary while commissioners deliberated. Curry explained that she was beginning this phase of study. **Motion was approved.**

### **Statement of Faith**

I believe in the goodness and perfect love of God. God is one and three; there is unity in the oneness and distinction in the three-ness. God's perfect love can be seen in the Trinity through the relationship of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. I believe God is sovereign, beyond our full understanding, but to be the one who offers light, hope, help, peace, and healing.

I believe in the full divinity of Jesus Christ. He is the visible image of the invisible God; he is the clear representation of God and in Christ all of who God is exists. At the same time that Jesus Christ is fully God, I believe he is fully human. These two natures are complete in the one person, Jesus. Through the life, death and resurrection of Christ, a way was made for the restoration of humanity to God. Jesus came to free the captive, release the oppressed and provide forgiveness of sin. It is through the gift of grace that we are saved. Salvation joins us to Christ and sets us free from sin and oppression. We have been saved, not simply from our sin, but to live an abundant, empowered and loving life in a continual and eternal relationship with God.

I believe the Holy Spirit empowers. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the Spirit spoke at different times through human beings, empowering them for certain tasks. It was by the power of the Holy Spirit that Christ was conceived, resurrected from the dead and the church was born at Pentecost. The Holy Spirit offers renewal and guidance, convicts us and guides us into truth and teaches us all things.

I believe the Word of God to be necessary for living out my faith. It is where I find guidance, comfort and strength. Reading, studying and meditating on God's Word connects me to God and to the bigger picture of God's sovereignty over and great love for the world.

I also believe the church to be necessary for living out my faith in this world. It is meant to be where we find community; we are not Christians alone. At our best and most loving the church glorifies God through worshipping, loving and serving together, and is inclusive of all.

**4.Motion that Inquirer Stephen Moody of First Presbyterian Church of Little Rock come under care of the Presbytery of Arkansas in the Covenant Agreement as Candidate.** He was introduced and updated the presbytery on his progress and his current service at First, Jonesboro. Both he and Hammons are in the Dubuque Seminary program. Questions on his faith statement were offered by TEs Adams, Cummings on baptism, and Fulks on his use of "mankind" and other exclusive language. He was escorted out. Curry explain how the committee helps candidates put their studies together to fill in the educational holes. **Motion was approved.**

### **Statement of Faith**

I believe in God as Almighty. I believe God is the reason for the existence of mankind. I believe that God has consistently reached out to man to bring him to a right relationship with Him. I believe that God's acts of love culminated in the gift of Jesus Christ. I believe Jesus came to seek and save the lost, and that His death and resurrection gave us all the free gift of grace and mercy. I don't believe those

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gifts can be earned, but can only be accepted in humble faith. I believe the Holy Spirit is God's Comforter and Teacher to the Christian. I believe that the triune God reaches out to mankind in His completeness.

I believe that God's love and mankind's salvation is a constant and fluid event. I believe that God comes to his creation wherever they find themselves in their spiritual journey. I believe that as people spiritually grow that God is there to nurture and lead them as they change and adapt to the circumstances they find their lives in. I believe that my faith is guided, not by feelings, but by the knowledge that I am His. I believe that nothing is able to separate me from the love of God.

I believe that we celebrate the sacraments of baptism and the Lords Supper to remember and to be encouraged and empowered to be the body of Christ that has the common goal of loving those who society deems unlovely. I believe that we are called to be completely inclusive to and embracing of the marginal among us.

Both returned to applause. People from First and Second, Little Rock stood in support. Moderator asked constitutional questions, which they answered in the affirmative. Curry embraced and prayed for both new candidates.

### **CONCEAL CARRY LEGISLATION AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR CHURCHES**

TE Marie Mainard-O'Connell, interim associate, Second, Little Rock presented a video report that could be used with Sessions and placed on Youtube. With passage of recent AR legislation, Acts 562 and 859 will come into effect on September 1. Her video suggested three options in response: do nothing, post signs prohibiting firearms at every church entrance and adopt policy of "see something/say something."

### **MINUTE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Various commissioners addressed upcoming events: RE Cathy Rogers on Presbyterian Women's retreats in August, TE Wilhelmi on opportunities at University of the Ozarks and the future of First, Clarksville meeting on June 4 for the first time in the UofO chapel, TE LeBlanc on the Cotham Lecture series with Carol Howard Merritt at Westover Hills, Little Rock and CCE Kristi Button requesting names and addresses of students enrolling at UofA, Fayetteville so that United Campus Ministry may greet and involve them.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

There was none.

### **REPORT OF THE LEAVES OF ABSENCE COMMITTEE**

Temporary Stated Clerk Belden reported for the committee. In attendance were: 47 TEs, 43 REs from congregations, 10 other voting ruling elders, 8 REs who are church professionals, 15 visitors for a total of 124. Requesting excused absences were 30 TEs and 15 REs.

### **COMMITMENT TO GOD'S CALL—REFERRALS**

Temporary Stated Clerk Belden reported one referral—the overture from Barr Memorial, Norman referred to the Polity Committee. **Motion to adjourn was seconded and approved.**

**CLOSING PRAYER**

Moderator Hamilton gave the prayer.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment came at 3:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

NiAnn Thompson, Recording Clerk

Leslie Smith Belden, Temporary Stated Clerk

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