

**MINUTES OF THE 136<sup>TH</sup> STATED MEETING OF THE  
PRESBYTERY OF ARKANSAS  
OCTOBER 6-7, 2017**

**CALL TO ORDER/OPENING PRAYER**

The 136<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Arkansas was called to order at 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary of Graham Memorial Presbyterian Church, Forrest City on Friday, October 6, 2017 by Ruling Elder Ruth Hamilton, Moderator of the Presbytery. She lit the Christ candle and opened the meeting with prayer.

**REPORT OF ENROLLMENT/DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

Temporary Stated Clerk Minister of the Word and Sacrament Leslie Smith Belden **declared a quorum present: 29 Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and 28 REs present at the gavel.** The quorum for stated meetings of the Presbytery of Arkansas (2/20/15) is 20 REs and 20 MWSs from at least 20 congregations.

**MINISTERS OF THE WORD AND SACRAMENT (who checked on sign-in sheet):** Karen Kokles Akin, Leslie F. Belden, Blake Brinegar, Carol Clark, Fern M. Davis, Ruskin Falls, Steven Frazier, Debra Carl Freeman, Elizabeth Gabbard, Steve Hancock, “Chip” Hatcher, Marion A. Humphrey, Clare Martin Kelley, Young Doo Kim, Courtney Bacon-Latina, Frank LeBlanc, “Mike” McCracken, Rebecca Purcell, Leslie Bethell Roper, Dari Rowen, Cindy Saul, David Schaller, William Seitz, Lacy Sellars, Georgia Senor, J. Stewart Smith, Rebecca Spooner, Michael Ulasewich, Michael Vinson, Jeremy Wilhelmi.

**HONORABLY RETIRED ACTIVE MINISTERS OF THE WORD AND SACRAMENT:** Ben H. Bateman, William W. Branch, Ira Brighton, David H. Dyer, Robert Hadley, David S. King, John E. King.

**RULING ELDER COMMISSIONERS FROM CONGREGATIONS (who signed in):** Memorial, Atkins, Mark Murdoch; First, Batesville, Kathy Whittenton; First, Benton, Emily Laurel; First, Bentonville, Steve Bailey; First, Clarksville, Colton Qualls; First, Conway, Toni Edsall; First, Dardanelle, DeNann Clark; Kirk of the Hills, Fairfield Bay, Douglas Forsman; First United, Fayetteville, Marti Woodruff and Jessie Koeppe; Graham Memorial, Forrest City, Curt Patton; Central, Fort Smith, Charles Cook; First, Heber Springs, Scott Rezabek; Faith, Horseshoe Bend, George Jackson; Westminster, Hot Springs, Lawrence Grubb; First, Huntsville, Susan Presley; First, Jacksonville, Glenn Fiscus; First, Jonesboro, Jo Pease; First, Little Rock, Roberta Saxon; Grace, Little Rock, Ellen McLemore; Pulaski Heights, LaWanda Harris; Second, Little Rock, Ben Barham and Rick Wells; Westover Hills, Little Rock, H. K. Stewart; First, Marianna, Mary N. Rogers; First, Mena, Linda Spurgin; Barr Memorial, Norman, Noah Williamson; First, Prairie Grove, Lynda Bottoms; First, Searcy, Michael Langston; First, Springdale, Lamar E. Allen and Jennifer Allen; First, Walnut Ridge, Mark Lorance; First, Yellville, Tim Kelly.

**AT-LARGE COMMISSIONERS:** Ex-Officio Members of Coordinating Team, Bob Boehmler, treasurer; Ruling Elder Members of Coordinating Team, Ted Belden, Jan Enke, Karene Jones, Patty Minga; Moderators of Presbytery Ministry Areas, Committees, Subcommittees, RE Ledridge Davis, Committee on Representation, RE Leah Shell, Future of the Church Ministry Area; Ruling Elder Commissioners to General Assembly 222 Gail Murdoch; Co-Moderator, Presbyterian Women, Ila Blackketter Wolfe; Moderator of Presbytery, RE Ruth Hamilton.

**COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS:** G. Hartley Jones, Barr Memorial, Norman; Chuck Olson, Memorial, Atkins; Kelly Pearson, First, Dardanelle.

**CERTIFIED CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS:** Jeannie Ford, NiAnn Thompson. Certified Associate Christian Educators: None

**VISITORS TO THIS MEETING:** 23 signed in.

**CORRESPONDING MEMBERS:** RE Sherry Kenney, Central, Denver Presbytery, Presbyterian Foundation; MWS David Johnson, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Mission Presbytery; MWS Jane C. Johnson, First, Smithville, Mission Presbytery; MWS Tim Ferrell, HR, South Alabama Presbytery.

**YOUNG ADULT DELEGATE ADVISOR:** Jeff Dunaway, Graham Memorial, Forrest City.

**MINISTERS OF THE WORD AND SACRAMENT WITH EXCUSED ABSENCES:** DC Adams, Bill Bailey, Nancy Benson-Nicol, Phil Blackburn, Tasha Blackburn, Bryan Bond, Brian Brock, Philip W. Butin, Janet Butin, Joy Carrington, Lance Clemmons, Kris Crawford, Katie Cummings, Kade Curry, Lewis R. Donelson IV, James J. Farley III, Paul Fulks, Susan Gray, Al Henager, Jennifer Lord, Jeff Price, Dennis Ritchie, Susan Rose, Ward Rudolph, Anne Russ, Shauna Silmon, Lindy Vogado, Marci Ward, Robert Williamson, Daniel Wooley, Harry Young.

**HONORABLY RETIRED ACTIVE MINISTERS OF THE WORD AND SACRAMENT WITH EXCUSED ABSENCES:** Donald Campbell, Danny Daniel, Joyce Daniel, Gordon Garlington, Sally Johnson, Dick Shinkle, Fred Taylor, Rita Wilson, Darwin Wolfe.

**MINISTERS OF THE WORD AND SACRAMENT ABSENT WITHOUT EXCUSE:** Mark Clark, Clifton P. Ford, John Gibson, Jai Kwak, Libby Lizarraga, Marie Mainard O'Connell, Jeff Parker, Timothy C. Reeves, Patricia Schaller, Terry Tallent.

**HONORABLY RETIRED ACTIVE MINISTERS OF THE WORD AND SACRAMENT ABSENT WITHOUT EXCUSE:** Catherine L. Allsbury, Milton B. Davis, Guy Delaney, Alan Ford, Orin M. Frank, Richard Frothingham, David E. Gill, William F. Henning, Lance Jones, Mark Lenneville, "Bo" Lewis, Terry McLellan, James B. Miller, Richard H. Miller, Jerry Rice, W. Kennedy Upham, Don Wardlaw.

**SESSIONS WITH EXCUSED ABSENCES:** First, Arkadelphia; Presbyterian Church of Bella Vista; Vaughn, Bentonville; Presbyterian Church of Bull Shoals; First, Eureka Springs; First, Fort Smith; First, Gurdon; First, Harrison; Holly Grove Presbyterian; Kirk in the Pines, Hot Springs Village; Mount Vernon, Pea Ridge; First, Rogers.

**SESSIONS ABSENT WITHOUT EXCUSE:** First, Alma; Alpine, Amity; West End, Arkadelphia; First, Beebe; second commissioner from First, Bentonville; First, Brinkley; Cane Hill; Harmony, Clarksville; Elkins; One-O-One, Gamaliel; First, Gravette; Good Shepherd, Greenwood; Hardy, Spring River; First, Helena; Holiday Island; First, Hot Springs; Woodlands, Hot Springs Village; Allison, Little Rock; third and fourth commissioners, Second, Little Rock; Trinity, Little Rock; First, Lonoke; First, Malvern; First, McGehee; First, Morrilton; Hopewell, Morrilton; First, Mountain Home; Mountainburg; First, North Little Rock; Park Hill, North Little Rock; First, Ozark; First, Paragould; Central, Pine Bluff; Faith, Pine Bluff; First, Pine Bluff; Central, Russellville; First, Stuttgart; First, Van Buren; Cleburne Avenue, West Helena; Wynne Presbyterian.

**AT-LARGE MEMBERS ABSENT WITH EXCUSE:** Ruling Elder Members of Coordinating Team, Justin Clark, Ken Coker, Peg Falls-Corbitt, Mary Shaw, Marty Shepherd.

**AT-LARGE MEMBERS ABSENT WITHOUT EXCUSE:** Ruling Elder Commissioners to General Assembly 222 Jessie Rancier.

**COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS ABSENT WITH EXCUSE:** Carolyn Beane, Barr Memorial, Norman; Claire and Kenneth Rhodes, West End, Arkadelphia; Ed Wilkinson, Good Shepherd, Greenwood.

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

**CERTIFIED CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS ABSENT WITH EXCUSE:** Kristi Button, Lynn King, retired; Nancy Irving Smith, retired. **Certified Associate Christian Educators Absent with Excuse:** Lynn Condra, retired; Theresa Spragins, 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 members with privilege of the floor and voice were: MWS Dr. David Johnson, APTS, Mission Presbytery; MWS Jane Johnson, Mission Presbytery; MWS Tim Ferrell, HR, South Alabama Presbytery; and guests Rev. John Landis, American Baptist, serving First, Pine Bluff; Rev. Michael Qualls, Cumberland Presbyterian, serving Graham Memorial, Forrest City; RE Duke Monroe, First, Jacksonville; Candidate being examined Margaret (Maggie) Alsup; Melissa Jenkins, Presbyterian Village, LR; and RE Sherry Hester Kenney, Central, Denver Presbytery, Presbyterian Foundation.

### **INTRODUCTION OF FIRST-TIME COMMISSIONERS**

Moderator asked for first-time Ministers of the Word and Sacrament or ruling elder commissioners to stand and introduce themselves.

## **INTRODUCTION OF PRESBYTERY STAFF**

Moderator introduced the following: General Presbyter MWS Stewart Smith, Temporary Stated Clerk MWS Leslie Belden, absent tonight/present tomorrow Resourcing Director/Recording Clerk RE NiAnn Thompson; Director of Mission Support RE Kenneth Rich; Staff for Congregational Discernment MWS Michael Vinson; and outgoing Youth Staff Britton Varn.

## **WELCOME FROM HOST**

Pulpit Supply Rev. Michael Qualls, Cumberland Presbyterian, brought greetings from the session, congregation and staff of Graham Memorial, Forrest City, and invited all to stay after worship for the reception in Pettus Hall.

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

The following were appointed: Leaves of Absence Committee—MWS Clare Kelley, HR and MWS David Schaller; Tellers – RE Patty Minga, First, Jonesboro; MWS Ruskin Falls, MWS Jeremy Wilhelmi.

## **ORDER OF THE DAY – THEOLOGICAL PRESENTATION**

MWS Dr. David Johnson, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, spoke on “Reformed Spirituality and Current Trends and Patterns and Practices” as a guest of the Mission of the Church Ministry Area.

## **BREAK**

## **WORSHIP WITH THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER**

Candidate for Ministry Margaret (Maggie) Alsup brought the sermon as part of her exam for ordination, REs Mike Easley and Sam Harris and Candidate Stacey Hammons were liturgists, and MWSs “Mike” McCracken and Fern Davis officiated at the table. Communion was served by intinction. Ruth Ann Vowan directed the Chancel Choir, and Alex Turner was guest organist. The offering benefitted Presbyterian Village’s campus renovations, especially accessibility, the center working with dementia, and rehabilitation-therapy services. (bulletin in appendix)

## **RECESS AND RECEPTION**

Moderator Ruth Hamilton recessed the meeting until 8:30 am Saturday morning, and extinguished the Christ candle. Light refreshments were served in the Presbyterian Women’s room and Pettus Hall. Commissioners were in recess until 7:30 a.m. Saturday morning when a light continental breakfast was served in Pettus Hall.

## **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2017**

## **BUSINESS RESUMES**

Moderator Hamilton called the body back to order in the sanctuary at 8:30 a.m. She introduced MWS Lacy Sellars, moderator of Coordinating Team, and RE NiAnn Thompson, lit Christ candle and prayed. Worship offering total was \$1,232.

## **DEVOTIONAL ON SPIRITUAL HEALTH OF CONGREGATIONS**

MWS Leslie Smith Belden led the brief devotional using the new PCUSA tool “Congregational Spiritual Vitality.” (bulletin and handout in appendix). Certified Christian Educator Jeannie Ford led the song and movements to “Spirit of the Living God.” Moderator Hamilton announced the availability of flood buckets in Pettus Hall and the need to fill out meeting evaluation forms.

### **ADOPTION OF CONSENT AGENDA**

Temporary Stated Clerk Belden moved the following, which was seconded and passed:

- 1. Motion to approve the minutes of the 135<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Arkansas, June 3, 2017, held at Second Presbyterian Church, Little Rock, AR. (distributed in a separate packet)**
- 2. Motion to receive the final report of the Rogers Administrative Commission, which served in an advisory capacity to the session of First Presbyterian Church, Rogers, during their time of transition, and dismiss the members of the Administrative Commission with thanks. (report in appendix)**
- 3. Motion to dismiss MWS William Fred Galbraith, HR, to Indian Nations Presbytery, effective October 7, 2017, who was received by that presbytery on July 11, 2017.**
- 4. Motion to receive Rev. Mike Clark, a minister in good standing in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), serving as the Transitional Pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Mountain Home, as a Temporary Member of the Presbytery of Arkansas per *Book of Order* G-2.0506, which reads:**

#### ***G-2.0506 Temporary Membership in Presbytery for a Period of Service***

**A presbytery may enroll a minister of another Christian church who is serving temporarily in a validated ministry in this church, or in an installed relationship under the provisions of the Formula of Agreement (*Book of Order*, Appendix B; G-5.0202), when the minister has satisfied the requirements of preparation for such service established by the presbytery’s own rule.**

**The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is in “Full Communion” with the PC(USA) through the Formula of Agreement (*Book of Order*, Appendix B).**

- 5. Motion to approve the Clergy Compensation Report for 2017. (see appendix)**
- 6. Motion to receive the report of the Administrative Commission that installed MWS Kade Curry as Pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Springdale, and dismiss them with thanks.**

**Consent agenda was approved.**

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Presbytery Treasurer RE Bob Boehmler gave the report. He reported income received so far this year and noted that many congregations pay late in the year. He thanked the congregations and asked for support through the end of the year. It has not yet been necessary to transfer investment funds this year. Returns on investments have been good and favorable. Boehmler voiced appreciation for staff support and asked if there were questions.

## REPORT OF THE TEMPORARY STATED CLERK

MWS Belden gave the following report:

### Reminder of Quorum:

The quorum for a meeting of the Presbytery of Arkansas was established by the General Committee and passed by the Presbytery on February, 20, 2015: The quorum for stated meetings of the Presbytery of Arkansas is twenty (20) Ruling Elders and twenty (20) Ministers of the Word and Sacrament from at least twenty (20) congregations.

### Report on Administrative Commissions:

- Cane Hill/Walnut Grove Administrative Commission – Phil Butin, Moderator

The Walnut Grove property was sold for \$45,000 on July 15, 2017. The presbytery received \$19,787 at the closing of the sale and will receive another \$25,000 on or before July 14, 2018. This money, as approved by the presbytery at its last meeting, will be used to support the Commissioned Ruling Elder program of the Presbytery. The AC is in communication with the Historic Cane Hill Society, who wishes to restore the Cane Hill Presbyterian Church property and grant permission for the church to continue meeting there.

- Clarksville, First Administrative Commission – Ted Belden and Clare Kelley, Co-Moderators

The AC is charged with working with the session of First Presbyterian Church, Clarksville, with the primary responsibility of selling the property. The AC has met multiple times and is establishing the value of the building and talking with various entities about the future use of the building.

- Gamaliel, 101 Presbyterian Church – Blake Brinegar, Moderator

The congregation seeks dissolution with the PC(USA). The AC has received financial records and continues to work with the session of Gamaliel 101. The church wants to be non-denominational with the new name “Grace.”

- La Comunidad Hispanic Administrative Commission – Phil Butin, Moderator

The ministry, as it has been, has closed and the sign is down at First, Springdale.

- Little Rock, First Administrative Commission – Cyril Hollingsworth, Moderator
 

The AC continues to work closely with the session during the congregation’s transitional period without a pastor.
- Lonoke, First Administrative Commission – Marie Mainard-O’Connell, Moderator
 

The AC was established June 4, 2016 to assist church in discerning the next steps, with the session, for the congregation. They met on Thursday, September 28, at 2:00 pm.
- Ozark, First Administrative Commission – Brian Brock, Moderator
 

The AC is charged, among other tasks, with selling property that the church holds in trust for the presbytery, as the congregation expressed their desire to leave the PC(USA).
- Rogers, First Administrative Commission - Leah Shell, Moderator
 

The AC believes that they have fulfilled their charge, and they have turned in their final report to the Temporary Stated Clerk, and asked to be dissolved. (see appendix)
- Washington County Property Administrative Commission – Ted Belden, Moderator
 

The AC is charged with selling a property on Crossover Road valued at \$500,000.

**Report on Pastoral Status:**

- MWS Ray McCalla is dismissed by Arkansas Presbytery, received by Des Moines Presbytery 2/11/17
- MWS Robert Lowry, dismissed by Arkansas Presbytery 2/3/17, received by MS Presbytery 2/18/17
- MWS Susan Carter Wiggins is dismissed by Arkansas Presbytery, received by Mid South Presbytery 8/14/16

**Report on the Synod’s Review of the 2016 Presbytery of Arkansas Minutes:**

One of the responsibilities of governing bodies is to review the records of the councils immediately below them. That is why the Presbytery reviews the records of congregations and the Synod reviews the records of presbyteries. The Synod of the Sun employed a new process for reviewing presbytery minutes and the results of that review were reported to the Temporary Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Arkansas on September 18, 2017.

When something is omitted it is considered an “exception.” There were very few exceptions noted, and the Temporary Stated Clerk will address the information requested.

The findings of the Synod are reported below. The Temporary Stated Clerk respectfully requests that congregations/Clerks of Session please assist with the review of the records of sister congregations so that those reviews may be recorded and reported to the Synod.

**EXCEPTIONS:** *Required by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) the following matters shall be included in the minutes, as applicable.*

Page Number	Item Number	Description
164?	8	Independent financial review not received as noted on form. The Independent Auditor's report for year ended 12/31/2014 was included in the Appendix - p. 164
	3	No indication of the number specified as a quorum in the presbytery bylaws or standing rules
	18	Reports of all actions regarding the sale, or transfer of real property should include: address, kind of property, present use, price paid, use of proceeds.
		<b>COMMENTS:</b>
8	11-12	No indication of how many Session minutes reviewed, including the number of exceptions noted, if any.
157	14	Should "A Vision for Children and the Church" be renamed to reflect the suggested name of "Child and Youth Protection Policy"?

Belden reported to commissioners language changes in the 2017-2019 *Book of Order*: return of "Minister of the Word and Sacrament" (instead of Teaching Elder) and retention of "ruling elder" and "commissioned ruling elder."

**Note: As per the *Book of Order* D-10.0103, Belden reported that an offense has been alleged and an investigating committee appointed.**

1. Also, in addition to the action item listed in the packet, another item of business has been submitted to the office of the Temporary Stated Clerk. **A request has come from the Session of the Presbyterian Church of Bull Shoals to grant them permission to sell to the Town of Bull Shoals, Arkansas, a parcel of property that was gifted to them.** Belden moved request and it was seconded. The Presbyterian Church of Bull Shoals received a gift of property across the street from the church on July 1, 2011. There are no utilities to the property and the city's Planning and Zoning Committee will not rezone the property to make it feasible for the church or a potential buyer to extend utilities to it. Meanwhile the church continues to pay for maintenance to the unimproved property. The Session called a congregational meeting, and on September 10, 2017 the congregation



voted to Quit Claim the property back to the City of Bull Shoals, pending approval of the Presbytery of Arkansas. (specifics on property from letter) **Motion was approved.**

## **2. Motion to limit all speakers to three minutes when speaking to a motion.**

### *Rationale:*

When the Presbytery of Arkansas gathers we gather to worship, fellowship, learn together, celebrate our ministry together, and to conduct the business before us – with the intent that all that we do is to the glory of God. All of these aspects of our meeting are important. At this meeting there are three 45-minute theological discussions and much business before us. In an attempt to honor the voices of all, and allow the business that is later in the docket to receive as much attention as the business earlier in the docket, those wishing to speak to a motion should be concise in their remarks so that others may also have time to speak.

**Motion was approved.**

## **REPORT OF THE PRESBYTERY’S TASK FORCE ON STAFFING MODEL**

MWS Leslie Bethell Roper, TF Moderator, First Presbyterian Church, Batesville, submitted the written report as follows with no verbal report:

“Our task force was charged with the work of looking at the current staffing model of the Presbytery of Arkansas, with particular attention to the direction and priorities set forth in the latest restructuring of the Presbytery, and recommending any changes to that staffing model that we see fit. We were asked to report back to the October 2017 meeting of the Presbytery.

The basis of our report is this: we are working on it! This is significant work, and we remain grateful for the Presbytery’s trust in us to complete it. So far, our work has included:

- Seeking definition among ourselves for our task, and in particular distinguishing our calling from the important and ongoing work of the Administrative Committee;
- Exploring the history of our current staffing model as well as its past iterations to be able to fully understand how we arrived at the model we have today;
- Comparing our own staffing needs and structure with other presbyteries, with particular focus on the eleven presbyteries within the Synod of the Sun;
- Determining other voices, including current and past staff and current leaders in our presbytery with distinct perspectives on our staffing needs, from which we need to learn and contacting said individuals; and
- Praying together as we seek with hope and joy to discern what staffing model might carry our Presbytery most faithfully into the future.

As we continue our work, we covet your prayers, as we seek to find the most faithful way to staff our Presbytery that we might all “make visible the body of Christ” in our state and in God’s world.”

Members of the Task Force: Roper, RE Julie Adkisson, First, Conway; MWS David Dyer, HR, Westminster, Little Rock; CRE Kelly Pearson, First, Dardanelle.

## **REPORT OF COORDINATING TEAM**

Coordinating Team moderator MWS Lacy Sellars gave the report. He thanked Hamilton, Belden and Thompson.

### **For Information:**

According to the Presbytery of Arkansas' Ministry Manual:

“The Coordinating Team serves as the coordinating and program oversight body of the Presbytery between meetings. When necessary, the Coordinating Team may act on behalf of the presbytery for routine business or when a called, special, or regular meeting of the presbytery is impractical.”

The Coordinating Team met on August 5, 2017, and took the following actions on behalf of the Presbytery of Arkansas:

1. Granted Grace Presbyterian Church, Little Rock, permission to encumber the property for up to \$65,000 so that they may take out a loan to pay for repairs to the portico over the walkway surrounding the courtyard of the church.
2. Approved the request of the Presbyterian Women to celebrate the Lord's Supper at their 2018 Spring Gathering, April 21, 2018 at First Presbyterian Church, Fort Smith, with PC(USA) MWS officiating.
3. Directed the Temporary Stated Clerk to send an email to all Moderators of Ministry Areas, Committees, and Sub-Committees in The Presbytery of Arkansas Ministry Manual, plus the Moderator of Presbyterian Women and the Permanent Judicial Commission, requesting that the groups review the Ministry Manual and send the Stated Clerk any recommended changes to the Manual that would benefit their ministry.
4. Elected an Administrative Commission to assist the Presbyterian Churches in Pine Bluff, as the presence of the Presbytery of Arkansas, as they look toward their future ministry, including Pine Bluff First, Central, and Faith. (see page 14 in minutes)
5. Approved the following dates and locations for meetings of the Presbytery of Arkansas in 2018:

February 9-10, 2018 at Lyon College, Batesville

June 2, 2018 at First Presbyterian Church of Conway

October 19-20, 2018 at Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center

### **Report on Coordinating Team Task Forces:**

There are two Coordinating Team Task Forces working on (1) financial assets beyond the budget, and (2) Commissioned Ruling Elder education and process, that were to report back to

the October 2017 meeting. Those Task Forces report that their work is on-going and that they will report back at the February 9-10, 2018 meeting.

**For Action:**

According to the Presbytery of Arkansas' Ministry Manual, Part 1: Organization and Structure, 8) Amendment, A. Amendments, on page 15:

“Amendments – The **Ministry Manual** may be amended by vote of the Presbytery as follows:

1. Amending Organization and Structure – The **Organization and Structure** section may be amended by 3/5 vote of the Presbytery present and voting if the proposed amendment is distributed to all members and member congregations no less than 30 days prior to the meeting during which the vote is to take place. This rule may be waived by a 2/3 vote of the Presbytery present and voting.
2. Ministry Duties and Presbytery Policies – The Ministry Duties and Presbytery Policies sections may be amended by majority vote of the Presbytery.”

The proposed changes were posted to the Presbytery's website more than 30 days prior to the October 6-7, 2017 meeting in the folder containing documents for the October 6-7, 2017 meeting of the Presbytery of Arkansas. All congregations, members of the Presbytery of Arkansas, and those required to attend and vote due to their service to the Presbytery were notified of that posting.

The following two motions are amendments to Part 1: Organization and Structure, requiring a 3/5 vote of the Presbytery present and voting to approve.

1. **Pertaining to the Committee on Leadership Development - Motion to amend the Presbytery of Arkansas Ministry Manual Part I: Organization and Structure, 5) Ministry Areas and Standing Committees, C. 1. a) Committee on Leadership Development, (1) Membership on page 8 to reflect the following:**

**Delete:** “Membership: One member from each region of the Presbytery shall be elected to serve a three-year term. Five at-large members representing the diversity of the Presbytery shall be elected. At least one member of the CLD shall be a Certified Christian Educator or Certified Associate Christian Educator.”

**Add:** “Membership: One member from each region of the Presbytery shall be elected to serve a three-year term. Seven at-large members representing the diversity of the Presbytery shall be elected. At least one member of the CLD shall be a Certified Christian Educator or Certified Associate Christian Educator.”

*Rationale:*

The number of members was reduced in the Presbytery's restructuring and has caused difficulties in serving the needs of the candidates under care and elders in the Commissioned Ruling Elder education process. Approval of this motion will add two much needed additional members to the committee.

Discussion: Roper asked whether Nominations can find these 8 additional committee members (CLD and COM). Voice vote was inconclusive. Tellers counted: 48 yes, 20 no. Stated Clerk announced the "yes" voted totaled 70.58% of those voting, with only 60% needed for approval.

**Motion was approved by more than 3/5 majority of those present and voting.**

2. **Pertaining to the Committee on Ministry - Motion to amend the Presbytery of Arkansas Ministry Manual Part I: Organization and Structure, 5) Ministry Areas and Standing Committees, C. 1. b) Committee on Ministry, (1) Membership on page 8 to reflect the following:**

**Delete: "Membership: Two members from each region of the Presbytery shall be elected to serve a three-year term. Ten at-large members representing the diversity of the Presbytery shall be elected to serve a three-year term."**

**Add: "Membership: Two members from each region of the Presbytery shall be elected to serve a three-year term. Sixteen at-large members representing the diversity of the Presbytery shall be elected to serve a three-year term."**

*Rationale:*

Prior to the Presbytery's restructuring the Committee on Ministry had twenty-four (24) members serving the geographical regions of the presbytery. The reorganization added the responsibilities of the former Care and Nurture of Church Professionals Committee to the work of the re-named Committee on the Church's Ministry, and reduced the number on the committee to 18. The committee has struggled to provide liaisons to the growing quantity of congregations without pastoral leadership, and needs the additional six members to adequately address the needs of the presbytery. The committee will continue to be equally balanced between Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and Ruling Elders that was formerly mandated in the older version of the PC(USA) *Book of Order*.

Discussion: MWS Frank LeBlanc spoke in favor of motion on enlarging COM. He suggested some other areas or committees could be reduced in members. **Motion was approved by 3/5 majority of those present and voting.**

The following motion is a proposed amendment to Part 2 of the Ministry Manual: Ministry Area and Committee Duties, requiring a simple majority vote of the Presbytery present and voting to approve.

3. **Pertaining to the Committee on Nominations – Motion to amend the Presbytery of Arkansas Ministry Manual Part II: Ministry and Committee Duties, adding a “Number 10” under the Responsibilities of the Committee on Nominations, following line 740 on page 19 to read:**

**“The Committee on Nominations will do the best job possible to match gifts of people with needs of the presbytery while honoring parity between elders and Ministers of Word and Sacrament, and laity, where allowed, and representing both genders, several ethnicities and regional geography, aspiring to the standards required in the documents. However, when these standards cannot be met despite their best efforts, it is up to the Committee on Nominations’ discretion to bring names of persons to the presbytery as appropriately as possible, favoring those who volunteer for particular service.”**

*Rationale:* There are some Ministry Areas, Committees, or Subcommittees with vacancies, or potential vacancies, although there are those in the Presbytery who are willing to serve but do not meet representational criteria.

**Motion was approved unanimously.**

4. **Motion to confirm the action of the Coordinating Team, which elected the following to fill immediate vacancies:**
  - a. **RE Curtis Wright, Westminster, Hot Springs, Disaster Subcommittee, Class of 2017 (replacing MWS Bryan Bond who resigned)**
  - b. **MWS Elizabeth Gabbard, serving First, Arkadelphia, Synod Commissioner, Class of 2017 (replacing MWS Karen Akin who resigned)**
  - c. **RE Susan Presley, First, Huntsville, Permanent Judicial Commission, Class of 2019 (replacing RE Sam Highsmith who resigned)**
  - d. **MWS Karen Akin, Grace, Little Rock, Ministries with Youth, Young Adult, Campus Ministry Area, Class of 2019**
  - e. **RE Karen Young-Vinson, First, Conway, Committee on Ministry, Class of 2018 (replacing RE Charlie Brown who resigned)**

According to the Presbytery of Arkansas Ministry Manual, Part 2: Ministry and Committee Duties, it is the responsibility of the Coordinating Team to, “Nominate individuals to the Presbytery to be elected to the Committee on Nominations” (The Presbytery Coordinating Team, lines 69-70). Nominations were invited from the floor; there was none. **Nominees were elected.**

5. **Motion to elect the following to serve on the Committee on Nominations:**

**Vacancy:**

**CRE Chuck Olson, Class of 2019, replacing MWS Elizabeth Gabbard who resigns at the end of the year to serve as Synod Moderator.**

## **Class of 2020**

**MWS Bob Hadley, HR, and to serve as Moderator for 2018.**

**RE Kim Brooks, First Presbyterian Church, Harrison**

**RE Keith Burt, First Presbyterian Church, Bentonville**

Nominations were invited from the floor. There was none. **Nominees were elected.**

### **Pine Bluff, Arkansas Administrative Commission**

The Coordinating Team of the Presbytery of Arkansas elected an Administrative Commission with the following members and authority, and the responsibility to report to the Presbytery of Arkansas:

1. **Charged with the responsibilities and authority to assist the Presbyterian Churches in Pine Bluff, as the presence of the Presbytery of Arkansas, as they look toward their future ministry. The Presbyterian Churches in Pine Bluff include First Presbyterian Church, Central Presbyterian Church, and Faith Presbyterian Church.**
2. **Members:**
  - a. **Ruling Elder Wynona Bryant-Williams, Allison Memorial Presbyterian Church, Little Rock**
  - b. **Ruling Elder Don Eilbott; Trinity Presbyterian Church, Little Rock; COM representative**
  - c. **MWS Debra Freeman, First Presbyterian Church, Jacksonville**
  - d. **Ruling Elder Ruth Hamilton, Kirk in the Pines, Hot Springs Village**
  - e. **MWS Frank LeBlanc, Westover Hills Presbyterian Church, Little Rock**
  - f. **MWS Jeff Price, Trinity Presbyterian Church, Little Rock**
  - g. **MWS Anne Russ, First Presbyterian Church, North Little Rock, FotCMA representative**
  - h. **MWS Leslie Belden, Temporary Stated Clerk (ex-officio)**
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.**

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

Committee Vice-Moderator MWS Debra Carl Freeman gave the report. She said that their committee has the most fun, working with enthusiastic inquirers and candidates for ministry.

#### **Report of Meeting - July 15, 2017**

Arkansas Presbytery's Committee on Leadership Development met remotely via Zoom beginning at 10:00 am on Saturday, July 15, 2017. Kade Curry announced that two additional people have been asked

to serve on this committee. The committee needs additional members, as we may have twenty candidates under care by the end of the year.

#### Format for Future Meetings

The committee discussed pros and cons of holding online versus in-person meetings. Options included all Zoom with candidates joining the meeting via Zoom, committee members meeting in person and candidates joining by Zoom, and all in-person meetings. The cost savings is dramatic when using Zoom, and it seems to be a waste of resources to bring candidates in for very short actual meeting times. There is still value to having some contact with other committee members. Kade will poll the committee on preferences.

#### Additional Candidates

Potential candidates who have not submitted an application were discussed. It was noted that this committee can offer the potential candidate a person to talk to while the candidate is going through the process of discernment. No action was taken on assigning a “point person” before an official liaison is assigned.

Liaison assignments for current candidates are included on the committee roster.

#### Preparing Candidates for Examination before Presbytery

Statements of Faith have been received from Inquirers and Candidates. Liaisons are asked to review these for content, making sure possible topics for questioning are covered. It was encouraged to review possible questions with the candidates in preparation for examination before Presbytery.

#### Preparation for Interviews

The committee discussed the process for interviewing CRE candidates. Arkansas Presbytery no longer has a Lay Academy, and there isn't much structure for training. Candidates had not been formally under care but had done academic work. Now we don't have much for them to do when they do come under care. Exams have consisted of answering specific questions, and there is no requirement for CRE candidates to be presented to Presbytery. There is no requirement relative to how long a candidate is to be under care.

### **INTERVIEWS**

Candidates individually joined the meeting via Zoom.

#### Mary Shaw

Mary stated that she started classes at Austin Seminary working on a Certificate in Ministry (CIM). She had no intent at that time to become a CRE. However, she became more interested as time went on. She was already engaged in ministry but was continually receiving God's call to do more. The committee made it clear that we do not commission; we just make sure you are appropriate to be commissioned. The Committee on Ministry does the placement. Mary indicated that the course that changed her direction was “Preaching and Worship.” The committee asked where she would like to grow. Mary indicated that pastoral care comes to the forefront. Kade indicated that Mary has already met the requirements to become a CRE; the only requirement left is the final exam. Mary thinks that she is ready to be commissioned. The interview was closed with prayer led by Sarah Leer.

Motion was approved by CLD that Mary be authorized to take the CRE exam and move on to the next step.

#### Ronnie Prevost

Ronnie is a retired professor from a Baptist seminary. He actually served as Stated Supply for a Presbyterian Church during his time as a professor. He retired to northwest Arkansas and feels that

churches there could use his services. Prevost has already been given permission by the COM to administer the Sacraments and moderate the First Presbyterian Church of Rogers Session.

Ronnie discussed his change from the Baptist to the Presbyterian Church. He is from a military family who was very active in Baptist Churches. He felt an early call to the ministry. He had always recognized the broader church, not just Baptists. Go where God leads you was his philosophy, which was not tied to a denomination. Ronnie stated that he “visited around” when he moved to Bella Vista and was drawn to the Presbyterian Church of Bella Vista. He noted that the seminary where he taught was more liberal than most Baptist seminaries and that he had an easy transition to Presbyterianism. Ronnie noted that his time he is now spending serving the Rogers Presbyterian Church has confirmed his direction. He has been granted permission to moderate the Session and has used the *Book of Order* when he had questions on the Presbyterian way. His beliefs have been consistent with the PC(USA). He feels confident that he has the training to do the work. He feels comfortable with things which are different in the PC(USA) and would like to be able to be a Transitional Pastor. The interview was closed with prayer led by Susan Anderson.

Motion was approved by CLD that Ronnie be authorized to take the CRE exam and move on to the next step. It was noted that he has done an excellent job serving as supply in Rogers.

#### Review of Candidates

- Katherine Norwood is halfway through CPE. She has just spent 2 weeks in Israel/Palestine and has interned in Louisville. She is ready for the Vital Content Exam. She will have a wedding in June.
- Molly DeWitt has completed her internship as a camp chaplain. She is an intern at the seminary library. First CPE exams are in two weeks. She is then traveling to Scotland.
- Krista Denne is taking a class in Bible/Exegesis. This is the only exam she lacks. Upon passing, she will have her final interview. She is now interning in Clarksville and Ft. Smith. She is leading worship at Clarksville, First, which is an ordainable position. If she does not pass the Bible Exegesis exam, we may need to determine an alternative.
- Brittany Fiscus-Van Rossum is still under care.
- Stacey Hammons is doing work at Dubuque.
- Stephen Moody has a two-week residency on campus.
- No report on David Mills.
- Jordan Akin has applied for a Presbyterian Study Grant.
- Max Hill has an internship this summer and had a good year at Princeton.
- David Clark took some courses at Austin Seminary and saw examples of diversity in worship. He is reading in preparation for the CRE exam.
- Mary Jane Fischer will be interviewed soon.

#### Committee Name

The Committee on Ministry has asked to be allowed to keep that name. This committee discussed the merits of keeping our original name, Committee on Preparation for Ministry. This would help in communicating with other bodies, as this is the name commonly associated with our function. Kade will investigate the possibility of our going back to this name.

#### Next Meeting

Kade will send out a notice of our next meeting. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:57 am with prayer led by Kade Curry.

#### **Report of Meeting - September 30, 2017**

The Committee on Church Leadership Development met on September 30<sup>th</sup> 2017 at Central Presbyterian Church in Russellville. A report of this meeting will be given verbally at the Oct. Presbytery meeting.



Issues to be discussed include a motion to ask the Presbytery's Coordinating Team to revert the committee name back to The Committee on Preparation for Ministry.

The Committee members will be reminded of the important role that liaisons play in the work of the committee. Liaison assignments can be found on the most recent CCLD Roster.

Interviews will be had with:

Alan Huddleston to come under care of CCLD for CRE Status. Alan is a member of the First Presbyterian Church in Springdale and is currently enrolled in ministry classes at Austin Theological Presbyterian Seminary.

Jill Acree of First Presbyterian Church in Conway, had been a candidate under care in Indian Nations but was not ordained by that presbytery. After relocating to Conway she is requesting to come under care of the Presbytery of Arkansas.

Mary Jane Fischer to come under care of CCLD for CRE Status. Mary Jane is a member of the First Church in Jacksonville.

Check-in Interview for Inquirer Max Hill

Check-in Interview for Inquirer Jordan Akin

Check -in Interview for Inquirer David Mills

#### **Acknowledgements and Introductions:**

1. Acknowledge the completion of the CRE Preparation Process of Dr. Ronnie Prevost, Ruling Elder Bella Vista Presbyterian Church
2. Acknowledge the completion of the CRE Preparation Process of Mary Shaw DCE/ Ruling Elder, First Presbyterian Church, Springdale
3. Acknowledge Alan Huddleston of First, Springdale as Under Care for CRE Process.
4. Acknowledge Mary Jane Fischer of First Presbyterian Church, Jacksonville, as Under Care for CRE Process.

#### **Action Item:**

1. **Motion to enroll Jill Acree of First, Conway as an Inquirer under care of the Presbytery of Arkansas. Motion was approved.**
2. **Motion to grant permission for the Leadership Development Committee to pursue an "alternate means by which to ascertain the readiness of the candidate for ministry in the areas covered by the standard ordination examinations" for Candidate Krista Denne', should the Leadership Development Committee deem appropriate.**

*Rationale: Book of Order citations*

G-2.0610 Accommodations to Particular Circumstances

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

Discussion: MWS Jeremy Wilhelmi asked the number of tries on this exam and experiences with prior candidates. He quoted document “when should presbyteries explore means” which recommends after two attempts on exam. He said that motion doesn’t give the process for means and asked Belden if this motion is in order. Belden answered in the strictest interpretation of the citation it was not, but under a flexible interpretation it was. CLD Vice Moderator Freeman said there is no formal plan, committee has candidate working with three helpers, and she and committee want her to repeat the exam. General Presbyter Smith spoke with CLD moderator Kade Curry who said the motion would help prevent presbytery from putting off process to Feb. Inquirer LaWanda Harris asked whether motion is specific for Candidate Denne’, and Freeman answered yes. MWS Dari Rowen raised concern that CLD might waive exam altogether, and Freeman answered that CLD was not so inclined. SC read the BOO citation, referenced in the motion. LeBlanc asked if this motion passes, would presbytery still conduct final exam of candidate? Freeman answered that it would. Wilhelmi asked SC whether in motion, the intent is for candidate to take exam more times and then have alternate process. SC answered presbytery will have to include alternate means in minutes. MWS Rebecca Purcell asked for motion to be read. Freeman read motion. Purcell said that, because language of committee is vague and should be specific, she speaks against the motion, as it is not needed at this time. RE Curt Patton said he is supportive but wanted specific reasons for candidate’s problems. Freeman explained that the reasons are how the exams have gone so far and mental block that candidate has developed. Patton asked if there were no self-identified learning disabilities. Freeman answered none. MWS Elizabeth Gabbard said the motion is vague, she opposes candidate taking exam for a fifth time and asked CLD to rethink requirement on her behalf. GP Smith said candidate is preparing and has paid for exam and if not voting approval today, her process will be delayed until Feb. MWS Ruskin Falls asked them about the exam itself and whether CLD is establishing means. Freeman said candidate is given a passage, translates, and answers questions. Falls asked who is the body. Freeman said presbytery is the body and is being asked them to give authority to CLD.

Wilhelmi made the following substitute motion: **That Candidate Krista Denne’ be given an alternative means for the exegesis exam. CLD shall administer the exam and report any results at the next Presbytery meeting. If the candidate is successful in completing the alternative exam, the CLD may proceed along with process for ordination prior to the next presbytery meeting.** Motion was seconded.

Discussion: Falls asked if this motion would ultimately delay the process. Wilhelmi spoke in favor of his motion to help her pastorally to move on. MWS Georgia Senor asked if candidate is forbidden from taking exegesis exam in three weeks. MWS Mike McCracken asked if CLD has considered what the alternative process would look like, more than friendly graders. Freeman said alternative process would be more than that, and they would ask for outside help. MWS Leslie Roper said that concern is whether motion is appropriate without knowing/giving specific means. SC said strict interpretation of BoO citation is exactly what Roper said, and that another interpretation is that process is the means. Purcell asked if this motion delays her and if CLD has authority to develop alternative plan. GP Smith stated that he had worked with last candidate to be granted alternate means, that presbytery did not approve the exact alternative plan, and the (then) Committee on Preparation for Ministry just came back and reported on the alternative outcome. Senor spoke. MWS Rebecca Spooner asked for clarification and said Denne' is an elder. Freeman apologized for saying that candidate wanted to take the exam. Report was arrested to move to scheduled Order of the Day.

### **ORDER OF THE DAY – THEOLOGICAL PRESENTATION**

Dr. Johnson returned at 10 a.m. with “Encouraging Opportunities for Spiritual Development across the Generations.”

### **BREAK**

#### **COMMITTEE ON LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT (continued)**

CLD report resumed. Maker (Wilhelmi) and seconder (MWS Bateman, HR) of substitute motion withdrew the motion. New motion was presented and seconded: to make new substitute motion the main motion. **Motion that the Presbytery of Arkansas approve alternate means (to satisfy G-2.0610) of allowing the Committee on Leadership Development (CLD) to develop an assessment tool, due to test anxiety and the guidance of the Office of the General Assembly’s Cooperative Committee on Examinations, and that Candidate Krista Denne’ be given the option of taking this assessment tool in lieu of the Biblical Exegesis exam. The CLD shall administer the assessment tool, if chosen, and report the results at the next presbytery meeting. If the candidate is successful in completing the alternative exam or the standard exam, the CLD may proceed with the process for ordination prior to the next presbytery meeting.** Motion was seconded.

Discussion: Purcell spoke against this substitute motion, asked for full account of reasons but not full account of means; full account of reasons is missing. SC explained that this vote is whether to make this the main motion. MWS Blake Brinegar asked whether the substitute motion should be perfected before vote. Wilhelmi made point of order: that SC can judge motion to be perfect. SC will let the discussion and vote proceed. RE Patton asked to compare main and substitute motion. Both were pointed out. Freeman asked if word in new motion “chosen” means if she (Candidate) chooses. Answer was yes. **Motion to make the substitute motion the main motion was approved. Motion to approve the new main motion by ¾ vote as required passed.** Freeman asked for candidates and inquirers under care of CLD who were present, to stand.

Vice Moderator Leslie Roper conducted the next part of the meeting.

#### **REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**

Committee Moderator MWS Dari Rowen gave the report.

**For Information:**

1. The COM approved Rev. Doug Miller, Disciples of Christ pastor and elder in the PC(USA), as Transitional Pastor for a period of six months at Holiday Island Presbyterian Church, and Moderator of First Presbyterian Church of Eureka Springs, to include duties of moderating the Session and officiating the Sacraments, with MWS Georgia Senor as mentor, effective June 1, 2017.
2. The COM approved MWS Rita Wilson, HR, as Transitional Pastor of Central Presbyterian Church, Fort Smith, with the following terms of call for  $\frac{3}{4}$  time (Sunday-Wednesday), effective July 10, 2017:

Effective Salary	
Salary	\$33,750
Housing	\$11,250
Total	\$45,000
Reimbursable Expenses	
Mileage	\$.50/Mile with cap of \$2,400
Interim Training Paid by Church	
Vacation, Continuing Education, and Other Time Away	
Vacation	4 weeks per year
Continuing Ed.	2 weeks per year
Service to Church	Participation in Presbytery

3. The COM added the following to the Pulpit Supply List:

Jill Acree, seminary graduate and potential Inquirer under care, Conway

MWS Danny Daniel, HR, Fayetteville

MWS Joyce Daniel, HR, Fayetteville

MWS Robert Hadley, HR, Fairfield Bay

4. The COM approved the Ministerial Residence Program proposed by First Presbyterian Church of Fort Smith, with Candidate Krista Denne' serving as the resident intern of First Presbyterian Church of Clarksville with permission to celebrate the sacraments and moderate the session, effective September 1, 2017. The resident intern's salary is \$40,000 for this educational-work full-time position (see appendix).
5. The COM approved Rev. Mike Yarman, Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church pastor, to serve in a Temporary Pastoral Relationship at Kirk of the Hills Presbyterian Church, Fairfield Bay, effective September 1, 2017 for a period of four months, ending December 31, 2017, at 18 hours per week and the following terms of call to be revised to meet the Presbytery of Arkansas' minimum terms of call:

Monthly Compensation	\$3,000
Special Ministry Events	\$200 per event
Travel Reimbursements	\$.50 per mile

Vacation 1 week after each quarter

6. The COM approved MWS David King, HR, to be the part-time Transitional Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Searcy, effective October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018, with the following terms of call:

Salary	\$30,000.00
Transportation	6,000.00
Administration/Continuing Education	500.00
Service to larger Church an average of 1 day per month	
Study leave of two weeks	
Vacation of four hours per pay period	

In the packet was “Ministerial Residence Program,” noted in COM information item #4. MWS Gabbard asked question on this document, which allows person in this position (Candidate Krista Denne’) to perform holy sacraments although she is neither commissioned nor ordained. Rowen deferred to GP Smith about whether COM permission was given on this document. He replied he would have to check the COM minutes. Gabbard understands that COM can not break the rules of the BoO. SC says that Lord’s Supper officiation by prepared elders is allowed in specific cases in the presbytery, but that baptism is not. SC said that both churches believed that Denne’ would be ordained. Gabbard said that was just an assumption and asked if she could make a motion to strike that section from COM document. SC said presbytery can always change and override.

**Gabbard moved to strike from “Ministerial Residence Program,” Job Description for Resident, B, the clause “performing the holy sacraments.” Motion was seconded.**

Discussion: Falls asked about language indicating that it is an ordained position. GP Smith said Candidate Denne’ could be allowed under BoO provision and asked for referral of document back to COM. Gabbard said she could only be allowed to perform one sacrament. RE Colton Qualls from First, Clarksville spoke to explain what is happening at the church: Candidate Denne’ does not officiate at communion, MWS Marilyn Rauch, HR, moderator of Session, does. Freeman rejects notion of separating the sacraments or assigning a hierarchy between the two.

LeBlanc offered **Substitute motion: To refer the document back to Committee on Ministry.** Motion was second. LeBlanc stated he needs more information. **Substitute motion was approved.**

**For Action:**

1. **Motion to proceed to examination of Candidate Margaret (Maggie) Alsup, under care of Indian Nations Presbytery. Motion was approved.**
2. **Motion to sustain faith statement portion of her exam. (appendix) Motion was approved.**
3. **Motion to sustain the sermon portion of her exam, preached Friday night. Motion was approved.**

4. MWS Gabbard asked question in area of Worship and Sacraments on theology of access to the table, and Alsup favors open access. **Motion to sustain the Worship and Sacraments portion of the exam. Motion was approved.**
5. MWS Lacy Sellars asked question in area of Bible about chronology of two versions of Jesus' story with money changers. **Motion to sustain Bible portion of exam. Motion was approved.**
6. MWS Michael Vinson asked question in area of Reformed Theology on diversity of faiths in college faculty and staff she encounters as chaplain, related to invitation to give opening prayer: would you accept and how would you pray? She has open-ended, ecumenical prayers and would welcome other faith leaders. **Motion to sustain theology portion of exam. Motion was approved.**
7. MWS Rowen asked question in area of polity, on whether or not to use lectionary. **Motion to sustain the polity portion of exam. Motion was approved.**
8. **Motion to sustain the exam as a whole. Motion was approved.**
9. **Motion to validate the ministry of Alsup as chaplain at Lyon College, Batesville. Motion was approved.**
10. She was escorted from the room. **Motion to approve Candidate Maggie Alsup for ordination to Ministry of the Word and Sacrament. Motion was approved.** She returned to applause.
11. **Motion to approve the following for the Ordination Service of Margaret (Maggie) Alsup:**

**Sunday, October 22, 2017 at 2:00 pm, at First Presbyterian Church, Batesville, with the offering recipient to be the Presbytery of Arkansas Scholarship Fund at Lyon College, and the following to serve on the Administrative Commission:**

**MWS Leslie Roper, First Presbyterian Church, Batesville to charge pastor**

**MWS Dave King, HR, First, Searcy**

**RE Eddie Cooley, First, Newport**

**MWS "Mike" McCracken, Wynne Presbyterian Church**

**RE Bruce Johnston, First Presbyterian Church, Batesville, to charge the congregation**

**RE Ruth Hamilton, Kirk in the Pines Presbyterian Church, Hot Springs Village, to Moderate and propound the constitutional questions**

**RE Hannah Hanson, Grace Presbyterian Church, Little Rock**

**And to sit with the Commission:**

**-MWS Dr. Kimberly Clayton, Director of Contextual Education of Columbia Theological Seminary, Greater Atlanta Presbytery, to preach**

**-RE Nancy Matthew, First Presbyterian Church, Norman, Oklahoma, Indian Nations Presbytery**

13. **Motion to enroll Alsup in Presbytery of Arkansas. Motion was approved.**

**Celebration of the Honorable Retirement of the Following:**

**MWS Robert W. Hadley, retired as Pastor of Kirk of the Hills Presbyterian Church, Fairfield Bay, effective June 1, 2017.** RE NiAnn Thompson spoke on his behalf. A certificate and book were presented. Hadley remarked about his 46 years of ministry.

**14. Motion to approve the Honorable Retirement of MWS Clare Martin Kelley, effective October 1. Motion was approved.**

**MWS Clare Martin Kelley, retiring as Pastor of the Larger Parish of Holiday Island Presbyterian Church, Holiday Island, and First Presbyterian Church, Eureka Springs.** MWS David Dyer, HR spoke on her behalf. A certificate and book were presented.

Celebration of Five-Year Anniversaries of Ordinations, Commissions, and Certifications (see appendix). Keyrings were presented to first-time honorees. MWS Ben Bateman, HR spoke on his 60<sup>th</sup> year of ordination.

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS**

Committee moderator MWS Elizabeth Gabbard gave the report.

**For Action:**

**1. The Committee on Nominations moves the election of the following person to fill immediately an unexpired term:**

Ruling Elder April Counts, Reader of Theological Exams, Class of 2019. No nominations were made from the floor. **Nominee was approved.**

**2. The Committee on Nominations moves the election of the following persons for one-year terms in Class of 2018:**

a. Moderators:

- RE Ruth Hamilton, Kirk in the Pines, Hot Springs Village, Coordinating Team
- Minister of the Word and Sacrament Leslie Bethell Roper, First, Batesville, Moderator of Presbytery
- RE Cyril Hollingsworth, Second, Little Rock, Committee on Ministry
- MWS Kade Curry, First, Springdale, Committee on Leadership Development
- RE Ted Belden, First United, Fayetteville, Future of the Church Ministry Area
- Commissioned Ruling Elder Kelly Pearson, First, Dardanelle, Mission of the Church Ministry Area
- RE Jan Enke, First, Van Buren, Administration Ministry Area
- MWS Ike Brighton, HR, at-large, Disaster Preparedness Subcommittee
- RE Ledridge Davis, First, Malvern, Committee on Representation

RE David Stricklin, Westover Hills, Little Rock, Vice Moderator of Presbytery

- b. General Assembly Commissioners:
  - RE Kim Brooks, First, Harrison
  - RE Ken Coker, Central, Russellville
  - MWS Michael Vinson, First, Conway and Presbytery staff
  - MWS Dari Rowen, First, Benton
- c. Alternates to General Assembly Commissioners:
  - RE Ruth Hamilton, Kirk in the Pines, Hot Springs Village
  - RE Ray Woodruff, Wynne Presbyterian
  - MWS Ruskin Falls, Pulaski Heights, Little Rock
  - MWS Marie Mainard-O'Connell, Second, Little Rock
  - RE Hartley Allen, First, Springdale, Alternate Young Adult Advisory Delegate
- d. Future of the Church Ministry Area member:
  - MWS Blake Brinegar, First, Yellville
- e. Disaster Preparedness Subcommittee member:
  - MWS Courtney Bacon-Latina, First, Malvern

No nominations were made from the floor. **Nominees were approved.**

**3. The Committee on Nominations moves the election of the following persons for two-year terms in Class of 2019:**

- a. Coordinating Team (at-large members):
  - MWS Elizabeth Gabbard, First, Arkadelphia
  - RE Karene Jones, Park Hill, North Little Rock
  - MWS Georgia Senor, First, Bentonville
- b. Commissioner to Synod of the Sun: RE Emily Laurel, First, Benton
- c. Treasurer of Presbytery: RE Bob Boehmler, First, Bentonville
- d. Committee on Representation members:
  - RE Nancy Bateman, Pulaski Heights, Little Rock
  - MWS Clif Ford, First, Alma
  - Mr. Obed Gonzalez, First, Springdale, attending UofO, Clarksville
  - RE Susan Morris, Hopewell, Morrilton

No nominations were made from the floor. **Nominees were approved.**

**4. The Committee on Nominations moves the election of the following persons to three year terms in the Class of 2020:**

- a. Committee on Leadership Development members:
  - RE Susan Anderson, First, Springdale
  - MWS Bill Henning, HR, at-large
  - MWS Jeff Price, Trinity, Little Rock
- b. Commissioner to Synod of the Sun:



- MWS Elizabeth Gabbard, First, Arkadelphia
- c. Future of the Church Ministry Area members:
  - MWS Ted Belden, First United, Fayetteville
  - RE Peg Falls-Corbitt, First, Conway
  - RE Ty Hendricks, First, Searcy
  - MWS Anne Russ, First, North Little Rock
  - Certified Christian Educator Theresa Spragins, serving at First, Conway
- d. Committee on Ministry members:
  - MWS Bill Bailey, Kirk in the Pines, Hot Springs Village
  - MWS DC Adams, First, Harrison
  - MWS “Chip” Hatcher, Westminster, Hot Springs
  - RE Cyril Hollingsworth, Second, Little Rock
  - RE Barb Verdery, First United, Fayetteville
- e. Administration Ministry Area members:
  - RE Tom Verdery, First United, Fayetteville
- f. Disaster Preparedness Subcommittee members:
  - MWS John Gibson, at-large
  - RE Gail Murdoch, Memorial, Atkins
  - RE Curtis Wright, Westminster, Hot Springs
- g. Mission of the Church Ministry Area members:
  - CCE Kristi Button, First United and UCM, Fayetteville
  - MWS Gordon Garlington, HR, at-large
  - RE Sally Roden, First, Conway
- h. Ministries with Youth, Young Adult and Campus Ministry members:
  - RE Donna Ellison, Allison Memorial, Little Rock
  - RE Mary Shaw, First, Springdale
  - MWS Jeremy Wilhelmi, UofO, Clarksville
- i. Counselor at law:
  - RE Richard Bright, First, Arkadelphia

No nominations were made from the floor. **Nominees were approved.**

**5. Committee on Nominations moves the election of the following persons to six-year terms in the Class of 2023:**

- a. Permanent Judicial Commission members:
  - MWS David Dyer, HR, Westminster, Little Rock
  - RE Donn Mixon, First, Jonesboro
  - RE Wendell Phillips, Park Hill, North Little Rock
  - MWS Ward Rudolph, at-large

No nominations were made from the floor. **Nominees were approved.**

If you are interested in serving in one of the following positions which are now vacant, please contact incoming Nominations moderator MWS Bob Hadley, HR at email:

[rwhadley@artelco.com](mailto:rwhadley@artelco.com) and [niann@presbyteryofarkansas.org](mailto:niann@presbyteryofarkansas.org)

- a. Immediate vacancy, Moderator of the Ministry with Youth, Young Adults, and Campus Ministry Area, Class of 2018 (ideally someone currently serving on that ministry area)
- b. Immediate vacancy, at-large member, Administration Ministry Area, Class of 2017 and to serve in Class of 2020
- c. Regular vacancy, at-large member, Mission of the Church Ministry Area, Class of 2020 (ideally from eastern part of region 4)

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

RE Leah Shell, moderator of Future of the Church, gave the report.

#### **“AUGUST 22<sup>ND</sup> - meeting details**

- 1) MOTIONS INCLUDING: THE MEETING AGENDA, FINANCIALS, MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING WERE APPROVED. A quorum was established.
- 2) Attendees of the meeting included those in person and one member who remotely dialed into the meeting.
- 3) Dr. Peg Falls-Corbitt prepared a report from the Coordinating Team which was reviewed by the committee.
- 4) Ted Belden will be assuming the duties of Moderator of FOTC in 2018 and a replacement on the Coordinating team is needed for 2017. None of the committee members volunteered to take his place. He will be in touch personally with the committee to find a replacement.
- 5) Leah Shell provided the organization/structure documents for the workgroups to review. It was suggested that we remove task #8 and rewrite #11. The language to include Forward to the Presbytery Coordinating Team any request for encumbrance or sale of real property held in trust by congregations that comes to FOTC in its work helping churches vision and re-envision their ministries.
- 6) Tactical workgroup motion: TO PAY FOR AN APPRAISAL OF THE CLARKSVILLE CHURCH PROPERTY UP TO \$4,000 FROM NEW CHURCH DEVELOPMENT, 7500-51-1-000, WITH THE RECOMMENDATION THAT IF THEY MAKE A SUCCESSFUL SALE, THESE MONIES WOULD RETURN TO THE FOTC BUDGET. – Approved by larger committee
- 7) Tactical workgroup motion: PRESUMING THAT PRESBYTERY APPROVES THE USE OF THE PROCEEDS FROM WALNUT GROVE/CANE HILL FOR CRE

TRAINING, FOTC WILL TURN OVER TO CLD THE TASK OF DISTRIBUTING FUNDS FOR CRE TRAINING SCHOLARSHIPS. – Approved by larger committee

- 8) BUDGET REQUEST FOR 2018 WAS DISCUSSED. NEW FUNDING REQUEST FOR FUNDING FOR A TECHNOLOGY CONTRACT POSITION TO HANDLE NEEDS BY THE PRESBYTERY. FUNDING FOR PRE-PRESBYTERY RETREATS AND WORKSHOPS WAS REQUESTED. THIS FUNDING INCLUDES MONIES FOR MEALS AND SNACKS. CRE TASK FORCE MONEY WILL BE TURNED OVER TO CLD- THEREFORE MONEY IS NOT EXPECTED TO BE ALLOCATED IN THE 2018 FOTC BUDGET. – Approved by the larger committee.”

Shell highlighted new presbytery website coming in 2018, 28 attendees at Vinson’s pre-presbytery workshop yesterday which will be in webinars, funding of CRE moved to CLD, and subcommittee on grants doing updates.

### **BREAK FOR LUNCH**

General Presbyter Smith asked God’s blessing of the noon meal which was served by the host church in the Christian Activities Building. He recognized and thanked Britton Travis Varn who is leaving in December after five years as presbytery’s staff resource for youth, and read the following resolution into the minutes. **Motion read into the minutes:**

#### **A RESOLUTION OFFERED TO THE PRESBYTERY OF ARKANSAS ON THE COMPLETION OF THE MINISTRY OF BRITTON TRAVIS VARN**

#### **AS STAFF RESOURCE FOR YOUTH MINISTRY OF THE PRESBYTERY**

*Whereas Britton Travis Varn has served faithfully for the past five years as the Staff Resource for Youth Ministry of the Presbytery of Arkansas; and*

*Whereas her example of kindness, calm and attention to detail and her willingness to do much more than her position required of her have greatly benefitted all the members of the Presbytery, and especially the beloved junior and senior high youth in our churches, their parents, their volunteer local and congregational leaders, the PC(USA); and*

*Whereas she has patiently answered countless inquiries, solved dilemmas, and given guidance and encouragement to adults who mentor youth and our young people in planning the presbytery’s youth events with the Youth Advisory Team including summer trips to PC(USA) conferences at Montreat and Mo-Ranch, participation in Presbytery meetings, YouthQuakes within the presbytery and mission events at home and beyond, to be true spiritual mountaintop experiences; and*

*Whereas Britton has nurtured through her own quiet, steady example and the competence of guest leaders the faith development and witness of teenagers moving into graduation and out into the world; and*

*Whereas Britton has given colleagues and the Presbytery alike a model of Christ-like servanthood and fulfilled her duties with grace, humor, impartiality and compassion;*

*Be it resolved that the Presbytery of Arkansas, this seventh day of October, 2017, gives thanks to Almighty God for the gifts for youth work and for Christian life given to Britton Travis Varn for mutual ministry, and gives thanks to her for all she has done as Staff Resource for Youth Ministry. Be it further resolved that the Presbytery wishes her continued blessings of health and joy, laughter and peace, in her labor and in her leisure, with her own young family, the family of her birth and her friends, as she leaves this place for another one, to learn and grow in service to her Lord.*

Varn thanked the Presbytery for allowing her to serve and for the Presbytery's support and love.

### **BUSINESS RESUMED AT 1:02 P.M.**

Moderator Hamilton resumed duties and called commissioners back to business in sanctuary.

### **PRESENTATION BY PRESBYTERIAN VILLAGE**

Melissa Jenkins made a presentation including video featuring the residents of the Little Rock facility.

### **GREETINGS FROM THE PRESBYTERIAN FOUNDATION**

RE Sherry Hester Kenney, Central, Denver, CO, brought greetings from the six-state region. They invest funds for congregations and are the stewardship arm of the denomination. "Live Forward, Give Forward" wills and legacy program was highlighted.

### **REPORT OF THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH MINISTRY AREA**

Commissioned Ruling Elder Kelly Pearson, moderator of the Mission of the Church Ministry Area, gave the report.

"Since the June Presbytery Meeting the Mission of the Church Ministry Area has met once on July 13 and will have met in a planned special meeting on September 7th (not before this report date) regarding the 2018 budget-line items, of an anticipated \$70,000 expense budget, the same as 2017. However, adjustments will be made according to directives of the Administration Ministry Area and the presbytery.

The response to this Ministry Area's publicizing of grants for \$50 to assist with expenses in attending NEXT Church or the Big Tent events was wonderful. Seven of eight available grants for one or the other of the two events were authorized. As it may be recalled, these grants along with the Ministry Area's endorsement of FPC-Ft. Smith's "Capstone Lecture Series," and the Ministry Area's planning for the theological discussion/lectures at the October presbytery meeting, were in lieu of The P.L.A.C.E. for 2017.

Several requests for grants have been requested for ministries within the bounds of our presbytery. Those approved since May to August 31st are:

- A \$2000 grant for van fuel expenses of Family Promise of Pulaski County, that works with displaced families and their myriad of concerns
- Presbyterian Women (PW) of Westover Hills PC, Little Rock, a grant of \$2000 to assist

with prison/jail literacy classes, including men, and also PW's work through the ministries of "Hope Rises"

- Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center, a grant for \$3000 for "Rise Against Hunger (formerly Stop Hunger Now)," \$1000 above the previously approved budget line-item
- Susie Wright of Westminster PC, Hot Springs, a grant of \$3000 to purchase building materials to be used by volunteers on the upcoming annual Presbyterian-wide mission trip to Lake Village, Arkansas, to help repair homes damaged by the floods of 2016
- First Presbyterian Church of Prairie Grove, a one-time grant of \$500 to fill a financial shortage for July-August of "Life Ministries" of NW Washington County's food program

There are two pending requests for a total of \$2,500, and a couple of others in the works with amounts unknown.

Additionally, we have asked that the portion of the October "Peace & Global Witness Offering," at the discretion of the presbytery, go to the "Canopy Northwest Arkansas" ministry that is assisting Tanzanian and other refugee families from Africa with housing and other needs, who fled prior to U.S. immigration restrictions.

God is doing marvelous things and we offer our praise! May we continue to give with joyful hearts as thankful partners with God to share the *good news* in deeds and words."

Besides the written report above, Pearson reported on the background of this meeting's emphasis on spiritual development through two speakers, new task force on The PLACE in 2018 formats, contact with Honduras Ministry Subcommittee (reporting next on docket) in form of covenant, by end of year Mission will have spent its total budget, recent endorsements and grants (Over the Hill Gang, offering grants for evangelism, Feed My Sheep at First, Batesville; Presbyterian Village Kindness Crew, McGehee backpack ministry, donation to Hurricane Harvey relief, mission trip to Lake Village), and PW report. MWS Ike Brighton, HR, moderator of Disaster Preparedness and Response Subcommittee, spoke of the need for flood buckets (21,000 pounds of kits went out in Sept.) beyond his written report. Hannah Lahodny, Ferncliff program director, announced winter camp (grades 5-8) and free night of R&R available for ministers and educators.

### **REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON HONDURAS MINISTRY**

RE Duke Monroe, First, Jacksonville gave the report, starting with the impact of his first trip to Honduras, in addition to written report below.

"The Presbytery of Arkansas, with other presbyteries and congregations of the Presbyterian Church (USA), has committed to an ongoing ministry of mission with our Honduran brothers and sisters in Christ.

In January 2017, a Solar Under the Sun installation team went to the El Horno and El Sute area to install 15 private home solar systems. This was to follow up on the work in 2015, when a SUTS and Living Waters for the World team installed panels and a water filtration system for the church. This was the first clean water and electricity for these remote villages.

MWS Phil Butin, of First United Presbyterian Church of Fayetteville, used his 3-month summer sabbatical to further our relationship with our Honduran ministry partners, pastors, and congregations. MWS Butin traveled to 25 of the 26 Presbyterian churches of the Presbytery of Honduras and preached many sermons. He slept in people's homes, ate from their dinner tables, and brought hope and mentorship to several church leaders. The connections MWS Butin built will have a long-lasting positive impact on our ministry.

In July 2017, Leigh Harvey led a community development team, including two UCM students, along with another team from South Carolina. The combined team worked on 4 homes in San Juan Planes de Copán. The team was in Trinidad de Copán to enjoy "Presbyterian Day" and a new ambulance dedication, which was donated by Mt. Pleasant Presbyterian of South Carolina. Then the team moved to the Copán Ruins area to tour the ancient Mayan city before continuing to help work on 4 additional homes.

The Presbytery and church communities of Honduras are growing. We in the PC(USA) could learn much about evangelism from our brothers and sisters in Honduras, where there is the possibility of three new church congregations. A new Mission Co-worker, MWS Dori Hjalmarson, will move to Honduras in January, 2018 to start her work as a support to the Honduran pastors, and providing continuing theological training for church leaders.

In August 2017, a Solar Under The Sun team returned to the villages of El Horno and El Sute to install more solar panels for 12 more individual homes. And in September 2017, Duke Monroe of First Presbyterian, Jacksonville returned to Los Mercedes to repair a solar system in the medical clinic."

Interested in going on a trip to Honduras? All are invited to apply. No matter your age or ability, whether or not you speak Spanish, if you can lift heavy loads or not... all are invited to apply. Look to *The Banner* and your church announcements for upcoming trips. And if you are interested in helping but don't want to travel to Honduras, there are many ways to donate funds for construction materials, solar systems, and any other church needs. Look online at the Solar Under the Sun website, or the Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center website, for the Solar School class schedule and sign up to get trained at Ferncliff, right outside of Little Rock.

### **Subcommittee Members**

Class of 2018: Ann Applegate, First Presbyterian Church, Springdale; MWS Bill Branch, HR, First Presbyterian Church, Walnut Ridge; Jim Pedersen, Mt. Vernon Presbyterian Church, Pea Ridge

Class of 2019: Leigh Woodruff Harvey, Moderator, First United Presbyterian Church, Fayetteville; Chris McRae, Central Presbyterian Church, Fort Smith; MWS Lindy Vogado, Second Presbyterian Church, Little Rock

Class of 2020: MWS David Gill, HR, Second Presbyterian Church, Little Rock/Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center; MWS Phil Butin, First United Presbyterian Church, Fayetteville; Duke Monroe, Treasurer, First Presbyterian Church, Jacksonville

Video was shown. Belden announced that \$100,000 grant has been given from PW Birthday Offering to PW in Honduras to buy retreat center.

## **REPORT OF THE POLITY COMMITTEE ON THE OVERTURE TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY: ON EXCLUDING CAMPAIGNING IN THE CHURCH**

Commissioners to General Assembly, MWS Leslie Roper, Elizabeth Gabbard and RE Gail Murdoch, prepared the report, and Gabbard spoke.

“With prayer and gratitude, the Polity Committee received the referral from the Presbytery of Arkansas of the proposed *Book of Order* amendment coming from the session of Barr Memorial Presbyterian Church, Norman. Taking very seriously the concerns about the *shalom*, the wholeness, of our body in Christ, the Polity Committee of the Presbytery of Arkansas answers that motion with the following:

The Polity Committee of the Presbytery of Arkansas moves that the Presbytery of Arkansas:

1. Request that the Coordinating Team, with an eye towards how discussions of politics affect all parts of the life of our congregations, focus the 137th meeting of the Presbytery of Arkansas (taking place on February 9-10 at Lyon College in Batesville) on conflict resolution and how we have difficult conversations as people of faith. Theological discussions should deal with both the theological concepts behind these conversations and specifics on dealing with politics, not just from the pulpit, but throughout the community of faith.
2. Request that the Temporary Stated Clerk write a letter to the Office of Public Witness of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), often referred to as “The Washington Office,” informing that office of our perceived value of the Johnson Amendment and encouraging them to advocate for its continued existence or, in the event of its removal, to be a public voice to the responsibility of churches to be a welcoming community for all political groups and ideologies.

### *Rationale:*

The primary concern of the Polity Committee was the spirit of the request it received from the session of Barr Memorial. We understood that, upon receiving this referral, we were called to respond to both the letter and the spirit of the request in a way that took seriously the concerns that were raised and dealt with those concerns in the most appropriate, and most effective, manner.

Our first recommendation deals with the spirit of the request from Barr Memorial. There is a need, we all agree, to be able to have healthy conversations in our churches, even when we disagree, and to be able to model those conversations to the larger world. Therefore, we believe that focusing an entire Presbytery Meeting on fostering healthy conversations even in times of conflict will be of great use to all of our congregations. We also felt strongly that these conversations not simply deal with the theoretical issues of open and honest conversations, but tackle, head-on, the specific issues surrounding conversations that are political.

Our second recommendation deals with the specific request to propose new language for the *Book of Order*, making the provisions included in the Johnson Amendment prohibitions in the

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Our recommendation, respectfully, does not include a proposed amendment to the Book of Order for two primary reasons:

1. Issues of Constitutionality

There were two citations in particular that we could not reconcile with this request, and as such, believed that such a proposal would not be ruled in order at the General Assembly level.

a. *F-3.0101 God Is Lord of the Conscience*

a. *That “God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men<sup>1</sup> which are in anything contrary to his Word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship.”*

b. *Therefore we consider the rights of private judgment, in all matters that respect religion, as universal and unalienable: We do not even wish to see any religious constitution aided by the civil power, further than may be necessary for protection and security, and at the same time, be equal and common to all others.*

Restricting the speech of anyone within the church, while intended for the health and well-being of the church itself, seemed to run diametrically opposed to this historic principle of our denomination.

b. *W-2.0304*

*Ministers of the Word and Sacrament*  
*Ministers of the Word and Sacrament (also called teaching elders) are called to proclaim the Word, preside at the Sacraments, and equip the people for ministry in Jesus’ name. Specifically, ministers of the Word and Sacrament are responsible for: the selection of Scriptures to be read, the preparation of the sermon, the prayers to be offered, the selection of music to be sung, printed worship aids or media presentations for a given service, and the use of drama, dance, and other art forms in a particular service of worship.*

Much of the responsibility of worship lies in the hands of the session. The writing and/or preaching of the sermon is one of the responsibilities specifically given to the Minister of the Word and Sacrament. Restricting “political speech”, even if specifically named as endorsements, runs contrary to this provision.

While the language of the Johnson Amendment sets up consequences to such speech that is often read as a prohibition, it is prohibited *so long as you wish to keep your tax-exempt status*. Even with the Johnson Amendment in effect, pastors are free to weigh the consequences of speaking

---

<sup>1</sup> Statements from the Foundational Statements of the PC(U.S.A.) Book of Order are included as they were originally written and, as such, do not meet our current linguistic standards.



their conscience with the reality of losing their IRS status. To explicitly prohibit speech from the pulpit runs contrary to the provisions of the *Book of Order*.

## 2. Issues of Expediency

The process of amending the *Book of Order* is a long one. An amendment would have to be approved by this body before February of this year in order to make it into those considered by the next General Assembly in 2018. Assuming it is approved by that General Assembly, it would then have a full year to be approved by a majority of the Presbyteries in order to change the *Book of Order*. All told, it would be nearly two years before any change was approved.

The legislative and executive processes in the United States government move much more quickly. There is a good chance that the legal status of the Johnson Amendment could be drastically different when such an amendment reaches the floor of General Assembly, or back on the floors of presbyteries for final approval. For that reason, we felt that a direct call to the body within our denomination that has the ear of our governmental officials would be a more prudent way of handling the concern about the status of the Johnson Amendment.

It is our intention with our actions to address the business referred to us in a manner that is both faithful and responsible. It is our prayer that we might all heed Paul's words to the church in Ephesus to "speak the truth in love".

Respectfully submitted by commissioners to General Assembly, MWS Elizabeth Gabbard from First, Arkadelphia; RE Gail Murdoch from Memorial, Atkins; and MWS Leslie Bethell Roper from First, Batesville

Gabbard spoke. Falls asked about moving motions one at a time. **Motion #1 was moved and was approved.**

**Motion #2 was moved.** Discussion: Falls asked why committee would be thankful for and what is the perceived value of the Johnson Amendment. Gabbard replied on the background of the overture presented in June, and answered that congregations are not instructed on how to vote nor are political parties preached. RE Noah Williamson, who moved the overture in June, asked if committee knew about the effect on IRS regulations, and whether he as original mover had any input with the committee. SC Belden said she tried to contact him to seek such input. He said he felt that questions were more to freedom of speech of MWSs. Gabbard replied that they had to weigh consequences of actions and to restrict speech of those led by Holy Spirit was out of line. Williamson asked if freedom of speech and bringing politics into conversation are becoming more important than doing things in order. Belden asked whether he wanted to substitute his original motion for the committee's second motion. Williamson fears that this motion and its consideration will be the end of the matter. Williamson still favors that the presbytery adopt the prior overture from June.

**MWS Michael Vinson moved to table motion #2 from the polity committee until conversation can happen.** It was seconded. Discussion: RE Michael Langston, First, Searcy spoke on Johnson Amendment. GP Smith asked question about timing of submitting amendment to *Book of Order* before next summer's General Assembly meeting. **Motion was approved.**

## **ORDER OF THE DAY: THEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION**

### **SPIRITUALITY OF A CAREGIVER AT ANY AGE (IN FAMILY, CONGREGATION, COMMUNITY)**

MWS Rebecca Spooner of Wellspring Renewal Center, Little Rock gave the presentation. She wants this to be user-friendly, entertaining program with a list of questions for hearers to use. From story of four friends who drop needy friend in front of Jesus for healing, she shared the care needs of her biological and marital families and asked who picks up your mat, whose mat you are carrying, and how many hands are on your mat. She named different zones of caring in community: praying friends, emailing friends, texting friends, friends who sit around you in worship and intertwined these practices with theological terms.

### **BUSINESS RESUMED**

On behalf of the Polity Committee and office of the Stated Clerk, Belden asked that it be recorded in the minutes that the Stated Clerk did reach out to RE Noah Williamson in June and since at the request of the Polity Committee. Williamson apologized for his remarks about not being included in the committee's work. He stated that Johnson Amendment specifically prevents campaigning for persons but not issues.

Related to question on timing of overtures to GA, Belden announced that GA meets June 18, 2018. Overtures on amendments to constitution must be received a minimum of 120 days prior to that meeting. Presbytery of Arkansas meets 126 days prior to the meeting, and another presbytery's concurrence is required for an overture to amend the constitution may be considered by GA.

### **REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION MINISTRY AREA**

RE Jan Enke, moderator of the Administration Ministry Area, gave the report: that a Search Committee has been formed to search for the interim staff resource for youth to replace Britton Varn. Search committee is composed of MWS Catherine Allsbury, HR, Second, LR; CCE Kristi Button of FUPC, Fayetteville; and RE Geoff Ryken, First, Conway. Written report follows:

“The Administration Ministry Area has conducted position reviews with General Presbyter Stewart Smith and Temporary Stated Clerk Leslie Belden and finds they are doing an excellent job. Reviews on the rest of the staff are in process and will be completed by the end of the year. There will be an exit interview with Britton Vann before she leaves at the end of the year.

Our staff is a great working team and resource for our presbytery who are very dedicated to the presbytery. They go outside their job descriptions to make it work. They have gone for 2 years without a pay raise and last year agreed to changes in their insurance plans to save the presbytery

money. With this in mind, Administration Ministry feels that we need to include a 2% raise in the 2018 proposed budget for the staff.

An insurance review is in process also and will be reported at the Coordinating Team Retreat in November.

The proposed budget numbers for 2018 are similar to what the budget is for this year. With the reduction in the Ferncliff site support (formerly the million dollar loan payment), and with a 2% increase proposed for staff salaries, the proposed budget will be slightly less than in 2017. The 2018 proposed budget may change depending on how our end-of-year contributions and expenses look like.

We ask that you share with your congregations the 2018 proposed budget of \$804,310 while they are making their budgets for 2018, and that they remember giving to our presbytery.” (full budget in appendix).

Enke reported a proposed 2% raise for staff in 2018, thanked them, and said that Ferncliff’s support had been restored with sale of Chenal property and pay off of loan to cover presbytery’s pledge to Ferncliff’s capital campaign. She urged every congregation to receive the finance brochure and pledge for 2018.

#### **MINUTE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The following made minute announcements: MWS Senor announced Oct. 22-23 appearance of David Jensen from APTS, GP Smith reminded all that employer agreements are due to Board of Pensions on Oct. 13 for 2018, Wilhelmi touted UofO’s pastoral study leave opportunity for ministers which is self-guided on their campus and UofO/Lyon/Conway/Second/UCM taking 26 people to Montreat College Conference; MWS Bill Seitz plugged Presbyterian Pilgrimage for living Christian life out in the world Oct. 19-22 and April, 2018; CCE Jeannie Ford announced opportunities for volunteers at AR Food Bank every third Tuesday night of month, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday family work days and special October opportunities “Full On Faith,” and RE Ted Belden needed help taking screen down in chancel.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

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

Temporary Stated Clerk Belden gave the report on behalf of the committee: 38 MWSs, 1 YADA, 23 visitors, 33 REs from churches, 3 CREs, 2 CCEs, 5 REs from Coordinating Team, 5 REs at large and 5 corresponding members for a total of 115 persons who signed in.

#### **COMMITMENT TO GOD’S CALL: REFERRALS**

There were three referrals: 1) one to CLD to develop assessment tool for candidate and report back; 2) one to COM to review wording of Ministerial Residence Program page 37, B.

Expectations of the Resident; 3) one to the Polity Committee to involve the Session of Barr Memorial, Norman in conversation.

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

Moderator Hamilton gave the closing prayer for traveling mercies and the joys and concerns of the presbytery: those being welcomed, those in transition, those leaving, those with births/weddings/retirements, those in grief.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment came at 3 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

NiAnn Thompson

Recording Clerk

Leslie Smith Belden

Temporary Stated Clerk