

Stated Meeting of Mission Presbytery

Via ZOOM Video Conferencing
June 5-6, 2020

Presbytery Meeting Convened

Moderator TE Stacy Ikard called the Stated Meeting of Mission Presbytery to order on June 5, 2020, at 10:00 A.M. via Zoom Video Conferencing, and asked TE Bobby Hulme-Lippert to open the meeting with prayer. A quorum was present.

Procedures for This Meeting

After heartfelt thanks were offered for the service of our former Stated Clerk, TE Trish Tedrow, the Moderator asked the Interim Stated Clerk, TE Bill Poe, to explain to the commissioners just how our electronic meeting would work, including voting procedures, ways to facilitate discussion, and how to seek the Moderator's recognition.

Approval of the Docket

The Interim Stated Clerk **MOVED** that the Docket be approved as it had been posted on the Presbytery's website. The Motion was seconded and **approved**.

The Interim Stated Clerk also **MOVED** that the Presbytery receive all reports as posted on the Presbytery's website, with the exception of recommendations or motions annotated as requiring vote on the floor of the Presbytery, and approve the Minutes of the Stated meeting of March 6-7, 2020, and the Minutes of the Called Meeting of May 9, 2020. The Motion was seconded and **approved**.

Seating of Corresponding Members

The Interim Stated Clerk **MOVED** that the following persons be seated as corresponding members for this meeting of Presbytery with voice but without vote: Valerie Young, Synod Leader & Stated Clerk. The Motion was seconded and **approved**.

Presenters with Voice and No Vote

The Interim Stated Clerk **MOVED** that the following persons be given voice without vote: Amy Myhand (Dripping Springs, Dripping Springs), Piper Madison (Hope, Austin), and Susan Shaw-Meadow (Madison Square, San Antonio). The Motion was seconded and **approved**.

10:15 A.M. Order of the Day – Report of the Commission on Ministry (COM)

The Moderator recognized TE Monica Smith, Chair of the COM, to bring the committee's report to the Presbytery. The committee presented the following candidate to be examined

for ordination: Ezequiel Herrera, who will be serving in specialized ministry as an Evangelist for Mission Presbytery.

TE Laura Neely Villareal, Chair of the Examinations Committee, presented the candidate for ordination and posed questions for his response. Laura asked Ezequiel, "What do you believe about the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and how does that belief inform your ministry?" TE David McCann asked, "Thinking in terms of pastoral theology, how do you share Christ's healing grace with a family facing a terminal illness?" Ezequiel responded (cf. Schleiermacher) that we pray not to "twist God's arm," but to align our wills with God's will. After he responded, the committee asked the Presbytery to sustain his examination, in whole and in part, and to ordain him to the ministry of Word and Sacrament. The committee's Motion was **approved**, and the Presbytery will move toward his ordination.

RE Leta Simpson spoke on behalf of the entire Presbytery in celebration of Ezequiel's successful completion of his examination. She offered prayer for him and for his future ministry.

10:30 A.M. Order of the Day – Report of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry

The Moderator recognized TE Kathy Escandell to present the report of the committee. She presented three prospective candidates to be enrolled by the presbytery: Amy Myhand (Dripping Springs, Dripping Springs), Piper Madison (Hope, Austin), and Susan Shaw-Meadow (Madison Square, San Antonio). Each candidate was examined in Christian faith, service to the church, and motives for entering the ministry. The Moderator posed the constitutional questions to each candidate. The committee Moved that the examinations be approved and the candidates enrolled. The Motion was **approved** and representatives of their home congregations (TE Nancy Marroquin, RE Mac Holmes, and TE Josh Robinson) spoke in celebration. TE Kathy Escandell offered prayer for the new candidates.

Report of the General Council

The Moderator recognized TE Peter Crouch, Chair of the General Council, to present the report of the Council. TE Crouch offered several informational items about recent actions of the General Council.

The General Council approved a motion by the General Council's Leadership Team to contract with the Rev. Dr. Bill Poe to serve as Standing (Interim) Stated Clerk, at half-time (20 hours a week), beginning June 1, 2020 until a new Stated Clerk is hired. Compensation terms are as follows:

- Salary -- \$27,016.10 (annual basis)
- Board of Pensions -- \$3,242 (annual basis)
- Reimbursed Expenses – up to \$1,000

The Council **recommends** to the presbytery the following persons to serve on the Stated Clerk Search Committee: REs Marie Baker, Judy Ferguson, Bonnie Wilkinson, and Liz

Anzaldua; TEs Bill Clark, Lemuel Garcia-Arroyo, and Joel Martinez. The recommendation was **approved**. GC Chair Peter Crouch **Moved** that RE Raquel Ybarra be added to the committee as an alternate member. The Motion was seconded and **approved**.

The Council also **Moved** that Presbytery approve changing the description of the General Presbyterian's position from a "five-year term" to an "indefinite term," like most TE calls. The Motion was **approved**.

The Council also **Moved** that Mission Presbytery elect Leslie Ellison as Treasurer and Michael Day as Assistant Treasurer. The Motion was **approved**.

Report of the Stewardship & Fiscal Oversight Committee

The Moderator recognized RE Fred Gamble (First, Kerrville), Chair of the Stewardship & Fiscal Oversight Committee, to present the committee's report. The committee's report was included in the Presbytery Packet. RE Gamble also informed the presbytery about Better Together grants which have been recently approved.

Report of the Interim Stated Clerk

TE Bill Poe, Interim Stated Clerk, reported to the Presbytery.

Rev. Poe presented the written report of the outgoing Stated Clerk, Dr. Trish Tedrow, to the presbytery. He highlighted several portions of that written report, particularly having to do with Session Minutes review.

Rev. Poe also reported that the Permanent Judicial Commission of Mission Presbytery has considered and concluded two cases, and as required by the *Book of Order*, he reported the PJC's rulings on these cases as follows:

In the matter of the Rev. Dr. Robert Lohmeyer, a Teaching Elder and member of Mission Presbytery, who submitted a self-accusation of sexual misconduct, The Permanent Judicial Commission found Dr. Lohmeyer guilty on three counts: (1) violating the presbytery's *Sexual Abuse and Harassment Policy* by committing sexual malfeasance; (2) violating his ordination vows; and (3) violation of the Scriptural injunction against adultery. The PJC issued the following order:

Whereas you, the Rev. Dr. Robert Lohmeyer, have been found guilty of the offense of clergy sexual misconduct, and by such offense you have acted contrary to Scripture, the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Sexual Abuse and Harassment Policy of Mission Presbytery: now, therefore Mission Presbytery, in the name and under the authority of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), does now declare you, Rev. Dr. Lohmeyer, temporarily excluded from the exercise of ordained ministry for a period of eighteen (18) months as well as completion of the following rehabilitation program supervised by the Permanent Judicial Commission as described below:

(In addition to immediate resignation as Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Kerrville without severance, the terms of the period of exclusion and rehabilitation are contained in the full report of the PJC, which will accompany the Minutes of this Presbytery Meeting.)

In the matter of the Rev. Elaine Dreeben, a Teaching Elder and member of Mission Presbytery, who submitted a self-accusation of sexual misconduct, the Permanent Judicial Commission found Rev. Dreeben guilty of (1) sexual malfeasance in violation of the *Sexual Abuse and Harassment Policy* of Mission Presbytery; (2) violation of her ordination vows; and (3) violation of the Scriptural injunction against adultery. The PJC issued the following order:

Whereas you, Rev. Elaine Dreeben, have been found guilty of the offense of clergy sexual misconduct, and by such offense you have acted contrary to Scripture, the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Sexual Abuse and Harassment Policy of Mission Presbytery; now, therefore Mission Presbytery, in the name and by the authority of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), does now declare you, Rev. Elaine Dreeben, excluded from the exercise of ordained ministry for a period of eighteen (18) months as well as completion of the following rehabilitation program supervised by the Permanent Judicial Commission as described below:

(As Rev. Dreeben had already submitted her resignation as Associate Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Kerrville, the terms of the exclusion order and the program of rehabilitation are contained in the full PJC report, which will accompany the Minutes of this Presbytery Meeting.)

Commissioning to the 224th General Assembly

The Moderator recognized those who will be serving as commissioners from Mission Presbytery to the 224th Meeting of the PC(USA) General Assembly. They are: REs Beaman Floyd (Shepherd of the Hills, Austin), Cara Herlin (First, Palacios), and Scott Russell (First, Kerrville); TEs Bill Clark, Kevin Jones, and Michelle Vettters; and YAAD Zach Shrull (First, Austin). The Moderator charged them for their service to the Church and offered prayer for them.

Attendance, Adjournment and Closing Prayer

The attendance for this electronic Stated Meeting was:

Teaching Elders – 88

Ruling Elder Commissioners – 92

Members of General Council (not TEs) – 6

Commissioned Pastors – 7

Certified Christian Educators – 1

Certified Associate Christian Educators – 3

Subtotal, Voting Members – 197

Corresponding Members – 1

Presenters given voice – 3

Visitors/Guests – 12

Presbytery Staff – 4

Subtotal, non-voting present – 20

Total Attendance – 217

Moderator Ikard thanked the commissioners for their able handling of new technology that is rapidly becoming familiar to many of us. The meeting was closed with prayer by Rev. Ikard at 11:35 A.M. The Presbytery will gather again tomorrow morning, June 6, 2020, at 10:00 A.M.



The Meeting is Re-Convened

The Moderator re-convened the presbytery on Saturday morning, June 6, 2020, at 10:00 A.M., and the Youth Connection Committee’s Midwinter Planning Team led the presbytery in worship around the theme of Hope.

The Co-Moderators of the general Assembly, Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri and Rev. Cindy Kohmann, brought greetings and words of hope and thanksgiving to the presbytery. There were also greetings from Valerie Young, Synod Leader and Stated Clerk, who spoke about Synod Sunday, which is August 23, 2020 – “Hope through Connections, Unhindered by Walls” (1 Thessalonians 1:3). Churches are asked to submit “good news stories.”

Ed Sackett reported to the presbytery on how Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is helping people and congregations in this time of global pandemic. He showed videos from congregations and agencies who have applied for PDA grants: Angry Tias and Abuelas; FKPC, San Antonio; Puentes de Cristo, Hidalgo; TAMU Colonias Program; Puentes de Cristo, Rio Grande Valley Region; New Hope PC, La Feria.

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Rev. Gini Norris-Lane, Executive Director of Presbyterian UKirk Collegiate Ministries, reported to the presbytery on UKirk, which is the recipient of this presbytery meeting's offering.

General Presbyter Sallie Watson reported to the presbytery, thanking staff members for all they have done to make this electronic presbytery meeting possible. She called us all "intrepid saints" for all the creativity our churches have displayed during this time of pandemic and unrest.

The Moderator announced to the commissioners that we would be breaking into smaller groups to share something that has surprised and delighted us during this time of pandemic and what our vision for the future of the church.

When commissioners were gathered back into the plenary meeting, Henry Owen, Director of John Knox Ranch, shared a video about John Knox with the presbytery. There will be Summer Camp, albeit with many adjustments and cautions.

The presbytery was treated to a photo and story montage of what has been going on around the presbytery during the pandemic, with all the changes it has brought. TE Charlie Palmer talked about "drive in church" at Treasure Hills PC in Harlingen. Moderator Ikard shared other stories from around the presbytery, all celebrating the creativity that is a surprising delight about this pandemic time. RE John Seamon (Hope, Austin) talked about the "diaper drive" held by Hope Church in partnership with Hill Country Community Ministries, and how that effort grew into also gathering and distributing fans.

TE Josh Robinson talked about the Austin area service of lament that took place this past week after the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

After a Doxology by a Zoom Bell Choir, the Moderator asked TE Josh Robinson to close our meeting with prayer at 11:37 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

TE Bill Poe
Interim Stated Clerk