

Mission Presbytery Minutes for the Stated Meeting, October 21-22, 2022

Friday, October 21, 2022

At 4:00 p.m., the Rev. Nancy McCranie, Moderator for Mission Presbytery, called the meeting to order, welcomed the presbytery, declared that a quorum was present, and prayed.

Moderator McCranie called for a motion to approve the docket, which was given along with a second. The motion passed.

The Moderator then called upon first-time commissioners to stand to be recognized and introduced.

Sallie Watson, General Presbyter, introduced Mark Yaconelli. Mark held a youth leader gathering on Thursday night, 10/20/22, and an all-day pre-presbytery workshop, both at FPC, Rockport.

The Moderator called upon the Rev. Kurt Simon, pastor of FPC, Rockport, to bring greetings from the host church.

Committee on Representation and Participation (CORP).

The Rev. Walt Lee gave the CORP Report. Rev. Lee mentioned that the committee has more work to do and will finish once it knows how Mission Presbytery votes on the Mission Forward report.

Motion: CORP moves that the presbytery elects the following nominees (asterisk indicates a second term; boldface indicates chair/co-chair status) to presbytery committees/commissions. All are for the Class of 2025 unless otherwise noted.

Committee on Representation and Participation (CORP)

RE Judy Ferguson (HC)

TE Carla Matthews (SA)

Commission on Ministry (COM)

TE Erin McGhee* (V)

RE Martha Langford* (A)

TE Kurt Simon* (CC)

RE Rick Carlson* (V)

TE Cheryl Homsher (V)

RE Claudia Smith (A)

TE Jim Currie (A))

Disaster Preparedness and Assistance Committee (DPAC)

RE Jennifer Rektorik* (RGV) (continuing chair, class of 2024)

Human Resources

TE Nancy Reeves (A)-2023

John Knox Ranch

RE Bob Simpson* (RGV)

Trustees

TE Kevin Jones (HC), Class of 2027

Moderator-Elect (2024)

CP Sheri Dittman

Synod Commissioner (2024)

TE Seth Saathoff, 2023 Moderator of Synod

The Moderator asked if there were any nominations from the floor. Hearing none, she called for the vote. The motion passed.

Commission on Ministry (COM)

The Rev. Monica Smith gave the COMreport.

Note that anyone serving in a congregation in any way must take the Boundaries Training that is now available. Watch for information in the Presbytery newsletter.

Keep an eye on opportunities for service that are listed in each Presbytery newsletter. We have churches searching for stated supplies, interim pastors, and other staff positions. Additional information for each position is available on the Presbytery website.

COM has two examinations for ordination and several incoming Teaching Elders to introduce.

Examination of Katy Bedford

Rev. Smith presented Katy Bedford for examination for ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. Katy completed a Master of Divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary and is a Mission Presbytery candidate.

She has been certified ready to receive a call and has been called as a chaplain at Heart to Heart Hospice in Austin. COM has sustained her examination with the Examinations Team.

The presbytery had the privilege and responsibility to examine Katy in the areas of Christian faith, theology, Sacraments, and government. Rev. Smith opened the examination with the first question. Upon answering, the Moderator opened the floor for questions.

After the examination, Rev. Smith stated, **"On behalf of COM, I move that Katy Bedford's examination be sustained, and she be enrolled, pending ordination, as a member of Mission Presbytery." No second was required.**

The Moderator called for the vote, and the motion passed.

Rev. Smith asked members from FPC, Georgetown, Central, Austin, and other chaplains to stand in support of Katy Bedford.

Examination of Maria Vargas

Rev. Smith presented Maria Vargas for examination for ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. Maria completed a Master of Divinity degree from the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico and is under the care of Grace Presbytery.

She has been certified ready to receive a call and has been called as the full-time Stated Supply at First Presbyterian Church of Del Rio. COM has sustained her examination with the Examinations Team.

The presbytery had the privilege and responsibility to examine Maria in the areas of Christian faith, theology, Sacraments, and government. Rev. Smith opened the examination with the first question.

After the examination, Rev. Smith stated, **"On behalf of COM, I move that Maria Vargas's examination be sustained and she be enrolled, pending ordination, as a member of Mission Presbytery." No second was required.**

The Moderator called for the vote, and the motion passed.

Rev. Smith asked members from Del Rio and the Administrative Commission serving the church to stand in support of Maria Vargas.

Rev. Smith Introduced four new minister members of Mission Presbytery. She asked the same question of all of them: What excites you about being in Mission Presbytery?

Caryn Thurman is transferring as a member-at-large from Sierra Blanca Presbytery, a returning member to Mission Presbytery.

Cheryl Homsher is transferring as an honorably retired member from Tres Rios. She is serving as Interim Pastor at the Presbyterian Church of Gonzales. Cheryl is a returning member of Mission Presbytery.

Diana Circelli transfers as honorably retired from Miami Valley Presbytery.

Rachael McConnell transfers to us from Western North Carolina Presbytery to serve as pastor of Rolling Hills Community Church in Lago Vista. Rachael is a returning member to Mission Presbytery.

Rev. Smith concluded the COM report by praying for all just examined and introduced.

The full report of the Commission on Ministry regarding its actions on behalf of Mission Presbytery since the June 10-11, 2022, meeting is in the packet for this meeting.

Pastoral Care

The Rev. Emily Owen gave the Pastoral Care report by honoring the Rev. Paula Sanders, who is newly retired.

Report of the General Assembly Commissioners

RE Bob Orr, TE Peter Crouch, TE Naomi Ingram, TE Brian Diebold, RE Lidia Serrata, CP Sheri Dittman, and RE Carlos Baladez (alternate) made a video for the presbytery regarding this summer's General Assembly Meeting. RE Carlos Baladez and RE Bob Orr were on hand to answer questions from the presbytery.

There was a motion and a second to move the Stated Clerk's report to this afternoon. The motion passed.

Stated Clerk, Rev. Laurie Palmer

For Action by Mission Presbytery, motions:

- 1. Approve excused absences for this meeting; the Moderator called for discussion; hearing none, the presbytery approved the motion.**
- 2. Approve a waiver for St. Mark PC, Boerne, letter attached to this report. The letter will be in the addendum to these minutes.**

An excerpt:

Motion: "Authorize the Clerk of Session to request a one-time waiver from Mission Presbytery for the rule that states "no elder or deacon shall be eligible to serve more than six consecutive years" (Book of Order G-2.0204 Terms of Services), applicable to officers who began their initial term on May 1, 2019, and allowing them to serve through December 31, 2025." The presbytery approved the motion.

3. Approve a waiver for the First Presbyterian Church session per Book of Order G-2.0204 for a lack of members to call as Ruling Elders. The presbytery approved the motion.

For Mission Presbytery's information

1. At its September 17, 2022, meeting, General Council approved the minutes of the June 10-11, 2022, Mission Presbytery meeting.
2. Administrative Commissions (AC), Updates
 - a. First Korean, McAllen
The AC has taken original jurisdiction of the session.
 - b. Community PC, Port Aransas
The AC and the session are entering mediation, after which the church will be dismissed to ECO.
 - c. FPC, Menard
The AC declared this an abandoned ("extinct") property. The Trustees are working through issues in order to put the property on the market.
 - d. FPC, Del Rio is calling a stated supply pastor!
 - e. FPC, Adamsville:
The AC has tried to engage the congregation. No response to the AC.

- f. Clerks of Session training happened on October 1, 2022, at El Divino Salvador PC, Corpus Christi, and October 8, 2022, at FPC, Kerrville.
3. Clerk of Session resources are available on the Stated Clerk's display table.
4. An end-of-the-year communication will go out to Clerks of Session regarding Annual Statistical Reports, 2022 Necrology, updated terms of call/contracts, and updated information for Clerks of Session.

The dates that churches can submit their annual statistical reports online are December 2, 2022-February 14, 2023.

I have received necrology for 2022 from some clerks, which will be included in October 2023 presbytery meeting memorial

5. We will vote on the Proposed Amendments to the Constitution at the March 3-4, 2023, Mission Presbytery meeting at Covenant PC, San Antonio. The link for them is <https://bit.ly/3dejuRd>. We understand that there are more amendments than usual. The General Assembly meeting in 2020 didn't address them (because of Covid, it was a Zoom meeting put together with little time), so we are catching up.

The other Mission Presbytery stated meetings will be on June 16-17, 2023, at San Pedro PC, San Antonio, and October 20-21, 2023, at Mo-Ranch.

6. If you haven't already, send your 2021 to me electronically (preferred) or a hard copy. Do not send originals to me. The link for the minutes' checklist is here: <https://www.mission-presbytery.org/clerks>.

The meeting was adjourned with prayer at 5:19 p.m. by Nancy McCranie.

Saturday, October 22, 2022

At 9:00 a.m., Moderator Nancy McCranie called the meeting to order with prayer. She introduced the Rev. Dr. Jose Irizarry, President of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, to greet the presbytery.

The presbytery joined in worship.

The Rev. Dr. Margaret Aymer preached the sermon and then presided at the Table with the Rev. Rachel Watson. Other participants were the Rev. Kathy Anderson, RE Liz Anzaldúa, RE Rita Odom, RE Rebecca Huchton, Rev. Nancy McCrairie, Rev. Katy Walters, Rev. Mandi Richie, and Rev. Emily Owen.

The presbytery offering was collected for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

RE Rebecca Huchton and Rev. Sallie Watson presented the 2021 necrology.

The presbytery resumed its meeting with staff reports.

General Presbyter, Rev. Dr. Sallie Watson (printed in full)

Good morning, friends! Isn't it great to be back together again? I am full of gratitude this morning - for our wonderful hosts from Rockport and the Corpus Christi region, for Margaret's sermon and the worship service, for Mark Yaconelli's inspiration and his boundless creativity, for

our committee leaders, for our congregations and their leaders, for the hardest-working Presbytery staff in the PC(USA).

I am also especially grateful this day for the creative geniuses among us that we have come to call the Mission Forward Team. They're going to be presenting their work to you in a few minutes, and I hope you will be as pleased with it as I am. This is the vision not only of Mission Forward but also our General Council of who we are as Mission Presbytery and where we are headed for the next few years. So please, listen carefully and listen prayerfully to what they have to offer to us.

Y'all, we have been through a rough time, haven't we? And I'm pretty sure it's not over yet. Laurie mentioned this week that we have yet to see all of the ramifications of the pandemic. I know that many of you are reporting that all of your worshipers have yet to return in person. Some of you are reporting that there are worshipers who will not be returning at all. That is consistent with what's going on across the country, and not just in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Reports are that as many as 25% of worshipers overall are either staying online for worship or not planning to return at all. In most cases, that means there are fewer of us to do all the things that need doing around the church. And so we grieve. And many of us know that grief has five stages - Denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and finally acceptance. I'm seeing different levels of grief in most if not all of our congregations, and among most if not all of our leaders.

I'm not saying that it's all okay. It's not. It's hard right now. But what I want to say, to you as well as to me, is to keep your eyes on the prize. Some of you have heard me say that when people ask me what I do, I tell them that I'm a midwife. My job is to help give birth to whatever's coming and to stay the heck out of the way. Perhaps, instead of giving in to grief and despair, perhaps we can see that we are experiencing birth pangs. Depending on whether you listen to Phyllis Tickle or Diana Butler Bass, we are in the middle of that "every 500 years garage sale," which has anywhere from about 45 years to at least another century to go. During times like this, Phyllis Tickle says that things get thrown out and things get saved. But she also notes that even as something new is created, what "used to be" doesn't totally go away. Rather, it reshapes itself. Just think: Judaism didn't go away at the advent of Christianity. The Roman Catholic Church didn't go away at the advent of the Reformation. But nobody knew that at the time. They were just busy trying to live through it.

I am convinced, friends, that mainline Christianity is not going away. But I am also convinced that it's past time for a new reformation. We have once again grown too close to the culture. Christianity was meant to offer an alternative to the culture, not to be hand-in-glove with it. Some of what I'm seeing and hearing about "Christian Nationalism" is not only wrong-headed, but it is also dangerous. Our main business as Christians is to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. That's it, period. If we have lost sight of that, then indeed it's high time for a reformation.

This is hard, hard, hard to go through. It's a lot more fun to study it in church history classes than it is to be living through it. But we don't get to choose. We get to live through it, together. The main thing that we can do, I think, is to hold fast and hold on, following the One we know to be in charge.

Come to think of it, maybe we are ALL midwives. Something new is coming; we know it. We just have to do what the apostle Paul advised in the benediction of his first letter to the

church in Corinth: ***“be watchful, stand firm in the faith, be courageous, be strong; let all that you do be done in love.”***

One final note, I want you to know that I won't be with you at our next meeting. Our Human Resource Team has graciously agreed that it's time for me to take a sabbatical! I will be out from March 1st through the end of May. I am feeling the need for that time, and you may be feeling it for me! But the best news for you is that they have contracted with Teaching Elder Monica Smith to fill in at the Presbytery half-time while she continues to serve the congregation in Luling. Y'all are going to be in good hands. While Paul doesn't exactly get a sabbatical from his work, he's saved up enough vacation time for us to go to Great Britain together in April. We figured after thirty years of marriage and thirty-five years of ordination for me, it's about time. I'm looking forward to going, I'm looking forward to leaving y'all in good hands, and I'm looking forward to being back with you in June!

Rio Grande Evangelist, Rev. Ezequiel Herrera

Rev. Herrera's report is in the addendum to these minutes.

Among our mission partners are Westlake Hills PC (Austin), St. Mark's PC (Boerne), Crossroads PC (San Antonio), University PC (San Antonio), First Presbyterian Church (McAllen), Northwoods PC (Houston), Rye PC (Rye, New York).

There are ongoing efforts to raise \$25,000 by the end of 2022. Thus far, we have raised \$19,626.50. 1001 Worshiping Communities will match if \$25,000 is raised. We are grateful to many members of this GC who have donated towards our goal.

The presbytery took a break.

GENERAL COUNCIL

Dr. Carlos Baladez (RE) gave the General Council Report

A. Dr. Baladez introduced members of the Mission Forward team to give its report. Rev. Gin Courtney, RE Liz Anzaldua, and RE Lety Martinez. Rev. Bobby Hulme-Lippert, RE B.K. Gamble, and RE Bill Wilkinson made a video presentation.

Upon hearing the report, Dr. Baladez moved that the new structure for Mission Presbytery be approved. Moderator McCranie opened the floor for discussion, then called for the vote. After discussion, the Moderator called for the vote, and the motion passed.

An email with the full Mission Forward Report will be sent out to the presbytery next week, and it will also be in the enews.

B. The presbytery was called upon to elect new Administrative Commission members to work with Rev. Ezequiel Herrera, RGV Evangelist. Carlos invited Ezequiel to speak to it.

Motion: to approve Rev. Jeff Saddington, RE Carlos Baladez, and Rev. Susan Shaw-Meadow as new members of the Administrative Commission. The motion passed.

C. RE Mike Day and the Rev. Kevin Jones presented the 2023 Mission Presbytery budget, which the General Council approved at its September 17, 2022, meeting. The budget and the narrative budget are in the packet for today's meeting.

D. Dr. Baladez presented the 2023 Minimum Terms of Call and asked Rev. Monica Smith, chair of the COM, to speak to them. The General Council approved them at its September 17, 2022, meeting. The floor was opened for questions.

E. Dr. Baladez introduced Caitlin Supcoff, Youth and Young Adult Advocate, and Henry Owen, Director for John Knox Ranch to present the LGBTQ+ Statement of Inclusivity for Mission Presbytery and John Knox Ranch. This is the first reading. The presbytery will discuss it and vote on it at the March 3-4, 2023 stated meeting.

F. The minutes of the June 10-11, 2022, presbytery meeting were approved by General Council on September 17, 2022.

2023 meetings

March 3-4, 2023, Covenant PC, San Antonio

June 16-17, 2023, San Pedro, PC, San Antonio

October 20-21, 2023, Mo-Ranch

These were approved by e-vote by the General Council on 10/14/2023.

Carlos offered a blessing upon Sallie and Paul Watson in advance of her sabbatical and their trip in 2023.

The Moderator gifted Dr. Carlos Baladez for his work as chair of the General Council.

The Moderator announced that there were 166 attendees at this meeting. The offering collected today totaled \$1608.

JOHN KNOX RANCH (JKR)

Director Henry Owen gave the report for JKR.

Summer was fantastic! 927 campers, also about 100 with bereavement camps (Camp Braveheart). Other stats: New zipline 602 riders, 504 loaves of bread, 107 high temperature, 32 unclogged toilets, .08" rain.

It's retreat season, and JKR is grateful for your participation. The camp is breaking ground on two cottages. JKR has begun an apprenticeship program—"because all the counselors come away from camp wanting my job." Two apprentices are on site now. Volunteer Weekend, November 2-4, 2002; a flyer is in the packet.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

RE Lori Black and RE Liz Anzaldua

Fall Gatherings have happened, and offerings have been collected to support various ministries.

Local PWs have been busy with mission projects and, again, may local and international missions benefit.

Horizons Bible Study is available online! They gather on the third Sunday of each month at 7:00 p.m. See the flyer in the packet for more information.

The Spring Gathering will be held at Mo Ranch on March 24-26, 2023. See the flyer in the packet for details. The keynote speaker will be the Rev. Kathy Anderson, El Divino Salvador PC, Corpus Christi. The Corpus Christi Cluster is sponsoring it.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE

RE Jen Rektorik gave the DPAC report.

The presbytery was introduced to the Rev. Kathy Lee-Cornell, Synod of the Sun Director of the Partnership for Disaster Response via video.

In Mission Presbytery, disaster kits were put together by the youth at Main Event in September. Churches in the presbytery are storing them until needed.

Disaster assistance truck: We have not raised all the funds, and things have changed a lot since 2019, including the price of trucks. We'll use the funds raised for rentals and gas.

More training for churches is in the works—"you're the experts in your communities."
DPAC needs volunteers.

MISSION OUTREACH AND JUSTICE

Rev. Doug Dalglish spoke to the Solar Under the Sun event; a flyer is in the addendum packet for this meeting.

Training will be at John Knox Ranch next year for the first time.

RE Caly Fernandez spoke about Puentes de Cristo and a video was shown. Take note of the written report in the addendum packet for this meeting.

Moderator McCranie installed RE Fred Gamble, FPC, Kerrville, as the 2023 Moderator for Mission Presbytery.

RE Gamble gifted Moderator McCranie for her work during the past year on behalf of Mission Presbytery.

A motion was made and was seconded that Mission Presbytery be adjourned. Fred Gamble closed the meeting with prayer.

Minutes submitted by Laurie Palmer, Stated Clerk.

Dear General Council,

Attached is our proposal for the Presbytery's new structure. In designing this, we did our best to design this structure in light of the newly approved Mission Statement:

Mission: *As Mission Presbytery we **connect** diverse leaders and congregations by providing opportunities for worship, **learning** and **service** so that we can flourish through God's grace .*

We have placed **in bold** the concepts that serve as the basis for three new committees.

Attachment A names the three new committees, complete with a purpose statement that we envision guiding each of them. We have also provided a list of bullet points for each committee. These are not intended to be mandates or requirements for the newly formed committees; rather, it is our hope that they provide initial direction and guidance to the committee as it begins taking shape. The bullet points represent ideas that we believe are noteworthy and important given what we have seen and learned in our time of discernment.

We trust that the newly formed committees can decide on the best ways to prioritize and pursue these ideas. We also recognize the newly formed committees may, in light of their overarching purpose, discern other areas where they need to focus their work. We wholeheartedly encourage this possibility. We recognize the need to remain flexible, both as the committees find their footing and once the committees find their rhythm.

Attachment B shows the full structure we are proposing. If approved, it is our hope that this structure not only streamlines some of our current structure, but does so in a way that we might live more fully into the final portion of our mission statement: "so that we can flourish through God's grace."

We remain mindful that "flourishing" is currently given expression through our newly-adopted Vision Statement:

Vision: *We live out our connection with intention, respect, support and challenge so that 100% of our congregations and leaders are engaged in some way.*

We search out strangers in our midst so everyone has a welcome seat in our presbytery.

We are a generous worshipping and welcoming presbytery, and others want to join us and learn from us because of the way we live out the Great Commandment.

Moving forward together,

The Moving Forward Task Force:

Liz Anzaldúa, Gin Courtney, B.K. Gamble, Bobby Hulme-Lippert, Lety Martinez, Bill Wilkinson

Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.

Matthew 9:17 (NRSV)

God has given each of you a gift. Use it to help each other. This will show God's loving-favor.

1 Peter 4:10 (NLV)

Connect

The purpose of Connect is to grow the relational strength and trust among congregations, ensure healthy ongoing communications in the Presbytery, and witness to the unity and diversity of God's people.

- Increase communication across the presbytery. Support the General Presbyter and Communications staff who communicates with the six agencies.
- Encourage all congregations to partner with two others: one local and similar, one in another region and different in size, temperament, and outlook

- Facilitate sharing of resources between congregations: educational, financial, leadership, human resources, etc.
- Connect affinity groups (Earth Care, More Light, etc.) across the presbytery
- Promote and oversee Better Together grants across the presbytery
- Connect, coordinate and communicate with leaders in each of the six regions
- Reach out to pastors and congregations to provide care in times of crisis and/or specific needs

Learn

The purpose of Learn is to develop, strengthen and equip leaders to nurture the faith of all ages to grow in their discipleship in Jesus Christ through storytelling, listening, trust building, and more.

- Facilitate officer training across the Presbytery
- Share resources for stewardship education and interpretation
- Coordinate regional confirmation classes
- Support youth and young adult ministry

- Develop training and educational events for pastoral leaders and congregations

Serve

The purpose of Serve is to encourage all to embody the hands, feet, and heart of Jesus Christ to serve neighbors within the Presbytery, our communities, and beyond.

- Work with Presbytery leadership to design and implement an annual “Mission in Mission” gathering
- Facilitate mission-driven partnerships between congregations
- Educate, support, and communicate with congregations on issues of social justice
- Brainstorm alongside Presbytery staff in considering opportunities for new church developments

POSSIBLE New Structure for your consideration

Committee	Number to Serve	Staff
Connect	6	Sallie/Caitlin
Learn	6	Caitlin
Serve	6	Sallie
Fiscal Oversight	6	Laurie/Jeanne
Trustees (incl HMK)	10	Laurie
COM	33	Laurie/Sallie
CPM	9	Sallie
PJC (required by BOO)	9	-----
CORP	6	Laurie
<u>JKR</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>Henry</u>
Total members	100	

General Council: Committee chairs from above, minus PJC: 9

Moderators of task forces below: 4

Mod, Presbytery Mod, Presbytery Mod-Elect: 3

GC Total, plus staff 16

Standing Task Forces (may meet on their own schedule, co-opt their own members, do not have to be elected): Disaster Preparation and Assistance, Youth Coordinating, Presbyterian Women, Human Resources