

Mission Presbytery Meeting Minutes
Saturday, March 5, 2022, via Zoom

Rev. Nancy McCranie, Moderator of Mission Presbytery, called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. She opened the meeting with prayer.

A video was played explaining Zoom instructions for this meeting.

New commissioners were introduced and Corresponding members were seated: Rev. Kevin Keaton, Board of Pensions. Mission Presbytery moved, seconded, and approved a motion giving voice but not vote.

Mission Presbytery went into a time of worship. The Rev. Ezequiel Herrera, Rio Grande Valley Evangelist, preached. Rev. Dr. Dick Powell and Rev. Gin Courtney presided at the Communion Table. The offering will benefit the ministry of Rev. Herrera in the Rio Grande Valley.

Report of the General Presbyter, Rev. Dr. Sallie Watson.

Sallie articulated the grief of the war in Ukraine for us all. We've got to find something to do, we have work to do, ministry to do: "There's disaster recovery work that needs doing, here and throughout our synod. Pastors need to be made examined for ordination. Commissioned pastors need to be examined. New members need to be welcomed. We've got some members who need to retire. Faith Formation has some good news for you! Money needs to be given out. And by the way, I need to remind you that it's time for you to be thinking about applying for a Better Together grant. Get with another congregation or with one of our six partners across the presbytery and figure out what new ministry you'd like to start if only you had several thousand dollars. Deadline to apply is April 15."

Sallie introduced Melissa Kirkpatrick, the chair of the newly formed Faith Formation Committee. Melissa shared FFC's vision and showed a video.

Report of the Stated Clerk, Rev. Laurie Palmer

As Information for Mission Presbytery

- The minutes of the September 9, 2021, General Council Meeting were approved.
- The minutes of the October 22, 2021, Mission Presbytery Meeting were approved.
- HMK Trustees' change to handbook was approved:

Change to its handbook, insert the following as paragraph 12.

"Loans may be made for repairs/replacement of facilities and/or equipment damaged or destroyed due to accidents or natural disasters, such as fires, windstorms, hailstorms, floods, etc., or other extraordinary circumstances. In such cases, the Trustees of the HMKMF may make interest-free loans (i.e., 0%) for payback periods not to exceed 13 years"

Rev. Palmer introduced the Rev. Dr. Laura Mendenhall to give a report on behalf of the Permanent Judicial Commission.

**Final Report of the Mission Presbytery Permanent Judicial Commission in the cases of
Mission Presbytery for The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) v. Rev. Dr. Robert Lohmeyer
and Mission Presbytery for The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) v. Rev. Elaine Dreeben
Background**

On October 13, 2019, the Stated Clerk of Mission Presbytery received a self-accusation from the Rev. Elaine Dreeben stating, "I violated my ordination vow to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church by engaging in an extramarital relationship with another Minister of Word and Sacrament." On October 14, 2019, the Stated Clerk of Mission Presbytery received a self-accusation from the Rev. Dr. Robert Lohmeyer stating he had "entered into a relationship beyond my marriage and ordination vows with a minister colleague."

Per the Book of Order and Mission Presbytery policies, two independent investigating committees were formed. After completing their investigations, each recommended alternative forms of resolution to the Permanent Judicial Commission (PJC) rather than proceeding to trial. The PJC worked with each investigating committee to finalize the forms of resolution.

On March 23, 2020, the PJC reached its decision regarding Rev. Dr. Lohmeyer, finding him guilty of the offense of clergy sexual misconduct and imposing the censure of temporary exclusion from the exercise of ordered ministry for a period of no less than 18 months, with additional specified conditions to be met, including a program of rehabilitation to be supervised by the PJC.

On May 7, 2020, the PJC reached its decision regarding Rev. Dreeben, finding her guilty of the offense of clergy sexual misconduct and imposing the censure of temporary exclusion from the exercise of ordered ministry for a period of no less than 18 months, with additional specified conditions to be met, including a program of rehabilitation to be supervised by the PJC.

These decisions were reported to Mission Presbytery at its stated meeting on June 5, 2020, and included in the minutes of that meeting.

As the relationships leading to the offenses were with each other, this report will serve as the concluding record for both cases. Note that Elaine Dreeben is now known as Elaine Murray and will be referred to as Rev. Murray in the remainder of this report.

Rehabilitation

As specified in the decisions, two members of the PJC served as direct supervisors of the rehabilitation program for each minister (Laura Mendenhall and Marie Baker with Rev. Murray, and Karen Stocks and Ann Hoch with Rev. Dr. Lohmeyer). They met regularly with each minister to discuss progress, concerns, and next steps, including their learnings through the prescribed reading, study, and reflection assignments. In addition, each minister was provided a teaching elder/mentor to walk alongside them during the period of temporary exclusion.

During this period, both Rev. Murray and Rev. Lohmeyer went through the process of divorce from their spouses.

Each wrote a letter of apology to the congregation of First Presbyterian Church, Kerrville.

As the rehabilitation process specified mandatory counseling, the PJC received written reports from the therapists for each minister.

On June 12, 2021, the full PJC met with Rev. Dr. Lohmeyer and Rev. Murray separately for an in-depth discussion with each of them regarding their rehabilitation progress. On September 28,

the full PJC met with Rev. Dr. Lohmeyer and Rev. Murray together to discuss appropriate boundaries, particularly related to First Presbyterian Church, Kerrville, where they both had served, should the period of temporary exclusion be ended. On November 13, the full PJC met separately with Rev. Dr. Lohmeyer and Rev. Murray for a final review of their rehabilitation process. Both Rev. Dr. Lohmeyer and Rev. Murray applied to the Stated Clerk for restoration as specified in the Book of Order, D-12.0104h.

On November 15, 2021, the PJC met to determine if the period of temporary exclusion should be ended in these cases according to the terms of D-12.0104h. The PJC discussed each minister's progress through the rehabilitation process and determined that each had successfully completed that process as stipulated in the decision, and the minimum period of 18 months of temporary exclusion had been met by each. At that time, it was thought that this would be a recommendation to the Presbytery. Since that time, the Stated Clerk determined that the PJC has the authority as the commission that imposed the censure to end the period of temporary exclusion, according to D-12.0104h. The PJC met on January 27, 2022, to conclude its work on these cases. Note that PJC member Scott Russell, a member and staff member at First Presbyterian Church, Kerrville, recused himself from participating in these deliberations.

Disposition

In the case of Rev. Elaine (Dreeben) Murray, the PJC found that Rev Murray has successfully completed the required rehabilitation program and ended the period of temporary exclusion from the exercise of ordered ministry effective February 1, 2022, with the following conditions:

- o As stipulated in the original decision, in Part II of the PIF, Step 6 of 6, Sexual Misconduct Self Certification will be checked next to: I am unable to make the above certification. I offer, instead, the following description of the complaint, termination, or the outcome of the situation with explanatory comments. Further, the description shall reference the report of the PJC in the minutes of the March 5, 2022 meeting of Mission Presbytery.
- o Before submitting a PIF or applying for a position requiring ordered ministry credentials, the concurrence of the Executive Presbyter's reference check is required.
- o To support discernment in maintaining appropriate boundaries and future vocational decisions, be assigned a mentor by the Executive Presbyter, a mentor who is accountable to the Executive Presbyter, and meet regularly with said mentor. Rev. Dr. Joan Watson has agreed to serve in this role.

In the case of Rev. Dr. Robert Lohmeyer, the PJC found that Rev Dr. Lohmeyer has successfully completed the required rehabilitation program and ended the period of temporary exclusion from the exercise of ordered ministry effective February 1, 2022, with the following conditions:

- o As stipulated in the original decision, in Part II of the PIF, Step 6 of 6, Sexual Misconduct Self Certification will be checked next to: I am unable to make the above certification. I offer, instead, the following description of the complaint, termination, or the outcome of the situation with explanatory comments. Further, the description shall reference the report of the PJC in the minutes of the March 5, 2022 meeting of Mission Presbytery.
- o Before submitting a PIF or applying for a position requiring ordered ministry credentials, the concurrence of the Executive Presbyter's reference check is required.

o To support discernment in maintaining appropriate boundaries and in future vocational decisions, be assigned a mentor by the Executive Presbyter, a mentor who is accountable to the Executive Presbyter, and meet regularly with said mentor. Rev. Dr. David Meriwether has agreed to serve in this role.

The PJC thanks Al Krummenacher, Karen Stocks, and Miles White for their service on the Commission during part of the process of these cases.

Submitted by the Mission Presbytery Permanent Judicial Commission

Marie Baker, Moderator; Tom Currie, Joe De La Fuente, Steve Hanson, Ann Hoch, Faith Jongewaard, Laura Mendenhall, Art Nicholson, Scott Russell.

After giving the PJC report, Moderator Nancy McCranie offered a prayer, then asked if there were any questions from the presbytery.

The PJC's full report is attached to these minutes.

Rev. Palmer then moved to actionable items for Mission Presbytery.

For action by Mission Presbytery

1. Requests for concurrence on overtures for General Assembly 225

a. The Session of University Presbytery Church San Antonio at its meeting on October 20, 2021, voted to overture Mission Presbytery to concur with the Presbytery of Baltimore to: "overtures the 225th General Assembly (2022) to change the use of the term AIDS to HIV in all national awareness days recognized in the Presbyterian Planning Calendar." Rev. Andries Coetzee made the motion and there was a second. Dries spoke to the overture on behalf of University Presbyterian Church, San Antonio.

The Moderator opened the floor for discussion. Mission Presbytery voted to concur with the Presbytery of Baltimore's overture.

b. This motion was approved at the February 5, 2022, General Council meeting: Mission Outreach and Justice Committee (MOJC) brings a request for Mission Presbytery to concur with Grace Presbytery's overture "Recognition that Israel's laws, policies, and practices constitute apartheid against the Palestinian people."

The motion comes from General Council and does not require a second. The Moderator opened the floor for discussion. Mission Presbytery concurred with the overture from Grace Presbytery.

c. The Leadership Team of the General Council approved at its February 23, 2022, meeting to send a motion to Mission Presbytery to concur with Palo Duro's Overture to General Assembly, "Regarding Clarifying the Intent of G-2.1001 on Use of Commissioned Pastors." Sallie Watson, General Presbyter, spoke to this overture. The presbytery voted to concur with Palo Duro's overture.

2. Request from El Divino Salvador PC, Corpus Christi for a waiver for Mary S. "Liz" Anzaldúa to serve as a Ruling Elder for the Class of 2022. She has just completed two three-year terms. The Nominating Committee was not able to fill the Class of 2022.

Reference: Book of Order, page 28, G-2.0404 “...The presbytery may, upon written request and by majority vote, grant a congregation a waiver of this limitation on terms.” The Stated Clerk moved it and there was a second. The motion passed.

3. Laurie Palmer moved to elect the Rev. Leslie Ellison as Treasurer for Mission Presbytery. There was a second. The Moderator asked if there were nominations from the floor. There were none. The Moderator called for the vote and the motion passed. Laurie Palmer moved to elect RE Pam Power as Assistant Treasurer for Mission Presbytery. There was a second. The Moderator asked if there were nominations from the floor. There were none. The motion passed.

General Council Report, RE Carlos Baladez, Chair

Carlos moved that Mission Presbytery approve the Covenant Agreement of the Synod of the Sun Partnership for Disaster Recovery.

The 11 presbyteries that comprise the Synod of the Sun are partnering for this “four-year pilot initiative that seeks to connect the ongoing needs of the Covenant Partners to prepare for, respond to, recover from, and mitigate against disaster events.” The Moderator opened the floor for discussion.

The motion passed.

The covenant is attached to these minutes.

The Moderator called upon Rev. Kevin Keaton, Mission Presbytery’s Board of Pensions’ liaison to give a report.

Committee on Preparation for Ministry, Rev. Malcolm McQueen

Malcolm made the following motions to remove these two from the rolls of CPM:

1. At her request, remove Courtney Hill-Root from the rolls of CPM. The motion passed.
2. At her request, remove Piper Madison from the rolls of CPM. The motion passed.

Mission Presbytery had a five-minute stretch break.

Report of the Rio Grande Evangelist, Rev. Ezequiel Herrera

The name of the ministry is New Life Faith Community.

Ezequiel gave highlights of recent activities. A Wednesday evening Bible Study has been organized and is going well, and is growing. First Korean PC, McAllen, has offered space for worship and that will begin on March 13, 2022. Ezequiel is involved in the life of the community in a variety of ways, one of which is as a Rotary Club member. After a conversation with Ms. Elie Torres, Hidalgo County Commissioner, Precinct 4, he hopes that a community garden will grow from it. New Life Faith Community and Puentes de Cristo have hired someone to be an administrative assistant (Puentes) and children’s ministry and social media (New Life Faith). 2022 goals: to grow and solidify the new church development, and to raise \$25,000 as it’s applying for a matching grant through 1001 New Worshiping Communities (PCUSA). (A family who is supporting the ministry has pledged \$3,000 towards it).

Report of the Commission on Ministry, Rev. Monica Smith Examinations

1. Monica presented Stephen Finkel for examination for ordination to Ministry of Word and Sacrament. Stephen completed a Master of Divinity degree from Fuller Theological Seminary and is under care of San Fernando Presbytery. He has been certified ready to receive a call and has been called as Designated Associate Pastor to Westlake Hills in Austin. COM has sustained his examination with the Examinations Team. Mission Presbytery was given the privilege and responsibility to examine Stephen in the areas of Christian faith, theology, Sacraments, and government.

Monica asked the first question: Describe a time when you have seen God's grace at work in the church. The Moderator opened the floor for questions for Stephen.

Monica made this motion: "On behalf of COM, I move that Stephen Finkel's examination be sustained and he be enrolled, pending ordination, as a member of Mission Presbytery." The Moderator asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, she called for the vote and the motion passed.

Monica congratulated Stephen and asked members of Westlake Hills to raise their virtual hands to be recognized.

2. Monica presented Austin Young for examination for ordination to Ministry of Word and Sacrament. Austin completed a Master of Divinity degree from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary and is under care of Eastern Tennessee Presbytery. He has been certified ready to receive a call and has been called as a chaplain at Hospice Austin. COM has sustained his examination with the Examinations Team. Mission Presbytery was given the privilege and responsibility to examine Austin in the areas of Christian faith, theology, Sacraments, and government.

Monica asked the first question: Why do Presbyterians include a prayer of confession in worship services?

What do you believe about the Sacraments? Why is it beneficial for you to be ordained to the chaplaincy at Austin Hospice? How are you the heart of Christ in a situation where someone is actively dying?

The Moderator opened the floor for questions for Austin.

Monica made this motion: On behalf of COM, I move that Austin Young's examination be sustained and he be enrolled, pending ordination, as a member of Mission Presbytery.

Nancy asked the presbytery if there was any discussion. Hearing none, she called for the vote and the motion passed.

Monica congratulated Austin and asked if there were supporters or other hospice chaplains in attendance at the meeting and to raise their virtual hands to be recognized.

3. Monica presented Ron Anderson for examination for commissioning. Ron is a Ruling Elder at First Presbyterian Church in Llano. He has completed the training required by the

Presbytery to be a Commissioned Pastor. He was examined by COM's examinations team, and COM sustained his exam. The Book of Order requires (G-2.1002) that we, the Presbytery, examine him in the areas of personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the areas of instruction determined by presbytery. Monica asked the first question: What is a passage of Scripture that sustains you in ministry?

The Moderator opened the floor for questions for Ron.

Monica made this motion: On behalf of COM, I move that Ron Anderson's examination be sustained and that he be commissioned to serve First, Llano. The Moderator asked if there was any discussion, and hearing none called for the vote. The motion passed.

Monica congratulated Ron and invited members of First, Llano to raise their virtual hands to be recognized.

4. Monica presented Colleen Claybourn for examination for commissioning. Colleen is a Ruling Elder at First Presbyterian Church in Palacios. She has completed the training required by the Presbytery to be a commissioned pastor. She was examined by COM's examinations team, and COM sustained his exam. The Book of Order requires (G-2.1002) that we, the Presbytery, examine her in the areas of personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the areas of instruction determined by presbytery.

Monica asked the first question: Please name two functions of a sermon.

The Moderator opened the floor for questions for Colleen.

How have you overcome crises of faith?

Monica made this motion: On behalf of COM, I move that Colleen Claybourn's examination be sustained and that she be commissioned to serve First, Palacios. The Moderator asked if there was any discussion. Hearing none, she called for the vote and the motion passed.

Monica congratulated Colleen and invited members of First, Palacios to raise their virtual hands to be recognized.

Introduction of New Members of the Presbytery

New minister members of Mission Presbytery were introduced. Each made a short video introduction that was shown.

1. Ann Marie Quigley-Swanson is the new pastor at St. Mark Boerne. She transferred from New Covenant Presbytery. St. Mark, Boerne members raised their virtual hands to be recognized.

2. Gary Dill is Honorably Retired and returning to us from Tres Rios Presbytery.

3. Andrew Frazier is transferring from Detroit Presbytery. He's returning to serve his alma mater, Austin Seminary, in the Admissions Department. He is joined in the video by new colleague, Rykie Marx, who is joining us as a temporary member. She is a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa.

Monica asked Austin Seminary employees to raise their hands to be recognized.

4. Kurt Simon transferred from Southeastern Illinois to serve First Presbyterian in Rockport.

Monica asked FPC, Rockport members to raise their virtual hands to be recognized.

5. Dana Pope is the new pastor at Northminster, San Antonio. She's transferring from Nevada Presbytery. Monica asked members of Northminster, San Antonio, to raise their hands to be recognized.

Monica prayed for all of those just examined and introduced (Stephen, Austin, Ron, Colleen, Ann Marie, Gary, Andrew, Rykie, Kurt, and Dana).

Motions for Presbytery vote:

1. That Presbytery elects an Administrative Commission to walk alongside First Presbyterian Church, Menard, in order to close it. The AC duties shall include but shall not be limited to: Inquiring into the current status of membership and all finances. Assuming original jurisdiction of the Session, if needed. Ascertaining what legal recourse may need to be taken. Recommending to the presbytery a plan for the property.

The Moderator asked if there was any discussion.

The Moderator called for the vote and the motion passed.

2. That Presbytery elects an Administrative Commission to inquire into the issues at First Korean Presbyterian Church, McAllen. The AC's duties shall include but shall not be limited to: Inquiring into the current status of membership and all finances. Assuming original jurisdiction of the Session, if needed. Ascertaining what legal recourses may need to be taken. Recommending to the presbytery a plan for the property.

The Moderator asked if there was any discussion.

The Moderator called for the vote and the motion passed.

Moderator Nancy McCranie passed moderating the meeting to RE Fred Gamble, Moderator-Elect.

Report of John Knox Ranch, RE Henry Owen

Summer camp already has strong registration, and camps are filling up. Register now!

Henry invited the presbytery to suggest good summer staff members to them.

Renovations: brand new zip line; renovating lookout point; new bathroom facility next to the dining hall.

New book: Rob Mueller, Krin Van Totenhove, "Holy Ground: The Power and Influence of Christian Camps and Retreat Centers." All proceeds will go to the camp scholarship fund.

A video was shown by Amy Meyer, FPC, Elgin where she shared about JKR Family Camp.

Report of the Youth Connection Committee, TE Katy Walters

Midwinters weekends were canceled due to Covid and morphed into "Late Winters." The retreat was one weekend, February 25-27, 2022, with around 100 participants. Rev. Brian Diebold was the keynote speaker. Brian is the pastor at Cross Roads PC, San Antonio.

The 2022 Presbyterian Youth Triennium has been canceled due to Covid concerns. The YCC is thinking about some kind of presbytery-wide youth event for this summer.

The Third Annual Souper Bowl Smackdown was a great success! This year's champion goes to Grace, Round Rock with 55 food items per capita, a total of 12,293 food items. Second place

goes to FPC, El Campo with 45 items per capita, 6,291 items. Dripping Springs and Shepherd of the Hills both had 26 items per capita each, 9,257 and 17,246 respectively.

Report of the Mission Outreach and Justice Committee, TE Chad Lawson

Caly Fernandez, Karen Sprouse, Chad named the recipients of the MOJC Grants

Sub-committee:

FPC, Elgin, food pantry, \$17,400

FPC, Llano, benevolence ministry, \$3,000

Mo-Ranch, Intercultural Youth Conference, \$3,000

John Knox Ranch, Peace Camp held at Divine Redeemer PC, SA, \$4,000

New Covenant PC, The Undocumented Stories program, \$6,000

Primera Iglesia Presbiteriana Mexicana, Young Christian Latina Leaders, \$2,000

Time Dollar, food pantry

Iglesia Presbiteriana, Sinai, outdoor worship site, \$2,500

Hyde Park PC, Austin, food pantry, \$2,000

St. Andrew PC, SA, music ministry, \$600

Report of the Committee on Representation and Participation, TE Walt Lee

Walt made an overview of the committee's work and challenges.

CORP lifted up the questionnaire that's been in the newsletter. Return completed forms to the Stated Clerk.

Walt brought a motion to approve TE Brian Wiggins, Memorial, Fredericksburg, to serve on the Pastoral Care Committee. The motion passed.

Report of the Disaster Preparedness and Assistance Committee, RE Jennifer Rektorik

DPAC needs volunteers, who aren't necessarily members of the committee. Especially needed are people who can help in emergencies.

DPAC is glad to hear about the Synod level Presbyterian Disaster Assistance position.

DPAC truck: We have received \$43,000 in donations towards the truck. We are still in need of additional resources. The truck will be housed at John Knox Ranch and a draft Memorandum of Understanding is in the works.

Report of the Pastoral Care Committee, TE Emily Owen

Emily celebrated pastors who have honorably retired: Eric Dittman and Regina Maas.

The Moderator-Elect invited the Moderator to say a few final words.

The Moderator-Elect asked if there was a motion to adjourn, which was given and seconded.

Fred closed the meeting with prayer.

Minutes submitted by Laurie Palmer, Stated Clerk.

