

**Stated Meeting of Mission Presbytery Minutes  
March 3-4, 2023  
Covenant Presbyterian Church, San Antonio, TX**

**Our 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.

**Our 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.

**FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 2023**

**Moderator Fred Gamble convened Mission Presbytery at 4:00 p.m. on Friday, March 3, 2023, at Covenant Presbyterian Church, San Antonio, TX.**

He began the meeting by reading our Mission Statement:

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.

Fred declared that a quorum was present and invited the Rev. Maria Vargas to open the meeting with prayer, which she did.

**Fred asked for a motion and a second to approve the docket for the meeting. The motion passed.**

Fred invited first-time commissioners to stand and introduce themselves, including which churches they were representing at this meeting.

Fred introduced Corresponding Member Rev. Kathy Lee Cornell, Director for Disaster Recovery, Synod of the Sun. **Fred asked the presbytery for a motion and a second to allow voice, but no vote, for Kathy. The motion passed.**

Fred asked the Rev. Dan Milford to offer the welcome from the host church.

Fred introduced the **Rev. Monica Smith, Mission Presbytery's Temporary Presbyter**, while Sallie Watson is on sabbatical from March 1-May 31, 2023. Monica gave her report:

Good afternoon, siblings in Christ, hermanas y hermanos en Cristo.

It is now Day Three serving as your Temporary General Presbyter, and at this point, I can confidently say that this job is not boring!

Our plans for the next three months while Sallie Watson is on sabbatical do not involve slowing down. Our three new committees of Serve, Connect, and Learn are up and running. Be on the lookout for communications from them in the coming weeks. Serve is already planning a “Mission in Mission” activity for our June meeting at San Pedro in San Antonio. Connect is laying groundwork for connecting new members of the Presbytery to those of us who have been here a while, as well as reaching out to listen to your congregations about your hopes and dreams and ways you can share in ministry with each other. Learn is hoping to focus on spiritual practices, especially in Advent. They also hope to provide training on how to lead Elder training.

A couple of other things to tell you about:

- It’s the season for Better Together grants.

This is money available to two or more congregations or entities who want to partner together to do ministry in creative ways. There is more information and an application form on the website, under the Resources tab, and then choose “Forms.” The deadline is approaching quickly, April 14.

- An announcement has been in the newsletter the past couple of weeks, and I want to highlight it for you. A zoom conference for Small Church Vitality: Designing for the New Norm is being presented by PneuMatrix. Those of us in small churches—under 100 members, and that’s a lot of us, know that the new norm is already here. This conference will happen on four consecutive Wednesday afternoons, beginning THIS Wednesday. It is free, but you do have to register, and that link is in the Mission Presbytery newsletter.

Before I close, I have some words of gratitude. I continue to serve First Luling as their part time stated supply. They have been overwhelmingly gracious and generous with my time and attention, and I want to thank them publicly for that. If you want to know how to care for your pastor well, they are experts and will be happy to share ideas. I’m also deeply grateful to Mission Presbytery’s staff. I would not have agreed to serve in this role without them and their gifts.

I am here for you, whatever may arise in the next three months. You can reach me through the Presbytery office, and I will receive the [presbyter@missionpby.org](mailto:presbyter@missionpby.org) emails. I’m grateful to you for the words of support, encouragement, and most of all for your prayers.

Moderator, that concludes my report.

### **Stated Clerk’s Report, Rev. Laurie Palmer**

**She moved that the requests for excused absences be approved by the presbytery for this meeting. There was a second, no discussion, and the motion passed.**

#### **For Information:**

1. Clerks of Sessions: Laurie will do whatever she can to help Clerks of Sessions with any of their needs. Call me. Email me. Text me. When you elect a new Clerk of Session, let her know so she can show them where to find all the information they need for their ministries.
2. Proposed Amendments to the Constitution: We had a workshop this afternoon to give the presbytery an opportunity to discuss them at length. We sent all the information in the packets and assume that the presbytery has those resources available to you this afternoon. Fred will explain how we will vote when we begin that part of the meeting. Laurie clarified that

neither they nor she would advocate for the proposed amendments but would serve as resources to help the best we can.

3. Proposed bylaws and manual of operations: Because of the change in Mission Presbytery's structure, updating our bylaws and manual of operations was necessary. They were brought to the called meeting of Mission Presbytery on January 21, 2023, so this is the second reading and an opportunity to discuss them.

If you plan to make any motions to amend them, write your proposed amendments, make two copies, and bring them to me. I will give one to Moderator Fred Gamble.

4. Commission on Ministry Report: Laurie is receiving updated and new terms of calls and contracts nearly by the day. The COM report has some of them, so churches might not see what you've sent in yet. Laurie will provide a spreadsheet with all she received at the June 16-17, 2023, presbytery meeting. Some of you find this information helpful in your own pastor searches.

5. Please note the flyer in the packet that says, "Let's get connected." This is the presbytery directory in Realm. You can use it on your computer and/or on your phone. If you have questions about downloading and accessing the directory, please contact Melody Gonzales in the office for help. If we have contact information for anyone, it's in there. If we need to add contact information, please tell us. It's likely that we won't do what we don't know.

6. Mission Presbytery e-newsletter. Please subscribe. Please open it. Please read it. You can sign up on the homepage of our website, bottom right corner.

7. Finally: Deadlines. We have them for all sorts of things in our lives. And we have them for the Mission Presbytery meetings. Friends, make sure you read the packet when it is released, and go ahead and register for anything you need to at that time. Sometimes we cannot help you as we'd like when deadlines pass. And we want to be a help, not a hindrance, so we need your help too. Having said this, as it applies to presbytery meetings, it also applies to the annual statistical report.

**New Life Community, Rio Grande Valley:** Rev. Ezequiel Herrera is ill. Carlos Baladez made the report in his absence.

New Life Community will celebrate its first anniversary on March 19, 2023.

New Life Community and Puentes de Cristo have welcomed various work groups.

Fred moderated the votes on the proposed amendments.

**Proposed Amendments to the Constitution** (Approved/No)

I. **Foundations M/S/Approved**

22-A **A**

22-B **A**

II. **Electronic Meetings m/s**

22-C **A**

22-M **A**

22-N **A**

III. **Boundary Training 22-O was pulled m/s**

22-G **A**

22-H **A**

- 22-K **A**
- 22-L **A**
- 22-O **A**
- 22-P **A**
- IV. **Government Section: all were pulled; m/s on all**
  - 22-D **A**
  - 22-E **A**
  - 22-F **A**
  - 22-I **A Motion and second/vote on ending debate. Motion passed.**
  - 22-J **A**
  - 22-Q **A**
  - 22-R **A**
  - 22-S **A**
- V. **Worship Directory m/s Pulled T and U**
  - 22-AA **A**
  - 22-BB **A**
  - 22-T **A**
  - 22-U **A**
  - 22-V **A**
  - 22-W **A**
  - 22-X **A**
  - 22-Y **A**
  - 22-Z **A**
- VI. **Changes to the current Book of Discipline m/s on all**
  - 22-CC **A**
  - 22-DD **A**
  - 22-EE **A**
  - 22-FF **A**
- VII. **Church Discipline m/s**
  - 22-GG **A**

The meeting was recessed with prayer by Fred Gamble until 9:00 a.m. Saturday morning, March 4, 2023.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 2023**

Moderator Fred Gamble reconvened the presbytery with prayer.

Mission Presbytery moved into a time of worship.

Rev. Maria Vargas, Stated Supply, FPC, Del Rio, preached.

Other participants: RE Laura Dabney, Rev. Brian Diebold, CP Sherri Dittman, Rev. Shinchan (Peter) Jeong, Rev. Krystal Leedy, RE Lety Martinez, Rev. Nancy McCranie, Rev. Dan Milford, RE Belinda Ornelas, Rev. John Roberts, RE Lita Simpson, Rev. Katy Walters

The offering was designated for Puentes De Cristo

The presbytery took a short break.

The Moderator announced that there is a request for amending the docket to include a commissioner resolution, as follows:

“Whereas two of the most horrific gun violence episodes in our state have occurred within the bounds of Mission Presbytery;

Whereas a supermajority of Texans currently supports common-sense measures to ensure responsible gun ownership including universal background checks, red flag laws, smaller magazine requirements, and raising the age to purchase assault rifles;

Whereas the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) affirmed its support of such measures in 2010;

Be it resolved that Mission Presbytery urges the 2023 Texas legislature to recognize this remarkable common ground and take action to pass such measures for the safety of our communities.”

**There was a motion and a second. The presbytery approved this amendment to the meeting’s docket to take up this request.**

### **Commission on Ministry, RE Gordon Ringler**

#### 1. Examination for Ordination for Ministry to Word and Sacrament

##### a. Kevin Ireland

On behalf of COM, Gordon presented Kevin Ireland for examination for ordination. Kevin completed a Master of Divinity degree from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. He has been certified ready to receive a call by the Presbytery of Northern Kansas and has been contracted as a pastoral resident for Westlake Hills Presbyterian Church, Austin.

COM has sustained his examination with the Examinations Team. Today presbytery has the privilege and responsibility to examine Kevin in the areas of Christian faith, theology, Sacraments, and government. Gordon began with a question, and then the Moderator opened the floor.

**A motion was made and seconded to close the examination. The motion passed.**

**Gordon moved, “On behalf of COM, I move that Kevin Ireland’s examination be sustained, and he be enrolled, pending ordination, as a member of Mission Presbytery.”**

**Fred asked for discussion, then called for the vote. The motion passed.**

Gordon congratulated Kevin, and asked for members of Westlake Hills PC, Austin, to stand or wave.

##### b. Sarah Dixon

On behalf of COM, Gordon presented Sarah Dixon for examination for ordination to Ministry of Word and Sacrament. Sarah completed a Master of Divinity degree from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. She has been certified ready to receive a call by Grace Presbytery and has been contracted as a Stated Supply for Faith Formation with First Presbyterian Church, Austin.

COM has sustained his examination with the Examinations Team. Today the presbytery has the privilege and responsibility to examine Sarah in the areas of Christian faith, theology, Sacraments, and government.

Gordon began with a question, and then the Moderator opened the floor.

**A motion was made and seconded to close the examination. The motion passed.**

**Gordon moved, "On behalf of COM, I move that Sarah Dixon's examination be sustained, and she be enrolled, pending ordination, as a member of Mission Presbytery."**

**Fred asked for discussion, then called for the vote. The motion passed.**

Gordon congratulated Sarah and asked First, Austin members to stand or wave.

3. **Gordon brought a motion on behalf of COM to declare First, Menard, an extinct congregation per the Book of Order, G-4.0205.** It has closed and is an abandoned property.

The property is under the care of the Trustees of Mission Presbytery.

The Moderator asked if there was any discussion, then called for a vote. **The motion passed.**

4. Gordon presented Charlie Palmer, who has just claimed honorable retirement. RE Steve Frazier from Treasure Hills, Harlingen, offered thanksgiving for Charlie's ministry there.

### **General Council Report, Rev. Nancy McCranie**

1. Vote on the Mission Presbytery Bylaws

**The Bylaws were approved.**

2. Vote on the Manual of Operations

**One amendment was made to include using the most current Robert's Rules of Order. There was a motion and a second and it passed.**

**The Manual of Operations was approved as amended.**

3. Vote on the Youth Connection and John Knox Ranch LGBTG+ Inclusion Policy

Caitlin Supcoff and Henry Owen made a report on this policy.

**After discussion, the motion passed.**

4. Dismiss Administrative Commissions

a. **Nancy moved that Mission Presbytery dismiss the Administrative Commission that worked with Community Presbyterian Church, Port Aransas.**

**Fred asked if there was any discussion. The motion passed.**

b. **Nancy moved that Mission Presbytery dismiss the Administrative Commission that worked with First Presbyterian Church, Del Rio. The fruit of its work was the contract with its Stated Supply Pastor, the Rev. Maria Vargas.**

**Fred asked if there were any discussion. The motion passed.**

Close her report in prayer for the Administrative Commissions.

### **Committee on Representation and Participation Report, Rev. Walt Lee**

Walt directed the presbytery to the report on representation in the packet.

**He made a motion on behalf of CORP that two people be elected to the Learn Committee: RE Alan Constant and TE Naomi Ingram.**

Fred asked if there were any nominations from the floor. Hearing none, he called for the vote.

**The motion passed.**

### **Disaster Preparedness and Assistance Task Force Report, RE Ben Henderson**

DPATF offers a risk assessment in congregations resource—see the packet for this meeting for that information.

We need volunteers, and the training you receive can be useful in your own congregations.

Non-profit grants are available. Contact DPATF for help.

### **Presbyterian Women Report, RE Lori Black**

Lori lifted up the Spring Gathering at Mo-Ranch from March 24-26, 2023. Information about the conference and registration are in the packet.

PWs are doing something new: We offer the Horizons Bible Study online. See the packet for the details.

We need a leader for the Austin cluster. If interested or want more information, contact Lori.

### **Youth Connection Task Force Report, RE Caitlin Supcoff**

A full report is available in the packet for today's meeting.

YCTF is taking applications for the Presbytery Youth Leadership Team. High school juniors and seniors are encouraged to apply.

Super Bowl Smackdown: We won a competition with Grace and New Covenant Presbyteries!! We raised the equivalent of 112,836 food items. These are the winners in our presbytery:

Third Place: Grace, Round Rock

Second Place: FPC, El Campo

First Place: San Pedro, San Antonio

### **John Knox Ranch Report, RE Henry Owen, Director**

JKR has started an apprentice program because "Everyone who works in the summer thinks they want my job." Matthew Wood is one of them, and he spoke to the presbytery.

Chainsaws are stored at Mo Ranch; they were used for cleaning up trees at JKR with 58 volunteers right after the ice storm.

764 signed up for summer camp as of 3/3/2023! Don't wait to register!

### **Puentes De Cristo Report, RE Caly Fernandez**

Caly lifted up the report in the packet. The situation at the border is very difficult and she is grateful for the groups that come to volunteer with her.

### **Rob Mueller: Commissioner Resolution**

Rob Mueller brought the following commissioner resolution:

"Whereas two of the most horrific gun violence episodes in our state have occurred within the bounds of Mission Presbytery;

Whereas a supermajority of Texans currently supports common-sense measures to ensure responsible gun ownership including universal background checks, red flag laws, smaller magazine requirements, and raising the age to purchase assault rifles;

Whereas the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) affirmed its support of such measures in 2010;

Be it resolved that Mission Presbytery urges the 2023 Texas legislature to recognize this remarkable common ground and take action to pass such measures for the safety of our communities.”

Rob moved it, and there was a second to approve.

**After an opportunity for discussion, Mission Presbytery approved the motion.**

**There was a motion and a second to adjourn the meeting with prayer. The motion passed.**

**Rev. Jack Haberer closed the meeting with prayer.**

These minutes are submitted by the Stated Clerk, Rev. Laurie Palmer.