

**Minutes of the One Hundred Forty-First Stated Meeting of
The Presbytery of Arkansas**
[Draft – for Presbytery Approval Only]

June 8, 2019

Call to Order/Opening Prayer

The 141st Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Arkansas was called to order with prayer and the lighting of the Christ candle in the Sanctuary of Second Presbyterian Church, Little Rock, Arkansas at 9:37 a.m. by Moderator Ruling Elder David Stricklin on Saturday, June 8, 2019.

Report of Enrollment/Declaration of a Quorum

Temporary Stated Clerk MWS Leslie Smith Belden declared **a quorum present** with 40 Ministers of the Word and Sacrament (MWS), and 47 Ruling Elders (RE) from 39 churches, 7 elder members-at-large and 6 other church professionals, for a grand total of 100 voting commissioners at the gavel. The quorum for Stated Meetings of the Presbytery being “20 Ruling Elders and 20 Ministers of the Word and Sacrament with at least 20 congregations represented overall” (Policy amended at the 2/10/18 Stated Meeting), a quorum was declared present. The record of total attendance is included in the Appendix as Attachment A.

Adoption of the Docket

Temporary Stated Clerk MWS Belden moved the adoption of the docket. The motion was seconded, and the **docket as originally distributed was adopted.**

**Seating of Corresponding Members and
Granting Privilege of the Floor/Voice**

Seated as a **corresponding member with privilege of the floor and voice** were **MWS Bradley Rito, of Wabash Valley Presbytery; RE Sherry Kenney, of the Presbyterian Foundation and the Presbytery of Denver; and Rev. John Landis, American Baptist serving at First, Pine Bluff.**

The Temporary Stated Clerk **moved that privilege of the floor and voice be granted to: Stacey Hammons, Candidate; Julianna Whitson, Inquirer; and Jeannie Shear, Applicant for Inquirer Status, First, Conway. Motion was seconded, and approved.**

Moderator RE Stricklin moved the appointment of tellers and Leaves of Absence Committee to later in the meeting.

Welcome to First-Time Commissioners

Moderator RE Stricklin asked first-time commissioners to stand and wave, and the body was pleased to welcome 13 first-time elder commissioners.

Introduction of Presbytery Staff and Officers

Moderator RE Stricklin introduced the following: Staff General Presbyter MWS Stewart Smith; Temporary Stated Clerk MWS Leslie Smith Belden; Director of Mission Support RE Kenneth Rich and Recording Clerk NiAnn Thompson. Also introduced were volunteer officers RE Bob Boehmler, Presbytery Treasurer and MWS Marion Humphrey, Vice Moderator of Presbytery.

Welcome from the Host

MWS Jennifer (Jen) Evans, associate pastor at Second Presbyterian, welcomed commissioners and guests to Second Presbyterian Church, Little Rock, orienting all to the facilities and schedule.

Report of the Staff Search Committee

MWS Steve Hancock, Moderator of the Staff Search Committee, reported on behalf of the committee, referencing the report handed out at registration included in the Appendix as Attachment B. Thompson was appointed acting Temporary Stated Clerk when Belden and family left the sanctuary. He named and thanked members of the committee and reminded commissioners of five part-time positions the committee is called to fill. They gave priority to the first three positions because they are needed most immediately. All three positions were posted in various locations in April and May, and the committee feels they have gotten the word out. He gave the following status report: Presbytery Administrator position received numerous applications, and those have been narrowed to the six leading applicants; Youth position has been narrowed to three leading applicants whom the committee will interview on Wednesday, June 12; and Stated Clerk search is finished. MWS Leslie Smith Belden has applied and been interviewed, having served as temporary stated clerk for two years and three months. Her recommendation by the committee comes with strong endorsement of GP Smith of their good working relationship in this interim time, and Belden agrees.

Motion to elect MWS Leslie Smith Belden for three year term as Stated Clerk. MWS Rebecca Spooner asked if there were other applicants. Hancock answered that there were not. **Motion was approved.**

Consent Agenda

Stated Clerk MWS Belden drew the commissioners' attention to the consent agenda, which included the following motions:

1. **Motion to approve the minutes of the 140th Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Arkansas, March 1-2, 2019, held at the University of the Ozarks, Clarksville.**

2. **Motion to receive the minutes as the report of the Administrative Commission installing MWS Ainsley Herrick at First Presbyterian Church, Morrilton, and dismiss them with thanks.**
3. **Motion to receive the report of the Committee on Representation with thanks and encourage the Committee on Nominations and other groups to follow their recommendations.** That report is included in the Appendix as Attachment C. She asked commissioners to read and note that extensive demographics report on who the presbytery is and who elected persons are, with recommendations.
4. **Motion to receive the report of the Future of the Church Ministry Area.** That report is included in the Appendix as Attachment D.
5. **Motion to receive the report of the Presbyterian Women.** That report is included in the Appendix as Attachment E.

Stated Clerk MWS Belden **moved the adoption of the consent agenda. The motion was seconded and adopted.**

Report of the General Presbyter

MWS Stewart Smith updated commissioners on the response to recent flooding of the Arkansas River. A \$7,500 grant was applied for this week from the national denomination. Mid-Council leaders have learned that because of the proximity to the receipt of the One Great Hour of Sharing offering, no national solicitation specific to Arkansas will be made. A bulletin insert is available for reproducing. Local church contributions can be made to the national office or to the Presbytery's Subcommittee on Disaster Preparation and Response.

In the wider church, he called attention to the Synod report in the packet, including Synod Sunday, leadership convocation, Oct. 30-Nov. 1 synod meeting in McAllen, TX on border mission work, and the Big Tent in Baltimore Aug. 1-3. Smith announced that the worship offering at today's service benefits presbytery's summer youth trips. Smith reported numbers registered for Triennium, Montreat and Mo Ranch trips. He also called attention to MWS Bill Seitz' wedding, which is set for June 22 at First, Mena, and all are invited.

GP Smith invited MWS Michael Vinson forward. Vinson recently resigned from presbytery staff to serve as stated supply, at First, North Little Rock/Argenta. Vinson has served as Staff for Congregational Vitality/Spiritual Discernment since 2011 and staffed three committees, helped several churches with visioning and has been a familiar figure at presbytery meeting registration. Smith presented Vinson a financial gift and card. The General Presbyter reminded commissioners that the transition in staff resulted in Director of Mission Support Kenneth Rich choosing a half-time schedule, with him working mornings only so please call Smith before coming to office any weekday afternoon.

Recess for Worship

Moderator RE Stricklin recessed the meeting in preparation for Worship to begin at 10:00 a.m. in the sanctuary. The worship bulletin is included in the Appendix as **Attachment F**. After worship commissioners moved to the Great Hall for the balance of the meeting.

Reconvene in the Great Hall

Moderator RE Stricklin called the meeting back to order at 10:56 a.m. in the Great Hall and relit the Christ candle. Stated Clerk Belden announced the appointment of Tellers, MWS Bill Branch, HR and MWS Gordon Garlington, HR, REs Amanda Latimar, Allison Memorial, Little Rock and Cathy Baker, First, Dardanelle. Leaves of Absence Committee include MWS Rebecca Spooner and RE Sam Highsmith, Second, LR. Stricklin thanked Hammons for her sermon and staff of Second Presbyterian for gracious hosting.

Report of the Treasurer

Treasurer RE Bob Boehmler drew the Presbytery's attention to the financial statements found in the "Additional Reports, Financials, and Fliers" packet, included in the Appendix as Attachment D. He saw no items of concern and reports \$27,000 more in expenses than in income, noting receipts from summer trips. Investments are doing better this year than last December, but Boehmler predicts a decline by the fall. \$180,000 is the amount from the spend rate amount, and he appreciates financial support from the congregations.

Report of the Stated Clerk

Stated Clerk MWS Belden announced the worship offering of \$1,720.66, which supports the presbytery's youth trips. She asked the commissioners and guests to review the information found in Section B of the main packet and the Section B in the "Additional Reports, Financials, and Fliers" packet, and made the following motions:

- 1. On behalf of the Committee on Nominations, motion to elect Emma Gillaspay of First Presbyterian Church, Conway, and a student at Lyon College, to serve on the Ministries with Youth, Young Adults, and Campus Ministry Area in the Class of 2019, filling the vacancy created by the resignation of MWS Robert Williamson.**

Moderator Stricklin asked if there were any nominations from the floor. There being none, **the motion was approved.**

- 2. Motion to approve the following proposed amendment to the Bylaws of the Synod of the Sun, of which Presbytery of Arkansas is a part:**

3.1.2 Six commissioners (three ruling elders and three teaching elders from six different presbyteries) shall be elected as at-large commissioners to represent racial-ethnic constituencies. The Coordinating Team, serving as the nominating committee, shall make recommendations for at-large commissioners at the Fall Stated meeting. At-large commissioners are elected by the Assembly.

Rationale: The Book of Order (G-3.0401) states "A synod shall determine a plan for the election of commissioners to the synod, as well as the method to fulfill the principles of participation and representation found in F- 1.0403 and G-3.0103; both plans shall be subject to approval by a majority of the presbyteries in the synod." All of the presbyteries in the Synod of the Sun are being asked to approve this amendment. Currently the Synod elects four commissioners, so the only change is the addition of two more commissioners.

Motion was seconded and approved.

3. **Report from Standing Administrative Commission:** Temporary Stated Clerk Belden welcomed RE Leah Shell, Moderator of the Administrative Commission elected to work with congregations requesting dissolution, to report on actions taken on behalf of the Presbytery of Arkansas. RE Shell reported the following:

She thanked and named the members of the Administrative Commission charged with working with congregations who have requested assistance from the Presbytery with their dissolution. The AC assumed original jurisdiction of the session of Cleburne Avenue Presbyterian in West Helena, at the request of the congregation and in the absence of a session, and conducted the *Book of Order* mandated congregational meeting on Thursday, June 6, 2019. The Administrative Commission unanimously concurred with the requests of the congregation to dissolve the congregation, to gift \$500 to Rev. Don Montgomery, to gift the remainder of the financial assets to Anchor Mission, a non-profit agency in that community supporting homeless people including women and children, and to sell the building, its contents, and the lands as described by the appraisal to Anchor Mission for \$1.00, "less and except all minerals and mineral rights." Stated Clerk Belden further explained that an AC functions as the presbytery. RE Ted Belden announced the West Helena members will publicize a fall date for celebration of the life of the congregation.

Resuming the Stated Clerk's report, the following information was in the written report in the packet:

Report of Pastors on the "Active Honorably Retired Roll"

Honorably Retired pastors who are on the Active Honorably Retired Roll for 2019 include:

MWS Catherine Allsbury, HR	MWS Sally Johnson, HR
MWS Bill Branch, HR	MWS Lance Jones, HR
MWS Ira "Ike" Brighton, HR	MWS Clare Kelley, HR
MWS Don Campbell, HR	MWS David King, HR
MWS Carol Clark, HR	MWS John King, HR
MWS Danny Daniel, HR	MWS Elton "Bo" Lewis, HR
MWS Joyce Daniel, HR	MWS Terry McLellan, HR
MWS Milton Davis, HR	MWS Jim Miller, HR
MWS David Dyer, HR	MWS Richard Miller, HR
MWS Orin Frank, HR	MWS David Reed, HR
MWS Dick Frothingham, HR	MWS Dick Shinkle, HR
MWS Gordon Garlington, HR	MWS Fred Taylor, HR
MWS David Gill, HR	MWS Don Wardlaw, HR
MWS "Flash" Gordon, HR	MWS Linda Whitworth-Reed, HR
MWS Robert Hadley, HR	MWS Rita Wilson-Perry, HR
MWS Bill Henning, HR	MWS Darwin Wolfe, HR

Report on Administrative Commissions

Seven Administrative Commissions continue to work with congregations or on property issues, including:

- First Presbyterian Church, Clarksville – RE Ted Belden and MWS Clare Kelley, HR, Co-Moderators
- First Presbyterian Church, Little Rock – RE Cyril Hollingsworth, Moderator
- First Presbyterian Church, Lonoke – MWS Lindy Vogado, Moderator
- Northwest Arkansas Hispanic Ministry Administrative Commission – MWS Phil Butin, Moderator
- Pine Bluff (Central, Faith, and First Presbyterian Churches) – MWS Dari Rowen, Moderator
- Standing Administrative Commission (currently working with First, Stuttgart) – RE Leah Shell, Moderator
- Washington County Property – RE Ted Belden, Moderator

Report of the Coordinating Team

Coordinating Team Moderator MWS Leslie Bethell Roper called commissioners' and guests' attention to the report in the main packet which included the following:

Actions Taken by the Coordinating Team on Behalf of the Presbytery:

1. Approved that the Presbytery of Arkansas commit to being a “Matthew 25” Presbytery. See further remarks/information.
2. Set the date of the Winter/Spring meeting in 2020 at Lyon College in Batesville, Arkansas, as March 6-7, 2020. Note that for the second year, the meeting is set for March.
3. Approved the request of First Presbyterian Church, Newport, for permission to sell a duplex that the church owns which has become a financial burden.
4. Approved the request of First Presbyterian Church, Harrison, for permission to sell four acres behind the church.
5. Dismissed two task forces of the Coordinating Team with thanks – the Task Force on Financial Resources Beyond the Normal Budgeting Process and the Task Force Looking at the CRE Process. The Coordinating Team also began a process of putting together a new Task Force that will be more directed, charged to develop a policy or policies, to assist the Presbytery of Arkansas and its various ministry areas and committees in the use of non-budgeted funds. The Task Force on the CRE process is handing off their business to joint Committee on Ministry and Committee on Preparation for Ministry.

The “Matthew 25” Initiative

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³ and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴ Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the

foundation of the world; ³⁵for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ ³⁷Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ ⁴⁰And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family,^[a] you did it to me.’ ⁴¹Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴²for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ ⁴⁴Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’ ⁴⁵Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ ⁴⁶And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” (New Revised Standard Version)

Matthew 25:31–46 calls all to actively engage in the world around us, so our faith comes alive and we wake up to new possibilities. Convicted by this passage, both the 222nd and 223rd General Assemblies (2016 and 2018) exhorted the PC(USA) to act boldly and compassionately to serve people who are hungry, oppressed, imprisoned or poor.

The Matthew 25 Initiative encourages synods, presbyteries, and congregations to commit to at least one of three “focus areas”:

1. Building Congregational Vitality
2. Dismantling Structural Racism
3. Eradicating Systemic Poverty

The Coordinating Team recognized that the first focus area, “Building Congregational Vitality,” offered encouragement and tools for congregations in line with the three priorities of the Presbytery:

1. Building strong congregations that faithfully and effectively share the gospel through mission and ministry.
2. Connecting congregations, resources, and expertise to support life-giving practices in congregations and fellowships.
3. Developing and supporting ministries with youth and young adults, including collegiate and campus ministry.

The Coordinating Team believes that by committing the Presbytery of Arkansas to being a “Matthew 25” presbytery we are uniting ourselves with the PC(USA) in a concentrated effort to work together toward common goals, and we are encouraging our congregations to take the pledge to become “Matthew 25” congregations. The PC(USA) denomination has developed recommendations and resources to assist congregations, presbyteries, and synods in our effort to live into Christ’s admonition to serve Christ’s own self by feeding the

hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, welcoming the stranger, clothing the naked, and visiting the sick and those in prison.

By accepting the Matthew 25 invitation, the Presbytery of Arkansas and its congregations can help the PC(USA) denomination become a more relevant presence in the world. The PC(USA)'s Presbyterian Mission Agency recognizes Christ's urgent call to be a church of action, where God's love, justice and mercy shine forth and are contagious. And all Presbyterians can rejoice how re-energized faith can unite all Presbyterians for a common and holy purpose: the common identity to do mission. At each of the next three presbytery meetings one of the focus areas will be looked at more in-depth. Congregations can look forward to more information in the future, and can find more details on-line at <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/>

MWS Matt Bussell asked which of the three foci the CT had or would choose. Roper said the first step was to have a theological discussion of each of these at the next three presbytery meetings. GP Stewart Smith explained that presbytery's commitment leads to the push to get 20% of the local congregations in the presbytery to commit to Matthew 25. Belden informed Roper that the Matthew 25 speaker has asked to come next March presbytery meeting.

Report of the Committee on Ministry

COM member MWS Dari Rowen gave the report of the Committee on Ministry in the absence of Moderator RE Cyril Hollingsworth. She noted the report of the COM in both the main packet and in the handout, and made the following motions:

- 1. Motion to proceed to examine Candidate Stacey Hammons for ordination. Motion was approved.** She is under care of this presbytery.

*Stacey's Statement of Faith is included in the Appendix as **Attachment G**. Stacey is serving as the Chaplain at Presbyterian Village, a ministry validated by the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry at their June 4, 2019 meeting. Motions pertaining to her ordination, including the members proposed to be on the Administrative Commission to ordain and their roles, the offering recipient, and the date, time, and place of the worship service will be directed to the Presbytery of Arkansas' Coordinating Team at their June 24, 2019 meeting.*

Stacey made a statement of her personal faith and sense of call, especially her call to chaplaincy at Presbyterian Village.

- a. Motion to sustain faith and commitment portion of exam. Motion was seconded and approved.**
- b. Motion to sustain the sermon portion of her exam, preached this morning. Motion was seconded and approved.**
- c. Motion to sustain printed faith statement portion of her exam. Motion was seconded and approved.**

- d. MWS Lacy Sellars asked a question in the area of Bible about the role of science and scripture, particularly creation and the ark, and whether the Bible and science are compatible and able to have conversation, and Hammons answered that she thinks they are compatible. **Motion to sustain Bible portion of exam. Motion was seconded and approved.**
- e. MWS Frank LeBlanc asked a question in the area of Reformed Theology on “sin and oppression” in her printed faith statement, and Hammons answered that while work is done we still live in the not-yet moment. **Motion to sustain Reformed Theology portion of the exam. Motion was seconded and was approved.**
- f. MWS Carol Clark, HR asked a question in the area of Worship and Sacraments on the work of the Holy Spirit in baptism and communion, and Hammons answered that the Holy Spirit claims us in water and unites us at table. **Motion to sustain the Worship and Sacraments portion of the exam. Motion was seconded and was approved.**
- g. MWS Rowen asked a question in the area of polity on the role of the moderator of session and Hammons answered role is to conduct the meeting. MWS Sellars asked what happens when you see someone struggling with discussion at the Session meeting. Hammons would have a private conversation to encourage talking. MWS Becky Purcell asked how to handle people who don’t agree, and Hammons said let all have a voice and feel valued. **Motion to sustain polity portion of the exam. Motion was seconded and approved.**
- h. **Motion to sustain the exam to Ministry of Word and Sacrament as a whole. Motion was seconded and approved.**
- i. She was escorted from the room. **Motion to approve Candidate Stacey Hammons for ordination to Ministry of the Word and Sacrament and then to enroll her as member of Presbytery of Arkansas. Motion was seconded and approved.** She returned to applause.

Following the examination, MWS Rowen asked that members of Second Presbyterian Church, Little Rock, Candidate Hammons’ home church, and residents and staff of Presbyterian Village stand and be recognized.

- 2. **Motion to grant honorable retirement to MWS Libby Lizarraga, effective June 8, 2019. Motion was approved.** She was absent, but her certificate will be delivered.
- 3. **Motion to grant honorable retirement to MWS Karen Akin, effective October 15, 2019, and also to approve the dissolution of call of MWS Karen Akin as Pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church, Little Rock effective October 15, 2019, as the congregation concurred with that dissolution in a duly called congregational meeting on April 28, 2019. Motion was approved.**

MWS Rowen asked MWS Lindy Vogado to speak on behalf of MWS Karen Akin on the occasion of her honorable retirement and gave her a certificate. She asked members of

Grace Presbyterian Church, Little Rock, to stand and be recognized. Report was arrested to allow Minute Announcements.

Minute Announcements at 11:50 a.m. RE David Clark spoke on the Boy Scouts and church partnerships. MWS Jeremy Wilhelmi updated on UofO activities. RE Ray Stephens invited all to Disaster’s display table. MWS Phil Butin spoke as co-moderator of Honduras Subcommittee on their March 21-29, 2020 mission trip. RE Patty Minga invited all to the NE Arkansas fall gathering of PW. RE Sherry Kenney from Presbyterian Foundation spoke of online and legacy giving and her stewardship resources. MWS Gordon Garlington, HR spoke on ripple effect of Helen Walton’s life and The PLACE educational event on August 10. CCE Kristi Button spoke of United Campus Ministry, UofA, Fayetteville. MWS Frank LeBlanc spoke of Cotham Lectures at Westover Hills, Little Rock and guest “Stuff that needs to be said” blogger on Sept. 23-24.

Recess for Lunch

Moderator RE Stricklin recessed the meeting at noon for lunch and called upon MWS Catherine Allsbury, HR for lunch directions and Candidate Jill Acree to give the prayer.

Reconvene and 12:45 pm Order of the Day

Moderator RE Stricklin called the meeting back to order and introduced MWS Becky Purcell to lead the theological presentation on the Book of Ruth as the Order of the Day.

Report of Committee on Ministry (resumes)

MWS Rowen resumed her report at 1:45 p.m.

- 4. **Motion to approve the call of MWS Bradley Rito as Pastor of Holiday Island Presbyterian Church, Holiday Island, effective May 19, 2019, with the following terms of call:**

Cash and Housing -----	\$46,400.00
Continuing Education -----	\$ 1,200.00
Professional Reimbursable Expenses -----	\$ 1,200.00
Board of Pensions –Full Family -----	\$17,168.00
Vacation -----	4 weeks paid
Continuing Education Time -----	2 weeks paid
Parental Leave -----	6 weeks paid
Sabbatical Leave -----	12 weeks paid
to be taken in the 7th year with Presbytery approval	
Total Compensation Package -----	\$65,968.00

And to enroll him as a member of the Presbytery of Arkansas, requesting his dismissal from Wabash Valley Presbytery. MWS Rito’s Statement of Faith is included in the Appendix as **Attachment H**. Motions concerning the worship service and Administrative Commission to install him will be approved by the Coordinating Team at their June 24, 2019 meeting. **Motion was approved.**

MWS Rowen asked MWS Rito to share greetings with the Presbytery, and asked that his family and members of Holiday Island Presbyterian Church, Holiday Island, stand and be recognized.

5. **Motion to approve the call of MWS Krista Denne' as Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Clarksville, with the following terms of call for a thirty (30) hour per week call:**

Salary	\$9,300
Housing	\$12,800
Auto Allowance	\$500
Education	\$1,500
Tax Reimbursement	\$3,500
Total	\$36,600

Board of Pensions benefits are fully covered

4 weeks vacation, 2 weeks continuing education, the church will furnish pastoral supply when Krista is gone for coaching softball, a sabbatical leave at the completion of seven years of ministry to be approved by the Committee on Ministry in the fifth year, and parental leave of six weeks. Motion was approved.

Krista has been serving as the Resident Intern at First Presbyterian Church, Clarksville, a position connected with First Presbyterian Church of Fort Smith. That two-year position will expire in August, necessitating a change in her pastoral relationship. The Book of Order requires that Presbytery approve a call by a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote of someone currently serving in a position at a congregation. See Book of Order G-2.0504c. Motions pertaining to her installation, including the members proposed to be on the Administrative Commission to install and their roles, the offering recipient, and the date, time, and place of the worship service will be directed to the Presbytery of Arkansas' Coordinating Team at their June 24, 2019 meeting.

MWS Rowen asked that family members of MWS Denne', and members of First Presbyterian Church, Clarksville, stand and be recognized.

6. **Motion to call a special meeting of the Presbytery of Arkansas for the purpose of examining and ordaining Candidate Max Hill at 3 p.m. Sunday, August 11, at Second Presbyterian Church, pending successful completion of his examination by the COM's Examinations Subcommittee.**

According to the Presbytery of Arkansas' Ministry Manual Part I: Organization and Structure, 3) Meetings of Presbytery, C) Special Meetings – Special, Called, or Adjourned meetings should be held on a Saturday. Only those ministers and elder commissioners within a 75-mile radius of the place of meeting shall be expected to attend a special meeting.

MWS Leslie Roper asked about why a special meeting is necessary and hoped that would not become a trend. Rowen answered that he was unavailable today and his presbytery of call asked that he be ordained before starting.

The following information was shared in the report of the Committee on Ministry:

1.The Committee on Ministry approved the covenant of MWS Michael Vinson to serve as the half-time Stated Supply Pastor of First Presbyterian Church in North Little Rock/Argenta, effective April 1, 2019, with an annual salary of \$24,700. He and members stood and were recognized.

2.The Committee on Ministry approved Rev. Jason Smith to serve in a Temporary Pastoral Relationship at First Presbyterian Church, Arkadelphia, with an effective date of May 7, 2019. Rev. Smith is a member in good standing of the Alliance of Baptists denomination, which is in full-communication with the United Church of Christ, with whom the PC(USA) is in full-communication. Rev. Smith was granted authority to celebrate the sacraments and officiate weddings, but not to moderate the Session, in accordance with the Presbytery of Arkansas' policy on Pastors from Other Denominations Serving Presbyterian Congregations. The terms of call for this part-time position include a salary of \$1,666.67 per month and the reimbursement of travel expenses at \$.42 per mile for travel outside of a twenty-mile radius from the church, plus the government's required social security match on the salary. Six weeks of paid vacation is also provided per calendar year. MWS Chip Hatcher will continue to serve as the Moderator of First Presbyterian Church, Arkadelphia. Rev. Jason Smith's Statement of Faith is included in the Appendix as **Attachment I**. He was not present.

3.The COM granted permission for RE Kelly Pearson to celebrate the Lord's Supper at First Presbyterian Church, Prairie Grove, in the absence of Pastor Becky Purcell and at her request.

Report of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry

MWS Jeff Price, Moderator of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, called the Presbytery's attention to the report of that committee in the main packet, noted formation of a committee task force to deal with requests of two ministers to transfer to this denomination, and made the following motions:

- 1. Motion for the Presbytery of Arkansas to examine Inquirer Julianna Whitson for candidacy and to approve moving her from Inquirer to Candidate status.**

*Julianna is a member of First Presbyterian Church in Prairie Grove and a student at Columbia Theological Seminary. Her Statement of Faith is included in the Appendix as **Attachment J**. The examination is restricted to her Statement of Faith.*

Whitson gave presbytery an update since she became an inquirer. There were no questions asked about her printed statement of faith. **Motion was approved.** Moderator asked constitutional questions, which she answered in the affirmative. Both Moderator Stricklin and her pastor MWS Purcell prayed for her.

- 2. Motion for the Presbytery of Arkansas to enroll Jeannie Shear as an Inquirer.**

*Jeannie is a member of First Presbyterian Church, Conway and a student at Austin Theological Seminary. Jeannie Shear's revised Statement of Faith was given to the Presbytery as a handout at the meeting and is included in the Appendix as **Attachment K**.*

She talked about her faith journey and her sense of call. **Motion was approved.** RE Mark Cooper prayed for her, and members of First, Conway stood and were recognized.

The following information was included in the report of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry in the main packet:

Stacey Hammons: The Committee on Preparation for Ministry met with candidate Stacey Hammons who is serving as the Chaplain at Presbyterian Village, Little Rock. *Having determined that she had satisfied all ordination requirements, the Committee voted to certify her ready to receive a call.*

Jordan Akin: The Committee met with candidate Jordan Akin, a member of Second, Little Rock and spring, 2019 graduate of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. *Having determined that she had satisfied all ordination requirements, the Committee voted to certify her ready to receive a call.*

Harold Eichelberger: Harold Eichelberger is from Gary, Indiana, and grew up in an American Baptist church. He attended Howard University and Harvard Divinity School. He was a hospice chaplain and Associate Pastor for six years in Boston and served as Pastor to United Methodist congregations in Georgia and Arkansas. The Committee will continue to work with Harold in the process of transferring ordination to the PC(USA).

Susie Wright: RE Susie Wright has previously completed course work to be a Commissioned Lay Pastor, the Commissioned Ruling Elder's predecessor, and now has been asked by Westminster Presbyterian Church of Hot Springs to be their CRE. She is also a Certified Christian Educator. *The committee voted to approve Susie Wright ready to become a CRE if she has previously completed a CLP exam, or in the future completes a CRE exam.*

Current Applicants

Inquirers – First Phase of the Preparation for Ministry Process

Brianne Christiansen - First United Presbyterian Church, Fayetteville

David Mills - Second Presbyterian Church, Little Rock

Julianna Whitson – First Presbyterian Church, Prairie Grove (to be presented for candidacy at the June 8, 2019 meeting of Presbytery)

Candidates – Second Phase of the Preparation for Ministry Process

Jill Acree – First Presbyterian Church, Conway

LaWanda Harris - Pulaski Heights Presbyterian Church, Little Rock

Keith Dove – Central Presbyterian Church, Russellville (certified ready to receive a call)

Max Hill – Second Presbyterian Church, Little Rock (certified ready to receive a call)

Stacey Hammons – Second Presbyterian Church, Little Rock (certified ready to receive a call)

Stephen Moody – First Presbyterian Church, Little Rock

Jordan Akin – Second Presbyterian Church, Little Rock (certified ready to receive a call)

Katherine Norwood – Second Presbyterian Church, Little Rock (certified ready to receive a call)

Molly DeWitt – Second Presbyterian Church, Little Rock (certified ready to receive a call)

Pending Applicants

Teila Creekmore - United Campus Ministry, Fayetteville

Jeannie Shear – First Presbyterian Church, Conway (to be presented for Inquirer status at the June 8, 2019 meeting of Presbytery)

CRE Candidates – Ruling Elders in the Educational Process toward serving as a Commissioned Ruling Elder

Peg Falls-Corbitt – First Presbyterian Church, Conway

Allan Huddleston – First Presbyterian Church, Springdale

Mary Jane Fisher – First Presbyterian Church, Jacksonville

Carla Taylor – First Presbyterian Church, Huntsville

Report of the Mission of the Church Ministry Area

MWS Gordon Garlington, HR, addressed the Presbytery and referred them to the report of the Mission of the Church Ministry Area in the main packet. He highlighted the following information from the report:

Email, U.S. Postal Service, Telephone, Morse Code, Carrier Pigeon, Any Way Possible!

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

That's the main thing we want to say as our Mission of the Church Ministry Area seeks to encourage and resource your congregation as our Presbytery of Arkansas works at *"Building strong congregations that faithfully and effectively share the gospel through mission and ministry."*

Specifically, we would love to hear what your church is doing in the areas of Christian Education and mission and outreach.

Tell us, please, what your church is offering in terms of Sunday school classes, study groups, or paths of personal devotion/spiritual enrichment, things you are doing in traditional, or

new, “out of the box” ways, helping folks in your church and community grow and mature in Christian faith.

And, tell us please, what your congregation is doing as you share the love of Christ in concrete ways with “the least of these,” those most vulnerable in your community and beyond. We know of and will be sharing stories of some amazing things in mission congregations are doing across our state. But we want to know more!

Why do we want to hear from you? First, so others across the Presbytery may rejoice with you in the difference these programs of Christian education and/or mission and outreach are making in the lives of those inside and beyond the walls of your church! Secondly, so as we share your stories they may inspire others to initiate similar programs or service in our local communities. And, related, because we are “Better Together,” we hope that in some cases learning what neighboring congregations are doing might spark cooperative efforts, folks in communities not too distant joining together in opportunities for mission and service or Christian education and spiritual enrichment!

We plan to share your stories in every way we can think or imagine -- Facebook, email, the Banner, through Presbyterian Women, youth events, etc! And please help us by suggesting new ways of sharing what we are doing in our congregations across the state!

Specifically, we are planning for our report at this year’s October meeting of Presbytery to be a celebration of ways congregations are “singing to the Lord a new song,” doing Christian education and mission and service in new, significant ways!

We are also inviting each of our congregations on the Sunday previous to that Presbytery meeting, September 29, to plan a “Presbyterian Day,” celebrating in their services and activities that day the ways they are sharing the love of Christ both within and without the walls of their churches!

We invite you, please, to share with us your congregation’s stories of Christian education and mission and outreach by emailing or mailing them to our Moderator, Gordon Garlington, at ggarlington3@hotmail.com or 204 Birnham Cove, North Little Rock, Arkansas 72116, telephone 501-940-8008. Or share them with any member of our Mission Area, listed below. If you have questions, please contact our Moderator or any member of the Ministry Area! Members of the Mission of the Church Ministry Area for 2019 are: the Rev. Jan Butin (First United, Fayetteville), Mrs. Kristi Button (First United, Fayetteville), the Rev. Dr. Paul Fulks (First, Van Buren), the Rev. Dr. Gordon Garlington (H.R., home church Westover Hills, Little Rock), Dr. Bruce Johnston (First, Batesville), Mrs. Emily Laurel (First, Benton), Mrs. Renee Nestor (First, Bentonville); Mr. Kelly Pearson (CRE, H.R., home church First, Prairie Grove), Dr. Sally Roden (First, Conway), Ms. Vicky Rogerson (First, Springdale), Ms. Mary Shaw (CRE, Elkins Federated); and Mrs. Marty Shepherd (First, Dardanelle).

Through the year we may also be contacting you, personally inviting you to share your stories, as well as asking if there are specific ways we as a ministry area might be helping

resource and encourage the ministries of your congregation! They will share those stories at the October presbytery meeting.

Speaking of resourcing and encouraging, we want to thank and express hearty “Kudos” to Carol Clark and the very active Board and volunteers who are now staffing and working with our Presbytery of Arkansas’ Resource Center! Please read Carol and the Resource Center’s report attached below ([Attachment L](#))!

And, we want to invite you to the very special P.L.A.C.E. (Presbytery Leadership Academy for Congregational Enrichment) event being planned for the morning of August 10, 2019. Our thanks to our host congregation this year, Trinity Presbyterian Church of Little Rock! See the highlights of the event in the attachment below ([Attachment M](#))! Rooms will be available at Ferncliff for the night before.

Other actions of our Mission of the Church Ministry Area at our meeting on May 3 at Central Presbyterian Church of Russellville included:

- Confirmation of two grants approved by email earlier this year, 1) a grant of \$950.00 to help Candidate for the Ministry and Pulaski Heights Presbyterian Elder LaWanda Harris participate in a Dominican Republic mission trip organized by Dubuque Seminary, and 2) a grant of \$1,000.00 to First Presbyterian Church of Huntsville for their hunger ministry.
- Acting on a request from MWS David Gill, HR approved a grant of \$2,000 to help David and the committee working on planning and hosting arrangements for the national meeting of the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (APCE) to be held in Little Rock in the winter of 2020. The Ministry Area believes the APCE meeting will be a boon for us, and hopes as many interested persons as possible from our Presbytery will be able to attend.
- Approved a request Joel Gill, Director of Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center, for a grant of \$5,000.00 to fund “Rise Against Hunger” at Ferncliff this summer. This program has campers each week as a part of their time at Ferncliff packing non-perishable meals to be shared with the hungry.
- Recommended to the Coordinating Team that the offering to be received at the October 4-5, 2019, meeting of Presbytery be designated to support Solar Under the Sun or Living Waters for the World projects in Honduras under the direction of our Presbytery’s Honduras Subcommittee.
- Set meetings for the rest of the year as July 12 (Zoom) and September 27.

The Mission of the Church Ministry Area also included a report of the Resource Center Board, which is included in the Appendix as Attachment L, and a report on the P.L.A.C.E. event, included in the Appendix as Attachment M. MWS Carol Clark, moderator of the RC board,

spoke of the Facebook page for the Resource Center and the benefits of using the Resource Center.

He welcomed RE Ray Stephens, moderator of the Disaster Preparedness and Response Subcommittee, who updated the presbytery on their activities this spring, responding to tornadoes in Harrison and Yellville and contacting/connecting with congregations affected by AR River floods, 350 homes in Fort Smith affected by flood, \$7,500 grant received from national to respond to Pine Bluff tornado in May, and invited people to sign up for subcommittee and for more information on their work. A group will be in Pine Bluff Monday morning to discuss unmet needs.

Report of the Administration Ministry Area

RE Jan Enke, Moderator of the Administration Ministry Area, gave the report of that ministry area, found in the main packet. She thanked congregations for their financial support. The report included the following information:

RE Kenneth Rich, Director of Mission Support, has started a part-time position elsewhere, knowing that changes were coming to the position that he currently holds. His new position began on April 15, 2019, reducing his position at the Presbytery of Arkansas to half-time. The Administration Ministry Area made a salary adjustment to Kenneth’s position based on 20 hours a week. The facts that this is a temporary position until the staffing is complete, and that the current budget will not be negatively affected, were factors considered in the decision concerning his salary.

The Administration Ministry Area reduced the Cash Salary of \$57,401.00 by half since Kenneth will now be working only 20 hours for the Presbytery, making the total package accordingly:

Kenneth Rich’s Annual Package:

Cash Salary	\$28,700.00
Pension 11%	\$ 3,157.06
Death & Disability	\$ 287.01
Medical	\$12,263.76
Dental	\$ 1,168.44
Travel	\$ 500.00
Cont Ed.	\$ 500.00
 Annual Total	 \$46,576.76

The Administration Ministry Area also recently received MWS Michael Vinson’s resignation as the Presbytery of Arkansas’ staff person for Congregational Vitality. As General Presbyter Smith reported earlier in meeting, Michael has been hired to be the part-time Stated Supply at First Presbyterian (Argenta) in North Little Rock, effective April 1, 2019. Enke voiced her

appreciation for his years served on staff and encouraged support for Rich in this transition time.

The Administration Ministry Area will be receiving budget requests in late August at a date to be announced at a later date.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

GP MWS Smith spoke to clarify items from his earlier report. First, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance did not minimize Arkansas' flooding and is continuing to respond through national funds. They have been in contact with this, and 20 other presbyteries, though there will not be a specific Arkansas River flood account created. Presbytery's Disaster Subcommittee is a good source of information.

Also, Smith gave more information regarding the special presbytery meeting on August 11 to examine Candidate Max Hill. Hill, who is a candidate under care of this presbytery, was unavailable for this meeting due to a wedding and requested that he be examined here since Giddings Lovejoy Presbytery, where he has been called as chaplain at Washington University in St. Louis, requires that the candidates they ordain must have Clinical Pastoral Education, and Hill has not had CPE. MWS Maggie Alsup spoke and warned about the "slippery slope" of having called presbytery meeting to examine candidates. She asked who is making the determination – presbyteries or candidate. GP Smith explained this presbytery's response. Stated Clerk MWS Belden said that the Committee on Ministry is trying to make the system more flexible, and have freer communications with stated clerks in other presbyteries usually to help smaller congregations and encourage rapid response. MWS Garlington spoke on appreciating the flexibility he experienced with a called presbytery meeting to examine an associate pastor colleague.

MWS Jeremy Wilhelmi clarified his thanks to GP Smith for information on disaster appeal and that Wilhelmi had talked to Special Offerings people at the national office. GP MWS Smith pointed out presbytery Disaster Subcommittee's response to McGehee area flooding and contrasted local denominational response to national denominational response.

REPORT OF THE LEAVES OF ABSENCE COMMITTEE

Temporary Stated Clerk Belden reported on behalf of the committee. Present at this meeting were 54 MWSs, 47 REs from churches, 7 at-large REs, 5 Commissioned Ruling Elders, 4 Certified Christian Educators, 3 corresponding members and 38 visitors. Total voting commissioners were 117. A total of 158 people signed in, and 28 commissioners requested excused requests.

COMMITMENT TO GOD'S CARE—REFERRALS

There were no referrals.

CLOSING PRAYER

MWS Carol Clark, HR gave the closing prayer, remembering the joys and concerns of the presbytery and gave a beautiful benediction.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment came at 2:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

RE NiAnn Thompson
Recording Clerk

MWS Leslie Belden
Stated Clerk

Draft – for Presbytery Approval Only

Appendix

Contents

Attachment A – Roster of Attendance/Enrollment

Attachment B – Report of the Staff Search Committee

Attachment C – Report of the Committee on Representation

Attachment D – Report of the Future of the Church Ministry Area

Attachment E – Report of Presbyterian Women

Attachment F – Worship Bulletin

Attachment G – Candidate Stacey Hammons Statement of Faith

Attachment H – MWS Bradley Rito Statement of Faith

Attachment I – Rev. Jason Smith Statement of Faith

Attachment J – Inquirer Julianna Whitson Statement of Faith

Attachment K – Jeannie Shear Statement of Faith

Attachment L – Report of the Resource Center Board

Attachment M – The P.L.A.C.E. Event

Attachment A - Roster of Attendance/Enrollment

Ministers of the Word and Sacrament

In Attendance

Karen Kokles Akin
Maggie Alsup
John Arnold
Susan Arnold
Leslie F. Belden
Blake Brinegar
Robert Brian Brock
Matthew Bussell
Janet B. Butin
Philip W. Butin
Mark Clark
Katie Cummings
Fern Davis
Krista Denne'
Jen Evans
Ruskin Falls
Paul Fulks
Elizabeth Gabbard
John Gibson
Susan Gray
Steve Hancock
Cameron Highsmith

Marion A. Humphrey
Young Doo Kim
Steven Kurtz
Courtney Bacon-Latina
Frank LeBlanc
Marie Mainard O'Connell
Jeff Price
Rebecca Purcell
Dennis Ritchie
Leslie Bethell Roper
Dari Rowen
Ward Rudolph
Alisa Secrest
Lacy Sellars
J. Stewart Smith
Rebecca Spooner
Michael Vinson
Lindy Vogado
Marci Ward
Jeremy Wilhelmi
Daniel Wooley

Excused from Attending

D.C. Adams
Bill Bailey
Valerie Bell
Philip Blackburn
Tasha Blackburn
Joy Carrington
Kade Curry
Steven Frazier
Chip Hatcher
Al Henager
Ainsley Herrick

Jennifer Lord
Tim Reeves
Susan Rose
Cindy Saul
David Schaller
Patti Schaller
William Seitz
Georgia Senor
Shauna Silmon
Michael Ulasewich

Absent without Excused Absence

Moises Chan
James Farley
Clif Ford
Jeff Parker

Anne Russ
Terry Tallent
Robert Williamson
Harry Young

Honorably Retired Active Ministers of the Word and Sacrament

In Attendance

Catherine Allsbury, HR
William Branch, HR
Ike Brighton, HR
Don Campbell, HR
Carol Clark, HR

David Dyer, HR
Gordon F. Garlington, III, HR
John E. King, HR
Rita Wilson Perry, HR
Linda Whitworth-Reed, HR

Excused from Attending

Howard (Flash) Gordon, HR
Robert Hadley, HR

David King, HR
Sally Johnson, HR

Active and Absent without Excuse

Danny Daniel, HR
Joyce Daniel, HR
Milton Davis, HR
Orin Frank, HR
Dick Frothingham, HR
David Gill, HR
Bill Henning, HR
Lance Jones, HR
Clare Kelley, HR

Bo Lewis, HR
Terry McLellan, HR
Jim Miller, HR
Richard Miller, HR
Dick Shinkle, HR
Fred Taylor, HR
Don Wardlaw, HR
Darwin Wolfe, HR

Ruling Elder Commissioners from Congregations/Sessions

In Attendance

Arkadelphia, West End: Mable Buckley
Batesville, First: Janet Thomas
Bella Vista: Darrell Maples and
Maryann Sweeney
Benton First: Richard Galbraith
Bentonville, First: Roy Horan and
Phil Cummings
Clarksville, First: Linda Castleman
Dardanelle, First: Cathy Baker
Fairfield Bay, Kirk of the Hills:
Douglas Forsman
Fayetteville, First United: Amy
McCann and Dennis Brewer
Fayetteville, Mt. Comfort: Dottie
Ashworth

Forrest City, Graham Memorial:
Elizabeth Alderson
Fort Smith, Central: Carl Rose
Greenwood, Good Shepherd: Tina
K. Brown
Gurdon, First: Linda Bullard
Holiday Island: Nancy Werbitsky
Hot Springs, First: Dick Mattson
Hot Springs, Westminster: Vicki
Jones
Jacksonville, First: Jeannie Price
Jonesboro, First: Mary Clayton
Lincoln, First: Michelle Hall
Little Rock, Allison: Amanda
Latimar

Little Rock, First: Sarah Keith-
Bolden
Little Rock, Grace: Tres Williams
Little Rock, Pulaski Heights:
Marian Dyer
Little Rock, Second: Sam
Highsmith, Phillip Boggs,
Sam Byrd, Leon Lants
Little Rock, Trinity: Julie Price
Little Rock, Westover Hills: Candia
Misenheimer
Malvern, First: Kathy Walters
Mountain Home, First: Van Jordan
Norman, Barr Memorial: Noah
Williamson

North Little Rock, First: Amy
Wetzel
North Little Rock, Park Hill:
Whitney Bordelon
Pea Ridge, Mount Vernon: Ron
Mullins
Pine Bluff, Central: Zac Cosner
Pine Bluff, First: Kitty Rubenstein
Prairie Grove, First: Pat Lyle
Rogers, First: David Webb
Russellville, Central: Kellie Coker
and Marty Berdoorn
Searcy, First: Mike Szabo
Wynne: Lynn Gardner
Yellville, First: Claudia Brighar

Congregations with Excused Absence
Atkins, Memorial
Brinkley, First
Cane Hill
Hardy, Spring River
Harrison, First

Holly Grove
Little Rock, Westminster
Mena, First
Springdale, First
Stuttgart, First

Congregations not Represented and without an Excuse

Alma, First
Amity, Alpine
Arkadelphia, First
Beebe, First
Bentonville, Vaughn
Bull Shoals
Clarksville, Harmony
Conway, First
Elkins
Eureka Springs, First
Fort Smith, First (both
commissioners)
Heber Springs, First
Helena, First
Horseshoe Bend, Faith

Hot Springs Village, Kirk (both
commissioners)
Huntsville, First
Lonoke, First
Marianna, First
McGehee, First
Morrilton, First
Morrilton, Hopewell
Mountainburg
Newport, First
Paragould, First
Pine Bluff, Faith
Van Buren, First
Walnut Ridge, First

At-Large Commissioners (Ruling Elders who attend and vote due to their positions)

In Attendance
David Stricklin, Moderator
Bob Boehmler, Treasurer

Jan Enke, Administration
Moderator

Ted Belden, Future of the Church,
Moderator
Mary Shaw, Coordinating Team
Cyril Hollingsworth, COM
Moderator
Ray Stephens, Disaster
Preparedness Subcommittee

Carolyn Beane Willis, Coordinating
Team
Karene Jones, Coordinating Team
Vicki Erickson, PW Co-Moderator
Maryann Sweeney, PW Co-
Moderator

Commissioned Ruling Elders

In Attendance

David Clark: Heber Springs, First
Chuck Olson: Atkins, Memorial
Claire Rhodes: Arkadelphia, West
End

Mary Shaw: Elkins, Federated
Ed Wilkinson: Greenwood, Good
Shepherd

Excused from Attending

Ronnie Prevost, Bella Vista Ken Rhodes: Arkadelphia, West End

Absent without Excuse

K.C. Chanthorn: Fort Smith,
Laotian Ministry
Hartley Jones: Norman, Barr
Memorial

Rita Manske: Cane Hill
Kenneth Rhodes: Arkadelphia,
West End
Harlis Wright: Pine Bluff, Faith

Certified Christian Educators

In Attendance

Kristi Button: Fayetteville, First
United

Jeannie Ford: Little Rock, Second
NiAnn Thompson: Retired

Certified Associate Christian Educators

In Attendance

Theresa Spragins: Conway, First

Corresponding Members in Attendance

RE Sherry Kenney, Presbytery of Denver
Rev. John Landis, American Baptist
MWS Bradley Rito, Wabash Valley Presbytery

Visitors to the Meeting: 38

Attachment B - Report of the Staff Search Committee

June 8, 2019

Presbytery Staff Search Committee
Progress Report

1. Members: Steve Hancock (moderator), Georgia Senor (recording secretary),
Led Davis, Bill Bailey, Hannah Hanson, Dick Freer,
Stewart Smith (General Presbyter)
2. Charge: Carry out searches for the five positions recommended by the Task
Force on Staff Structure and approved by the Presbytery in
October of 2018. Those five positions are:
 - Part-time Stated Clerk
 - Part-time Presbytery Administrator
 - Part-time Presbytery Developer of Ministries to, for, and with Young
People
 - Part-time Presbytery Builder
 - Part-time Presbytery Connector
3. The search committee has given initial priority to the first three positions listed in
(2) above.
4. All three positions were posted in the Banner and on the Presbytery website. The
youth/young adult position was also posted on the Association of Presbyterian
Church Educators website and on the Presbyterian Youth Workers website. The
Presbyterian Administrator position was also posted on Indeed.
5. Status
 - a. Presbytery Administrator
 - b. Presbytery Developer of Ministries to, with, and for Young People
 - c. Stated Clerk

Attachment C - Report of the Committee on Representation

RE Nancy Bateman
Moderator

The Presbytery's Committee on Representation examines and compares the statistics of who is serving in elected positions to the statistics reported to General Assembly by local churches of their membership and makes commendation and recommendations for wider inclusion and closer representation.

This year 62 of the 79 congregations in the presbytery (78-1/2%) submitted statistical reports to General Assembly for 2018 by the February, 2019 deadline (compared to 64 reporting last year). Comparison of ages, genders, races, and disabilities "in the pews" to those elected to serve can be more accurately done. COR is grateful for this excellent response immeasurably assisted by Temporary Stated Clerk Leslie Belden. (Note: if a church does not submit statistical reports, General Assembly "brings forward" that church's statistics on membership numbers from the last year a local church report was submitted. For most churches, this inflates their membership, and Presbytery is charged a "per capita" fee for a larger membership than is realistic.)

*The Presbytery's Committee on Representation met by conference call on April 25, with 4 of 8 voting members present to examine the following statistics and sent out the report to absent members for approval.

1. **Number of positions filled by people** serving Presbytery as of March 1, 2019: **210 (4 fewer, compared to 214 last year)**. Active members reported by those churches which actually reported to G.A. by deadline (or their 2017 number brought forward if the church did not report) totaled 10,129 plus 741 friends and 40 baptisms (compared to 10,996 active members reported last year).
 - Persons counted as elected have been nominated by the Committee on Nominations and approved by the Presbytery of Arkansas, or nominated to commissions by committees as officers, members of committees or commissions of the Presbytery or to fulfill specific tasks of the Presbytery. (Not included are the Ferncliff Board and the Presbyterian Women Coordinating Team, both of which are self-perpetuating groups; Youth Advisory Team, filled by application process; and all subcommittees which are populated by invitation or volunteers.)
 - Seven (7) Administrative Commissions and a staff search committee are in place this year as compared to nine (9) Administrative Commissions this time last year.
 - This number (210) includes **forty-four (44) persons who serve in more than one position (and some in several positions)**. They are counted multiple times – once for each chair each fills. (This number of people serving in multiple positions (44) is two more than last year's 42 persons in dual or more roles. **There are 154 different people participating**, four fewer than the 158 last year.) It should be noted here that restructuring requires 11 people elected to ministry areas or committees to serve also on the Coordinating Team as representatives of those groups, so by definition those

11 must serve in two positions simultaneously.

- The 44 persons counted above, filling more than one position include twenty-four (24) active Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and twenty (20) Ruling Elders or members.

2. **Number of different churches represented by persons elected: 53 of 79 churches.** (Four churches were either dissolved or dismissed in 2018. Six of the seven Administrative Commissions are also working with churches, usually at their request, and some of these are struggling churches, of which some may be dissolved or dismissed in the future.)

- **67% of churches within the presbytery bounds are participating** in the work of the Presbytery. This is 3% less than the percentage which participated last year.
- **26 churches** that do not have any staff or members serving (one more than last year) are as follows, accompanied by region numbers and AC (Administrative Commission, if they are assigned):

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a) Amity, Alpine (Region 2) | n) Marianna, First (4) |
| b) Arkadelphia, West End (2) | o) McGehee, First (3) |
| c) Brinkley, First (4) | p) Morrilton, First (4) |
| d) Cane Hill (1) | q) Mountain Home, First (1) |
| e) Clarksville, First (2) -- AC | r) Mountainburg Presbyterian (2) |
| f) Eureka Springs, First (1) | s) Newport, First (4) |
| g) Fayetteville, Mount Comfort (1) | t) Norman, Barr Memorial (2) |
| h) Hardy, Spring River (4) | u) Paragould, First (4) |
| i) Helena, First (4) | v) Pine Bluff, Central (3) – AC |
| j) Holiday Island (1) | w) Pine Bluff, Faith (3) -- AC |
| k) Little Rock, First (3) | x) Pine Bluff, First (3) – AC |
| l) Little Rock, Westminster (3) | y) Stuttgart, First (4) -- AC |
| m) Lonoke, First (3) -- AC | z) West Helena, Cleburne Ave. (4) |

Note: Six (6) of the above churches are under Administrative Commissions, and several of the churches above are pastor-less or operating with pulpit supplies only.

3. **Age Groups:** There were changes in all age groups-- **70% of the elected persons, 5% more than last year, are age 56 or older.** (Observation: The Youth Advisory Team, a 25-member subcommittee of presbytery’s Ministries with Youth, Campus and Young Adults Area comprised predominately of young adults and youth, is not in this count since they are appointed, not elected.)

Age Group	# of Persons Elected	% of Total Elected	Comparison to Report from Churches
25 & Under	3	2%	11%
26 - 35	7	5%	13%
36 - 55	36	23%	14%
56 - 64	58	38%	23%

65 and Up 50 32% 39%
 (While divided differently, those elected from under 25 through age 55 total 30% and those in these ranges reported in the churches total 38%. Again divided differently, those elected age 56 and up total 70% and those reported in the churches, 62%. In most cases, elected people in place simply moved to the next age range.)

4. **Genders** of persons and percentage of elected group (There is a slight change from last four years' percentages of 49% male and 51% female)

Gender # Persons Elected % of Total Elected Group Comparison to Report from Churches

Male	74	48% of those elected	46% of reported members
Female	80	52% of those elected	54% of reported members

Note: Genders reported for residents of AR are: 49% male and 51% female, per research on <http://www.discover.arkansas.gov/Population-by-Race-and-Sex>

5. **Ethnic Heritage** of elected persons and percentage of group compared to reported members

Ethnicity # Persons Elected % of Elected Group % of Reported Members

African American/Black	6	4% (same as last year)	1-1/2%
Caucasian/White	146	95% (1% more than last year)	97%
Hispanic	2	1% (1% less than last year)	1-1/2% (all others combined)
Asian, Native American, Middle Eastern, African	0		

(Note: Of the presbytery's churches that reported to General Assembly earlier this year about their 2018 statistics, racial ethnic breakdown included: Asian, Middle Eastern, Native American, White, Black/African American, African, Hispanic, Multiracial.)

Also Note: Ethnic Heritage reported for residents of AR by comparison are:

White	Black	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Other	Two or more races	Hispanic or Latino
77.31%	15.45%	0.65%	1.42%	0.24%	2.52%	2.41%	7.16%

*per research on <http://www.discover.arkansas.gov/Population-by-Race-and-Sex>, as of 5/2/19 for 2017 Census Data. See Also graphics at <http://worldpopulationreview.com/states/arkansas-population/> Arkansas Population. (2019-04-01). Retrieved 2019-05-02.

6. **Type of Ordination** represented by number of persons and percentage of elected group
Ordination # Persons % of Total Elected Group

Minister of Word and Sacrament	60 (9 of whom are HR)	39% (3% less than last year)
Ruling Elder	84	55% (3% more than last year)

Non ruling elders (deacons or members) 10 6 % (same as last year)
(This is a change from last year's 66 MWSs, 84 REs and 10 deacons or members, reflecting fewer minister members of Presbytery.)

7. Number of persons with **Disabilities** who are elected
- This category is defined as hearing, sight, and mobility disabled, from the categories given on the statistical report questions to congregations.
 - **Sixteen (16) persons** elected to serve have a disability: 8 related to hearing, 6 to mobility, and 2 to sight. This is 10% of the people elected, 3% less than last year.
 - Comparison to disabilities reported by local churches: 14% of total membership, reported disabilities. (COR believes that this determination is made by those preparing the report rather than by the members themselves. It is also unclear whether churches are reporting those with "managed" disabilities.)

COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE ON REPRESENTATION ON SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FROM LOCAL CHURCHES AND FROM THOSE ELECTED TO SERVE IN PRESBYTERY:

1. A goal for future reference would be to research which Christian denominations in AR have substantial numbers of people of color as members. (It was suggested that Baptist, United Methodist and COGIC have a substantial number of African American members.)
2. Suggestion to open contacts with honorably retired ministers to consider future nomination and election to service on committees, etc.
3. Suggestion to contact moderators of ministry areas and committees/subcommittees/teams to ask them to confirm the lowest number of members that they actually need to carry out their work.

RECOMMENDATIONS from Committee on Representation to Committee on Nominations and other committees and groups for their work in 2019 through mid-2020:

1. As was given as a comment last year, concern for small churches who are not growing, are running out of finances, and need help and information on how to handle their circumstances as they pray for rebirth and fear dissolution.
2. Become informed as to where populations of people of color live in our communities and to Committee on Nominations favor "diversity over geography" in choosing nominees.

Attachment D - Report of the Future of the Church Ministry Area

RE Ted Belden
Moderator

For Action:

No action items.

For Information:

The Future of the Church Ministry Area approved matching funds of \$7,500 for the Ferncliff Forest Church project with monies to be taken from the old category of New Church Development. We are excited about this new worshipping community that will take place at Ferncliff.

We have good news to announce related to our new web site. We have launched the new site and it can be viewed at presbyark.org. That is the good news. The bad news is that we need to keep working on the content and other features to make this a web site we all want to use. We are getting new and updated photographs of all of our pastors so that we will have a pictorial directory of everyone serving the Presbytery. We will continue to have the old web site for several months while the new site is filled out. When we feel confident that the new web site will give us what we want we will direct all traffic to this new web site.

We will be reviewing 6 grants that have been received. The following churches have submitted grant requests: First, Mena; Good Shepherd, Greenwood; First, Jonesboro; Grace, Little Rock; First, Eureka Springs; and First, Prairie Grove. We thank these churches for their applications and wish them well in their ministry.

Our committee will be addressing two of the five strategies associated with the priorities of the Presbytery. These are the two strategies we will focus on.

- 1) The Future of the Church Ministry Area will activate the rebuilt website and invest in additional technology.
- 2) The Future of the Church Ministry Area will work with other ministries to discern the life-giving practices of our congregations to better all congregations.

At the last Presbytery meeting we talked about having more zoom room locations. Five churches volunteered to become host sites, First, Jonesboro; First, Springdale; Fort Smith; First, Conway; and Central, Russellville. The ministry area is developing guidelines on how this new technology can be accessed and used by the ministry areas and committees of the Presbytery and the congregations of our Presbytery. We want to find new ways to better connect to one another and do ministry.

Attachment E - Report of the Presbyterian Women

REs Ila Blacketter-Wolfe and Cathy Rogers
Co-Moderators

The Presbyterian Women of the Presbytery Coordinating Team want to express our thankfulness to you, the Presbytery of Arkansas, for your graciousness in providing us with funding that allows us to go about the business of Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery of Arkansas. Monies go toward Spring and Fall Gatherings, scholarships for retreats, Synod, and Churchwide Gatherings. It also covers partial funding for the Co-Moderators to attend Presbytery, Synod and Churchwide meetings.

PWP Spring Gathering

The Spring Gathering and Business Meeting of Presbyterian Women of the Presbytery of Arkansas was held on Saturday, April 6, 2019 at First Presbyterian Church in Jonesboro and was based on the theme "Let Your Light Shine." Fifty-six official registrants attended the event. We were welcomed by the Rev. Matt Bussell and PW Moderator Marlita Stuart of FPC Jonesboro the host church. The Ingathering offering was received for "In His Wings" and "Breaking Bonds Ministries," Jonesboro organizations actively helping people break the bonds of addiction.

Mission speaker was Melinda Hunt, recently retired Executive Director of Solar Under the Sun, a project of the Synod of the Sun. She updated the group on the continuing success of Solar Under the Sun. An offering of \$771.00 was received for Solar Under the Sun during the worship service. The worship leader was the Rev. Carol Clark of Little Rock who delivered the message "Be the Light," celebrated the Sacrament of Communion and concluded by leading the congregation in a rousing rendition of the song "This Little Light of Mine." The Keynote speaker was the Rev. Stewart Smith, General Presbyter of the Presbytery of Arkansas. Stewart challenged Presbyterian Women to adapt to changes in the Church and in our culture.

Other presentations during the meeting included: A puppet presentation directed by Maryann Sweeney encouraging women to attend the 2019 PW Synod Gathering in Tulsa this July. Updates were from: Vera Lloyd Home in Monticello by Katie Gacy; University of the Ozarks in Clarksville by Dawn Dvoracek; and Presbyterian Village in Little Rock by Melissa Jenkins. Words from Outgoing Arkansas PW Co-Moderators Ila Blacketter-Wolfe and Cathy Rogers and the Synod PW Moderator-Elect Kathy White.

Outgoing members of the Arkansas PW Coordinating Team are Jeanne Lloyd, Karene Jones, and Renee Nestor. The following were confirmed as the PW Presbytery Coordinating Team for 2019:

- Maryann Sweeney and Vicki Erickson – Co-Moderators
- Sharon Warner and Sharyl Ritschel – Co-Vice-Moderators
- Kathy White – Secretary/Historian

- Gail Phillips - Treasurer
- Mary Shaw – Mission/Peace/Justice Coordinator
- Carolyn Willis – Cluster 1 Leader
- Sally Pierce – Cluster 3 Leader • Patty Minga – Cluster 4 Leader
- Ila Blackketter-Wolfe and Cathy Rogers – Members-at-Large

Attachment F - Worship Bulletin



OPENING WORSHIP SERVICE

**141ST STATED MEETING OF
THE PRESBYTERY OF ARKANSAS**

SATURDAY, JUNE 8, 2019

**SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS**

**Large Print Bulletins and Hearing Devices are available.
Please ask an usher.**

THE PRESBYTERY OF ARKANSAS AT WORSHIP

JUNE 8, 2019

10:00 A.M.

The Congregation will speak aloud the bold print in responsive readings.

*** Please rise in body or spirit.**

GATHERING

*Worship begins with God. God takes the initiative and calls the Church into being.
In the name of Christ, we heed God's call and gather as the community of faith.*

WELCOME

PRELUDE

The Lost Chord

A. Sullivan

*** CALL TO WORSHIP (RESPONSIVE)**

This is no ordinary place; this is the house of God.

This is the place where the prophets cry out

for peace and justice and righteousness.

It is the place where God reaches down

into the corners of our lives,

to offer us the mystery of holy love.

This is no ordinary gathering.

This is no ordinary place; this is the house of God.

Let us worship God.

*** HYMN**

Sing to God as Sings the Ocean
(Stanzas 1 and 2)

HYMN TO JOY

**Sing to God as sings the ocean, sing as birds that greet the dawn,
Sing as windswept trees in motion, sing and let your song be drawn
From God's vast and whole creation, from your faith and doubt and fears,
From rebirth and re-creation, from life's wealth of joy and tears.**

**Sing the heart's deep sighing sorrow to the Lord who hears lament,
Who at midnight sees tomorrow when the dark at last is spent.
Sing to God who in our sadness brings the news of coming light,
Ample hope to waken gladness and sustain us through the night.**

*** CALL TO CONFESSION**

Trusting in the promise of grace,
let us tell the truth about ourselves
and ask God's mercy
for the renewal and amendment of our lives.

*** PRAYER OF CONFESSION (UNISON)**

Lord God, forgive us.

**Doing your will does not always flow naturally:
convention overshadows conviction;
bad habits die hard;
good habits form slowly.**

**Doing your will is not always a spontaneous choice:
your way is sometimes unclear;
your direction is often unpopular;
your path is seldom profitable.**

Create in us clean hearts, O God.

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

(Silent Confession)

*** DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS**

By the power of the Holy Spirit,
as a witness to the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus
and the assurance of pardon in Jesus' name,
I proclaim to you the forgiveness of all your sins,
that with renewed life you may
serve this creation and the people of God
in peace and strength.
God is with you.

- * **CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE** *Sing to God as Sings the Ocean*
(Stanza 3)

**Sing the great, glad joy of Jesus! Sing the gospel that Christ brings.
Sing the way Christ heals and feeds us, sing the song that Easter sings:
Christ is risen, Christ is living, Christ among us, Christ within.
Christ the spring of endless giving where new songs of faith begin.**

- * **PASSING OF THE PEACE** (*RESPONSIVE*)
Lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called,
with all humility and gentleness, with patience,
bearing with one another in love,
making every effort to maintain
the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
The Peace of Christ be with you all.
And also with you.
Let us greet one another with the peace of Christ.

PROCLAIMING GOD’S WORD

Gathered in God’s name, we now open ourselves to God’s life-giving Word.

ANTHEM	<i>Great Day</i>	arr. M. Hogan
SCRIPTURE READING	<i>MARK 6:7-13</i>	NT, P. 40
SERMON	<i>THE GOD STUFF</i>	Stacey Hammons

RESPONDING TO GOD’S WORD

The proclamation of God’s Word invites responses of faith.

OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS

OFFERTORY	<i>Meditation on BEACH SPRING</i>	E. Krouse
------------------	-----------------------------------	-----------

- * **DOXOLOGY** LASST UNS ERFREUEN
**All praise to God, Eternal One, and praise to Christ,
Redeeming Son, Alleluia, Alleluia!
Praise to the Spirit, ever near,
Great Three in One, be with us here, Alleluia (5 times)**

- * **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

SENDING

The God who calls us together in worship now sends us out in service.

- * **HYMN NO. 643** NUN DANKET ALLE GOTT
Now Thank We All Our God

- * **BENEDICTION**

- * **CHORAL BENEDICTION** J. Rutter
The Lord Bless You and Keep You

POSTLUDE	<i>From Thy Throne So High</i>	C.W. Gluck
-----------------	--------------------------------	------------

TODAY’S WORSHIP LEADERS

Steve Hancock
Stacey Hammons
Second Presbyterian Church Adult Choir Ensemble
Dr. Bevan Keating, Director of Music and the Arts
Ralph Wilcox, Guest Organist
Ushers: Emily Hall, Tom Hicks, Ed Rogers, Sandra Rogers

SOUND AMPLIFICATION: Assistive listening devices are in a cabinet at the rear of the Sanctuary, along with instructions. The wireless receivers each connect to either headphones or a neck loop. Use the neck loop if your hearing aid has a telecoil switch or t-switch. The telecoil feature is standard in most models. Use headphones if you don't have a t-switch or if you don't use hearing aids. See an usher for assistance.

THIS MORNING'S WORSHIP OFFERING will go toward expenses related to the Presbytery Youth summer trips.

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH	
600 PLEASANT VALLEY DRIVE	OFFICE: (501) 227-0000
LITTLE ROCK, AR 72227	FAX: (501) 227-6513
CARE & CONCERN LINE: (501) 227-6117	
WWW.SECONDPRESLR.ORG	

Attachment G - Candidate Stacey Hammons Statement of Faith

I believe in the goodness and perfect love of God. God is one and three; there is unity in the oneness and distinction in the threeness. God's perfect love can be seen in the Trinity through the relationship of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. I believe God is sovereign and beyond our full understanding. I believe God is the one who offers light, hope, help, peace, and healing.

I believe in the full divinity of Jesus Christ. He is the visible image of the invisible God; he is the clear representation of God and in Christ all of who God is exists. At the same time that Jesus Christ is fully God, I believe he is fully human. These two natures are complete in the one person, Jesus. Through the life, death and resurrection of Christ, a way was made for the restoration of humanity to God. Jesus came to free the captive, release the oppressed and provide forgiveness of sin. It is through the gift of grace that we are saved. Salvation joins us to Christ and sets us free from sin and oppression. We have been saved, not simply from our sin, but to live an abundant, empowered and loving life in a continual and eternal relationship with God.

I believe the Holy Spirit empowers. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the Spirit spoke at different times through human beings, empowering them for certain tasks. It was by the power of the Holy Spirit that Christ was conceived, resurrected from the dead and the church was born at Pentecost. The Holy Spirit offers renewal and guidance, convicts us and guides us into truth and teaches us all things.

I believe the Word of God to be necessary for living out my faith. It is where I find guidance, comfort and strength. Reading, studying and meditating on the Holy Scriptures connects me to God and to the bigger picture of God's sovereignty over and great love for the world.

I believe the church to be necessary for living out my faith in this world. It is meant to be where we find community; we are not Christians alone. Within this community we observe the signs and seals of our faith. In Baptism, we are responding to God's love and acknowledging that by the grace of God, we are forgiven, cleansed and belong to the community of faith. In Communion, we are also responding to God's love. Assured of God's love, invited by Christ and united by the Holy Spirit, we are fed from the Lord's Table. We are nourished and strengthened to be the body of Christ in the world, fulfilling our calling to seek justice for all living beings. At our best and most loving the church glorifies God through worshipping, loving and serving together, and is inclusive of all.

Attachment H - MWS Bradley Rito Statement of Faith

I believe there is one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, distinct but inseparable; that God is all powerful, all-knowing, and present everywhere; that God's power, mercy, and perfectly-just will is shown through God's graceful forgiving of our sins.

I believe God the Father is a loving, wise, patient, slow to anger, and kind parent to us; that God is the Creator of all things, and it is in God's image we are made; that God loved God's creation so much that God sent God's only Son to reconcile humanity to God and to show God's love for humanity.

I believe Jesus Christ has and continues to guide us on our spiritual journey, lifting us when we fall, carrying us when we cannot or refuse to go any further, and sharing in the emotions along the way; that he sacrificed himself as a once and for all payment for the forgiveness of sins, including mine, which showed forth the love of the Father for God's creation; that he continues to connect us with our fellow Christians in the one body as we experience God's presence through worship, mission, Scriptural study, and prayer; that he is the model we are to follow in walking the path God has set before us.

I believe, through God the Holy Spirit, we are truly able to lift our hearts in prayer for what is needed and in God's plan rather than what we want and that we are guided to do what it is God has called us to do at any given place or time.

I believe Baptism is the means by which God has marked us as one of God's own; that baptism is a beautiful sign of God's sealing us and is our rebirth as one of God's children, no longer condemned to Death. I believe Communion then reminds us of the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross, the reconnection with God and the forgiveness that resulted, and the undeniable love of God for us. In Communion, we are brought up to Christ, where we have a foretaste of the divine banquet.

I believe the purpose of the Church, as granted by God, is to serve as a beacon of hope in the darkness for all humanity; that as a Christian guided by the Holy Spirit, we are called to serve as the eyes, hands, and mouth of God in this world, doing and saying as God would have us do and say; that we are called to share the graces of joy, peace, and love with the rest of the world, just as God has shared them with us.

I believe the Scriptures are the basis and the guiding rule for any and all traditions in the church, the means by which we come into a more intimate relationship with the triune God, and the means by which God directs our lives.

I believe that, when life ends, having been made clean through Christ, our spirit shall ascend the Kingdom of God. There we shall find an absence of hate, sand, or sadness, finding only the paradise God envisioned, and, feeling so completely filled with love, peace, righteousness, and purity, we will be able to do nothing but join in the eternal praising of God Almighty. Once Christ comes again, this kingdom will defend and replace the world that is.

Attachment I - Rev. Jason Smith Statement of Faith

As a youth in high school and college, I sang with the Maranatha Touring Choir. Maranatha was an ecumenical choir of young people and we counted Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Pentecostals, Episcopalians, and non-denominational youth in the choir. We gathered every Saturday morning to practice, sing, and fellowship together. It was in Maranatha that I, a Baptist, first learned the words of the Apostle's Creed through the song *Credo* by Mark Hayes. In music and word, I reflected upon this ancient statement of faith and the fact that I was a part of an ecumenical group of 75 students from different Christian traditions who affirmed in one voice the unity of "the Church universal on earth." When I think about my definitions of God, the Church, and my understanding of faith, I often come back to the Maranatha Choir, believing that the body of Christian believers should be striving toward unity. As followers of the Way, we should collectively call upon the Lord Jesus to "Come" and dwell within our midst.

Words cannot capture the immensity of the divine forces swirling throughout the cosmos since the beginning of time. So I tend to associate God with personal experiences: the love woven into a warm meal prepared by my grandmother for our family on one of the rare occasions we were all together under one roof; the justice swirling around my Salvadoran siblings and I at an immigration rally at the U.S. Capitol, as we plead, advocated, and prayed together for just immigration reform; the tears that well up during worship when singing "When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun," and the goosebumps I feel when taking the Eucharist and hearing the words "bread of life" and "cup of love." I believe God is within all of these experiences and beyond, as the divine life force guiding our sacred stories, our traditions, and the Word.

God is the Creator and connects us back to the world, rooting us in the earth as sacred vessels to be in harmony with all of creation, hearing our prayers, forgiving our debts, and serving as a loving parent to all. God is Christ and calls us to act, to love neighbor, to comfort the afflicted, to afflict the comfortable, to preach and advocate for justice and peace in the world. Christ provides for us life everlasting, and we are called to remember the death of Jesus Christ and celebrate his resurrection on the third day. God is Spirit, and she is a gale-force wind, emanating from the same *ruach* that was present in the beginning and nurturing within us fruits and gifts to share with the world.

The purpose of the Church is to serve as Teresa of Avila says, as the "hands and feet" of Christ Jesus in the world through performing acts of justice, peace, and solidarity with the marginalized and the poor. I believe that the Church manifests itself ecumenically. As someone who grew up and was ordained Baptist, played piano at my grandmother's Methodist church in college and attended a Methodist seminary, preached at and formed close relationships with dually aligned UCC/Alliance of Baptists congregations around the country, and served in pulpit supply with First Presbyterian Church, Arkadelphia, for four years, I believe many different denominations, movements, churches, and traditions form the body of Jesus Christ's Church on earth.

The Church also exists to provide a space to engage with the sacraments. The sacraments are divine rituals that bring humanity into an intimate experience with God. While I come from a Baptist tradition and have practiced baptism and the Lord's Supper as ordinances being outward symbols of inward grace per Augustine, I believe that the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist are holy rituals that bring us deeply close to God and impart grace. Rooted in scripture, the sacraments must be open to all persons just as Jesus Christ invited all to bathe in the Jordan River and sought for all to feast with him.

The Table should never be denied to anyone for any reason just as God showered grace in the form of manna upon all of the Hebrew people wandering in the desert and blessed the five thousand with a bounty of fish and bread for all to enjoy. I believe that Eucharistic bread and wine must be accessible and open to all just as Christ was physically accessible and open to all.

Likewise, I believe the waters of baptism should be open to all persons of all ages. I am proud that the congregation that ordained me, Calvary Baptist Church, practices open communion and accepts both infant and adult baptism as marks of God's grace. Baptism, whether immersed or christened, is a demonstration that God through Christ adopts all of humanity within the fold.

The Reformed Tradition roots itself in the covenant God made with Abraham and Sarah, to bring God's self closer to humanity. It has continued for thousands of years and through the Protestant Reformation, has brought about an orderly system for organizing the Church. Because individual human beings are not perfect, an organized Church working together in community with protocol and systems can help us better seek justice and discern God's will in our lives.

I believe God passionately seeks to connect with people, and one of the ways God can connect with humanity is through sacred scripture. Through the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, we learn God's unfolding and interactive story with humanity. The good news of the Gospel message centers us, grounding us in the past, present, and future and we should use responsible scholarship and biblical research methods along with the inspiration of the Spirit to read and preach the Word.

Salvation for many is a one-time activity. But I believe salvation is a journey, a process of constantly asking questions, finding answers, then having more questions. Humans are in desperate need of salvation from our personal sin, from our failure to live up to Christ's example of love, peace, and justice. Likewise our systems, economic, political, social, and religious are also in constant need of salvation. It is up to us as individuals and communities of faith to courageously risk ourselves in seeking personal and communal deliverance.

As I reflect upon my own understanding of faith, I will always remember the words, beat, and tune of *Credo*. Through this song and through saying the Apostles Creed every Sunday in Methodist and Presbyterian churches, I have cemented the words "I believe" into my memory and refer to the ancient words to inform, nurture, and expand my faith. As I continue

my journey, I hope to continue asking questions, to continue searching for answers in prayer, and to continue to proclaim boldly, "I believe."

Attachment J - Inquirer Julianna Whitson Statement of Faith

I believe in the Triune—God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit—the three in one that molds and shapes our lives and the world. God is the Creator, Advocate, and Teacher of this world who walks alongside us wherever we go and sits in the depths with us wherever we may find ourselves. God’s unconditional love for us was shown through Jesus Christ’s act of sacrifice to save us from our sins as he was crucified, dead, buried, and rose again. I believe this to be a true miracle of our Savior.

Jesus was full of the grace, mercy, and love that we should strive to embody in even the most uncomfortable spaces—spaces of fear, spaces of unfamiliarity, spaces of doubt, spaces of vulnerability—so that we may go forth with listening hearts and open minds.

The Holy Spirit is omnipresent as it moves through me, uses me, and guides me through a life that honors my baptism. My baptism is symbolic of God’s connection with me, where life and death are celebrated. Partaking in Holy Communion connects me in community within the church and with all who are invited to the Table, where we remember Jesus’ sacrifice.

I believe that God is always present in the covenantal relationships with us, even when we may find it hard to accept the relationship, God’s grace abounds.

In our creation, I believe that God trusts us to take care of creation and to make a sustainable life for all. I believe that the Church’s potential lies in God’s continued message about love, about not turning people away, but welcoming them to learn and grow alongside each other. The role of the church is to acknowledge the intersectionality of all people and make visible those who feel hidden in the depths of doubt and difference. In times of tension, violence, and loss, I believe that there is hope found in the grace that is freely given to us, and that living into that can bring us hope.

I believe that every time we read Scripture, God breathes through the history, lessons, and stories showing us new lenses of guidance. I feel God’s call to not only use my gifts to teach and walk alongside people along their journeys, but to have those gifts manifest into the embodiment of gratitude I have for the healing, providing, and sustaining life that God grants.

Attachment K - Jeannie Shear Statement of Faith

I believe that God is a God of Love; that out of love God created the world, and out of love God became human in Jesus Christ, and that it is to the task of loving that God calls, and by the Holy Spirit, guides us still.

I believe that God is a God of Grace; that in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus we receive our fullest revelation of the person of God and find at the center of that person love for even the most broken, forgiveness for even the gravest of sins. By grace we who are broken and sinful are claimed, forgiven, and brought into communion with God.

I believe that God is a God of Justice; that in a special way God is present to and standing with the poor, oppressed, suffering and vulnerable. When we who have much answer God's urgent call to stand there also, we are met by God.

I believe that God is God of All; that every person regardless of race, gender, class, sexuality, or ability is made in the divine image and is immeasurably precious to God. There is nothing a person can do to lose God's love.

I believe that God is a God of Redemption; that in a broken world of sin, evil, death, cruelty, pollution, and pain, God is ushering forth the Kingdom of the lion and lamb, where none shall hurt or destroy. In Jesus, brokenness is made whole, darkness turned to light, and death turned to life eternal. I believe that in the very darkest moments of history and our lives Jesus is present—weeping, acting, speaking, transforming, and calling into being that which is not yet.

Attachment L - Report of the Resource Center Board

MWS Carol Clark
Moderator

In these technological days when resources are available at our fingertips, the question is asked "Is a resource center needed?" Many Presbyteries abandoned the concept, and that is an open question in our own Presbytery. There are many amazing resources already in our center, but to move forward, the board would like to see the Resource Center be, not just a center for physical materials like books/DVD's and magazines, but a true center of communication for all kinds of needs, thoughts, and ideas.

The Resource Center Board has launched a new Facebook group called "**Resource ARK**" in hopes of establishing a strong forum to share ideas, worship materials, recommendations for projects, connections to the wider community for speakers and musicians and all other ideas limited only by our imaginations. If you are a Facebook user, PLEASE type "**Resource ARK**" in your search engine and ask to join our 60+ members so that you can start posting your own good ideas!

One of our discoveries is that a lot of people don't know about the Resource Center: that the materials can be mailed to you; that the materials are free; that if you find some material that you want to use but the cost is prohibitive that the Resource Center will 'go half with you'; that the catalog of resources can be searched on the Presbytery's website by clicking on resources and then the resource center. You can contact Carol Clark at cbclark05@aol.com or call 501-563-6279 to ask for materials. Visit our booth at the Presbytery meeting for a summer 'give-away', a chance to 'check-out' some materials and to learn more about the Resource Center. If you'd like to help out in the Resource Center, check in with Carol Clark. If you'd like us to send out a 'resource-mobile', we'd be glad to bring materials to parts of the Presbytery that are not near the Presbytery office in Little Rock where they are housed.

Our board members and volunteers who have helped on occasional tasks do such a great job, and we appreciate them: Marian Dyer (who works each Monday), Jeannie Ford, Betty Winter, NiAnn Thompson, Julie Price, Karene Jones, Mary Ellen Holder, Dari Rowen, Mark Clark and Kenneth Rich (who supplies us with financial reports and weekly help with the resource computer).

Attachment M - The P.L.A.C.E. Event

SAVE THE DATE!

What: PLACE (Presbytery Leadership Academy for Congregational Enrichment) Event

When: Saturday morning, August 10, 2019

Where: Trinity Presbyterian Church of Little Rock

The Morning Will Include:

A brief worship service introduced by, you guessed it, bagpipes!

A keynote address by MWS Steve Hancock, pastor of Second Presbyterian Church of Little Rock, on the theme, "Following Jesus: The Discipleship Path."

Of the theme, Steve says, "Jesus invited people into a relationship with God that was vibrant, dynamic, and fruitful. He said, "I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in you bear much fruit..." (John 15:5). Jesus wanted people to flourish. Scripture is sprinkled with phrases that point to fruitful living – the kingdom of God, eternal life, immeasurable riches, a peace that passes all understanding, abundant life. We will explore four core fundamental spiritual practices Jesus and his followers developed that sustained them in God and motivated them to relieve the burdens that restrain people from flourishing by protecting the vulnerable, embracing outcasts, healing the sick, welcoming children, caring for widows, confronting injustice, pardoning sin, preaching good news, releasing people from paralysis and suffering and the fear of death. Giving purposeful and repeated attention to these four essential practices is crucial for our growth in Christ: Passionate Worship, Intentional Faith Development, Risk-Taking Mission and Service, Extravagant Generosity."

Following worship and the keynote, participants will have the opportunity to attend two one-hour workshops. Four of the workshops will focus on the "essential practices" of discipleship:

Passionate Worship – MWS Carol Clark, Leader

Intentional Faith Development – Theresa Spragins and Kristi Button, Leaders

Risk Taking Mission & Service – David Gill, Leader

Extravagant Generosity – MWS Steve Hancock and Malinda Kirchner, Leaders

Two other workshops will be offered:

Clerk of Session Training – Both One Hour Sessions – MWS Leslie Belden, Leader

Bonus One Hour Class – "Why We Worship As We Do" – MWS David Dyer, HR, Leader

A packet with a fuller explanation of the classes, directions for registration, and other information will be distributed at the June 8 meeting of the Presbytery at Second

Presbyterian Church of Little Rock, as well as emailed and distributed in other ways as we get closer to August 10. We hope each of our congregations will encourage their members and staff to take advantage of this great opportunity for both personal growth as well as gaining experiences and resources that can be shared in our local churches!

Our thanks to the Task Force who did the initial planning for the event, Emily Laurel, Bruce Johnston, Jeannie Ford Andrews, NiAnn Thompson, and Julie Price, and to the folks at Trinity Presbyterian Church who are doing yeoman work preparing for The PLACE: Julie Price, Jeff Price, Jared Brown, Julie Peak, Robin Brown, Deena Dougherty, and Cindy Birchfield!