

MINUTES
111th Stated Meeting
Presbytery of the Pines
February 21, 2015
The Presbyterian Church of Ruston

Constitution

According to the By-laws and Standing Rules of Presbytery, the council met in Stated Meeting on February 21, 2015, in the sanctuary of the Presbyterian Church of Ruston, Ruston, Louisiana. Moderator Dana Stinson called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m., and offered the opening prayer.

The following were present, constituting a quorum:

Ruling Elders commissioned by Sessions: Athens-Andy Pate, Bastrop-Jeanne Anders, Belcher-Karen Logan, Benton-Clay Brock, Bossier City Trinity-John Husak, Camden-Joyce Smith, Chidester-John R. McGill, Choudrant-Laurence Serford, El Dorado-Jimmy Bennett, Frierson-Dexter A. White, Homer-Susan Herring, Hope-Amelia Leverett, Lake Village-illegible, Magnolia-Ann Rouch, Mansfield Red Lick-Ponder Clinton, Jr., Monroe-Harry Liner, Monticello First-Sam Snyder, Natchitoches-Donna Rose, Plain Dealing Cottage Grove-Margie Boggs, Plain Dealing First-David Kelly, Rayville, Sandra Watson, Ruston-James W. Evans, Jr., Shreveport Broadmoor-Patty Kim, Shreveport First- Kelly Hodgson, Piper Maritz, Texarkana-Charles Jackson, West Monroe-Robyn Jordan, Winnsboro-John Guice

Ruling Elders commissioned to a congregation: Edith Hill, Kay Childs-Travis

Ruling Elders enrolled in Presbytery: Dana Stinson, Corbet Lamkin

Teaching Elders: John Albright, John Arnold, Susan Arnold, Alford Branch, Dianne Brown, Chris Currie, Philip Faris, Daniel Hignight, Kathleen Hignight, Joe Hill, Erin Kaye, Mark Kennedy, Stephen Kim, John D. McClelland, Allison Moody, Lauren Moore, Mike Morgan, John-Nelson Pope, Tom Reinowski, David Roberts, John Scott, Beth Sentell, Rhodes Stipp, Jerry Tompkins, Jim Van Hook, George Wortham

The following *Corresponding Members* were seated for this meeting: Patrick Fleming-Cumberland PC, Maetta M. Synder-Presbytery of Arkansas, Jungsuk Seo, Kris Crawford-Presbytery of Arkansas, Jim Norcross-Church of the Nazarene

Sessions absent: Alto, Baskin, Bossier City Korean, Carthage, Crossett, DeQueen, Dermott, Ferriday, Grand Cane, Haynesville, Hermitage, Keatchie, Lake Providence, Mansfield First, Monticello Holmes Chapel, Newellton, Shreveport Hollywood, Shreveport St. Andrew, Tallulah, Tulip, Vidalia, Vivian, Warren, Winnfield

Ruling Elders commissioned to a congregation, excused: Charlotte Cobb, Clyde Ray Webber

Teaching Elders absent, all excused: Ralph Burns (HR), Jame Freeman, Lee Grisso (HR), Grant Groves (HR), Jung Jin Kim, Dan Loomis, Bryan McDowell (HR), Phil McLarty (HR), Murry Spencer (HR), Robin Nygaard (HR), Lindsey Perry, Rosemary Stelz (HR), Art Vance (HR), Bill Willis (HR), Hugh Yates (HR)

Welcome by Host Church, Morning Prayer

Edith Hill, Ruling Elder Commissioned to the Ruston Church, brought a word of welcome. She then led the body in a service of Morning Prayer.

Partial Report of the Stated Clerk

Dan Hignight presented the report. The following items were MOVED, SECONDED, AND ADOPTED:

1. That the docket for this meeting be adopted.
2. That the minutes of the October 18, 2014, meeting of presbytery be approved as circulated.
3. That corresponding members be seated.
4. That the following ruling elders be enrolled members of presbytery while serving as moderator or moderator of a presbytery committee or ministry: Dana Stinson and Corbet Lamkin.

Discussion on Proposed Amendments to the *Book of Order*

The body moved to the Fellowship Hall and entered into a time of directed discussion on the Proposed Amendments to the *Book of Order*. The discussion was led by John Scott on behalf of the Vision and Mission Committee.

Lunch Recess

At noon the body recessed for lunch with a prayer offered by the Edith Hill.

Reconvene

At 12:45 p.m. the body reconvened in the sanctuary. The body was called to order by the Moderator who offered an opening prayer.

Worship and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

The council moved to a time of worship and sharing the bread and cup of the Lord's Supper. Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders representing the reaches of the presbytery participated throughout the service. Congregations presented their quilt squares as part of worship.

Good News from Congregations

Individuals were invited to share something exciting their congregations were doing.

Stated Clerk's Report Continued

The following items were MOVED, SECONDED, AND ADOPTED

5. That presbytery elect the following for the Nominating Committee:

Class of 2015

TE Maetta Snyder

RE John McGill

TE Dianne Brown

Moderator Lauren Moore

Class of 2016

RE Gary Martin

TE Lauren Moore

RE Wayne Neuroth

Vice-Moderator John McGill

6. That Presbytery elect Edith Hill as Commissioner to the Synod of the Sun for the Class of 2016

7. That the following rolls as of December 31, 2014, be admitted to record:

Teaching Elders in Validated Ministries within Congregation

1. ALBRIGHT, John C.
2. ARNOLD, John C.
3. ARNOLD, Susan
4. BRANCH, Alford L.
5. BROWN, Dianne E.
6. CURRIE, T. Christian
7. FARIS, Philip A
8. FREEMAN, James D.
9. HIGNIGHT, R. Kathleen
10. KAYE, Erin P.
11. KENNEDY, Mark E.
12. MOODY, Allison
13. MORGAN, Michael D.
14. REINOWSKI, Thomas K.
15. ROBERTS, David
16. SEARIGHT, William
17. SEARIGHT, Sarah
18. SENTELL, Beth
19. VAN HOOK, James A., Jr.
20. WORTHAM, George

Teaching Elders Who are Members at Large

1. FARRELL, Julia Nance
2. KIM, Jung Jin
3. MOORE, Lauren
4. PERRY, Lindsey
5. POPE, John-Nelson

Teaching Elders who are Honorably Retired

1. BURNS, Ralph M.
2. GRISSO, E. Lee
3. GROVES, Grantland M.
4. KIM, Stephen K.
5. McCLELLAND, John D.
6. McDOWELL, Bryan L.
7. McLARTY, Philip W.
8. MURRAY, Spencer C.
9. STIPP, R. Rhodes
10. TOMPKINS, Jerry R.
11. VANCE, A. Arthur
12. WILLIS, William C.

Teaching Elders Serving in Other Validated Ministries

1. HIGNIGHT, J. Daniel
2. HILL, Joseph W.

Ruling Elders Commissioned to Serve Congregations

1. BROWN, Ron
2. TRAVIS, Kay Childs
3. COBB, Charolotte
4. HILL, Edith
5. WEBBER, Clyde Ray

General Presbyter's Report

Joe Hill, General Presbyter presented an oral report which was received as information.

Committee on Administration

Corbet Lamkin, Moderator presented an oral report which was received as information.

Congregational and Pastoral Care Committee.

Edith Hill, Moderator, presented the report. THE FOLLOWING MOTIONS WERE ADOPTED:

1. That the report be received as information.
2. That presbytery enter into records the following actions taken by the committee under its commission powers authorized by Presbytery:
 - a. Approved the Transitional Pastor Agreement between Trinity Presbyterian Church, Bossier City, and the Rev. Kris Crawford, effective February 1, 2015.
 - b. Appointed the following moderators of sessions:
 1. Smyrna PC – Beth Sentell
 2. First PC, Mansfield – Beth Sentell
 3. First PC, Natchitoches – Edith Hill
 4. Crossett – Lauren Moore
 - c. In response to the call of the Shreveport-Bossier Korean Presbyterian Church examined the Rev. Jungsuk Seo.
 - d. At the Ruling Elder's request, and with concurrence of the congregation, dissolved the commissions of Ron Brown with Smyrna Presbyterian Church and First Presbyterian Church, Mansfield, effective December 31, 2014.
 - e. At the pastor's request, and with concurrence of the congregation, dissolved the pastoral relationship between the Rev. Dan Loomis and First Presbyterian Church, El Dorado, effective January 31, 2015, and enroll him as a member-at-large.
3. That presbytery examine Jungsuk Seo on his Statement of Faith, and Sense of Call.
4. That presbytery sustain the examination of Jungsek Seo, enroll him in Presbytery pending receipt of his transfer from Long Island Presbytery.
5. That presbytery grant the committee commission powers to approve the Terms of Call between the Rev. Mr. Seo and the Shreveport Korean Presbyterian Church.
6. That presbytery receive the Rev. Mae Etta Snyder as an Honorably Retired member pending her transfer from the Presbytery of Arkansas.

Voting on Proposed Amendments to the *Book of Order*

The Stated Clerk presented the Proposed Amendments to the *Book of Order*, as sent down from the General Assembly for yea or nay votes. Each amendment was presented, followed by a time for discussion. The VOTE OF THE PRESBYTERY was:

14-A no

14-B 1	yes
14-B 2	yes
14-C	yes
14-D	yes
14-E	yes
14-F	yes

Adjournment

With all business being concluded, the Moderator declared the meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m. with singing one verse of "Bless Be the Tie that Binds."

MINUTES
112th Stated Meeting
Presbytery of the Pines
May 16, 2015
Alabama Presbyterian Church

CONSTITUTION

The 112th Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of the Pines was called to order at 10:00 a.m. in the sanctuary of Alabama Presbyterian Church, Choudrant, Louisiana, by Moderator Dana Stinson, who offered the opening prayer.

The following were present, constituting a quorum:

Ruling Elders commissioned by Sessions: Belcher – Karen Logan, Bossier City Trinity – Gordon Christy, Camden – John Pickett, Chidester – John McGill, Choudrant – Debbie A. Barnes, Crossett - Baker Coulter, El Dorado – Jim Bennett, Homer - Sandra Futch, Jonesville – Gail Bean, Magnolia – Martine Boumtje, Mansfield Red Lick – John L. Holmes, Monroe – Linda Stewart, Monticello First – Sam Synder, Monticello Holmes Chapel – Charles Peeples, Natchitoches – Donna Rose, Plain Dealing Cottage Grove – Charlie Coyle, Plain Dealing First – Tom Myrick, Ruston – Buddy Johnson, Shreveport Broadmoor – Billy Washburne, Shreveport Hollywood – W. W. Mays, Jr., Texarkana – Charles Morgan, Warren – Jim Cross, West Monroe – Ruth Smith

Teaching Elders: John Arnold, Susan Arnold, Philip Farris, Julia Farrell, Daniel Hignight, Kathleen Hignight, Joseph Hill, Erin Kaye, Maetta Snyder, Mark Kennedy, Allison Moody, Michael Morgan, David Roberts, John Scott, Jim Van Hook, Jr., George Worthem

Ruling Elders Enrolled in Presbytery: Dana Stinson

Ruling Elders Commissioned to a Congregation: Edith Hill, Kay Childs Travis

The following were absent:

Sessions excused: Alto, Athens, Baskin, DeQueen, Dermott, Ferriday, Hope, Newellton, Rayville, Shreveport First, Shreveport John Calvin, Vidalia, Winnsboro

unexcused: Bastrop, Benton, Bossier City Korean, Carthage, Frierson, Grand Cane, Hanesville, Hermitage, Keatchie, Lake Providence, Lake Village, Mansfield First, Shreveport St. Andrew, Tulip, Vivian, Winfield

Teaching Elders excused: John Albright, Dianne Brown, Ralph Burns, Chris Currie, James Freeman, Lee Grisson, Grant Groves, Steve Kim, John McClelland, Bryan McDowell, Phil McLarty, Lauren Moore, Spencer Murray, Robin Nygaard, Lindsey Perry, Beth Sentell, Jungsuk Seo, Rhodes Stipp, Jerry Tompkin, Art Vance, Bill Willis, Hugh Yates

unexcused: Alford Branch, John-Nelson Pope, Tom Reinowski

Elders Enrolled in Presbytery excused: Corbet Lamkin

Ruling Elders Commissioned to a Congregation excused: Charlotte Cobb, Clyde Ray Webber

WELCOME BY HOST CHURCH

Allison Moody, temporary pastor of the host church, offered a welcome.

PARTIAL REPORT OF THE STATED CLERK

Dan Hignight, Stated Clerk, offered a partial report. IT WAS VOTED to adopt the following recommendations:

1. That the Docket of this meeting be approved as presented.
2. The following Corresponding Members be seated: Wil Howie, St. Andrew Presbytery; Kevin Keaton, New Covenant Presbytery, Dan Drutz, Louisiana Interchurch Conference, Patrick Fleming, Arkansas Presbytery of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.
3. That the following Consent Agenda Items be approved: Vision and Mission Committee report, Congregational and Pastoral Care Report – Items 1 and 2.

MORNING WORSHIP WITH THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Council moved into a time of worship of Almighty God during which the Sacrament of Holy Communion was celebrated. Liturgist was Dana Stinson, Preacher Wil Howie, Celebrants Erin Kaye and Joe Hill, Music by Donna Rose and David Roberts.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Wil Howie, founder of Living Waters for the World, presented a talk on the history and ministry of Living Waters for the World. He thanked the Presbytery for its participation and urged more people to become involved in its work.

SHARING GOOD NEWS

Attendees were given an opportunity to share good news from their congregations.

LUNCH RECESS

At noon the body recessed for lunch. The prayer was offered before the recess.

RECONVENE

At 12:45 the Moderator called the Council to order and offered a prayer.

ORDER OF THE DAY

The time for the Order of the Day having arrived, the body moved into a Memorial Service for Teaching Elder Joe Sheeler, led by Edith Hill.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

John Scott led the group in a discussion of the proposed regional groups.

REPORTS

Stated Clerk The Stated Clerk continued his report. IT WAS VOTED to adopt the following recommendations:

4. That the Presbytery vote on the Proposed Amendment to the *Book of Confessions*, the inclusion of the *Confession of Belhar*. The vote was Yea 14, Nay 17.
5. That the name of the Committee on Administration be changed to Business Affairs, and that all references in the *Manual of Operations* be updated.
6. The motion that the Presbytery adopt the *Gracious Separation Policy* had extensive amendments offered. IT WAS VOTED to table discussion and action until the next Stated Meeting.

General Presbyter Joe Hill presented a report to be received as information.

Vision and Mission (adopted under Consent Agenda) That the report be received as information.

Congregational and Pastoral Care Edith Hill, Moderator, presented the report. IT WAS VOTED to adopt the following recommendations:

1. That the report be received as information.
2. That Presbytery grant permission to Trinity Church, Jonesville, Louisiana, to purchase property adjacent to the church. (The congregation did not claim the exemption at the time of Reunion to buy, sell or encumber property.)
3. That James Giddens, a Teaching Elder of Presbytery of San Diego be received and enrolled as member of presbytery and placed in the status of Validated Ministry.
4. That presbytery enter into record the following actions taken by the Committee under its Commission powers:
 - a. Dissolved the relationship between Bonnie Wilkins and the Presbyterian Church of Crossett effective December 31, 2014.
 - b. Dissolved the relationship between Sarah Cooper Searight and First Presbyterian Church, Shreveport, effective February 18, 2015.
 - c. Appointed Maetta Snyder moderator of First Presbyterian Church, Monticello.
 - d. Approved the Temporary Pastor Agreement between Julia Nance Farrell and First Presbyterian Church, Shreveport.
 - e. Granted permission for First Presbyterian Church, El Dorado, to form a Pastor Nominating Committee.
5. That the Committee be given authority to form a team to respond to issues arising at First Presbyterian Church, Monroe, and that the team operate under a format similar to the one used by Reponse Teams to Churches Seeking to Leave the Denomination.

ADJOURNMENT

With all business being completed, the Moderator adjourned the meeting with prayer at 2:50 p.m.

2014 Necrology Report

Church	Elder's Name	Date
Honorably Retired	Joe Sheeler	10-08-14
Athens, First Presbyterian Church, Athens, LA	William T. "Bill" Bailey	10-20-14
Belcher Presbyterian Church , Belcher, LA	Margaret Lynn	9-14
Benton Presbyterian Church, Benton, LA	Donn Thompson	01-10-14
	Betty Finkelstein	04-02-14
	Abi Cummings	05-02-14
Trinity Presbyterian Church, Bossier, LA	Wendell Launius	03-11-14
	Helen Persons	04-03-14
	Gordon Maciver	04-08-14
	Larry Roberts	07-17-14
	Monty Wyche	07-28-14
	Betty Banning	11-12-14
Camden, First Presbyterian, Camden, AR	Sarah McCormick Yawn	7-20-14
	Thomas Edison Bensberg	8-21-14
El Dorado, First Pres. Church El Dorado, AR	Bob Archer	04-23-14
	Mike Jacobs	05-02-14
	Dr. Bill Landers	07-25-14
	Bunny Kaldem	10-12-14
Ferriday, First Pres. Church, Ferriday, LA	Mittie Lancaster Schiele	09-29-14
Good Hope Presbyterian Church, Frierson, LA	Howard White	02-18-14
	Hezekiah White III	02-25-14
Lake Village, Frist Pres., Lake Village, AR	Roxie Sue McWilliams	11-29-14
Mansfield, First Pres. Church , Mansfield, LA	Ms. Doris Huey	10-01-14
Plain Dealing, First Pres., Plain Dealing, LA	Maurice Arnold McCall	01-20-14
	J. Davis McCall	08-26-14
Presbyterian Church of Ruston, Ruston, LA	Wiley Hilburn Jr.	01-16-14
Shreveport , First Pres., Shreveport, LA		
Date of Elder: 2008, 2014	Mrs. Deborah J. Roberts	1-15-14
Date of Elder: 1971, '75, '79, '83, '87, '91, '96	Mr. Henry Goodrich	3-26-14
Date of Elder: 1991, 1997	Mr. Wesley D. Glassell	7-31-14
Date of Elder: 1979, '88, '94, '99	Mrs. Lea M. Johnson	8-12-14
Texarkana, First Presbyterian, Texarkana, AR	Richard V. Hall	01-12-14
	George Crank	02-08-14
	Lynn Jackson	02-23-14
	Jean Garrison	03-22-14
	Cornelia DeWoody	03-25-14
		35

MINUTES TO BE APPROVED
113th Stated Meeting
Presbytery of the Pines
October 17, 2015
Camden, Arkansas

Constitution

Ruling Elder Dana Stinson, Moderator, called the 113th Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of the Pines to order at 10:00 a.m. in the sanctuary of First Presbyterian Church, Camden Arkansas. She opened the meeting with prayer.

The following attendance was taken, constituting a quorum:

Teaching Elders

John Albright - absent	Stephen Kim – excused HR
John Arnold – present	Daniel Loomis – excused
Susan Arnold – present	John McClelland – excused HR
Alford Branch – present	Bryan McDowell – excused HR
Dianne Brown – excused	Phil McLarty – excused HR
Ralph Burns – excused HR	Allison Moody – excused
Kris Crawford – absent	Lauren Moore – present
Chris Currie – excused	Thomas Reinowski – present
Philip Faris – present	David Roberts – present
Julia Nance Farrell – excused	John Scott – present
James Freeman – present	Beth Sentell – present
James Giddens – present	Jungsuk Seo – excused
Lee Grisso – excused HR	Rhodes Stipp – excused HR
Grant Groves – excused HR	Jerry Thompkins – excused HR
Daniel Hignight – present	Art Vance – excused HR
Kathleen Hignight – present	Jim Van Hook – excused
Joe Hill – present	Bill Willis – excused HR
Mark Kennedy – present	George Wortham – present
Jung Jin Kim – excused	Huge Yates – excused HR

Sessional Commissioners

Alto – absent	Camden – Jim Murray
Athens – Andy Pate	Carthage – absent
Baskin – absent	Chidester – Tina Hubbard
Bastrop – absent	Choudrant – Lee Lowery
Belcher – Dan Logan	Crossett – Baker Coulter
Benton – Clay Brock	Dequeen – excused
Bossier City, Korean – absent	Dermott – Frank Henry, Jr.
Bossier City, Trinity – Gordon	El Dorado – Rosalind Jeffery
Christy	Ferriday – absent

Frierson – absent
Grand Cane – absent
Haynesville – absent
Hermitage – absent
Homer – Susan Herring
Hope – Amelia Leverett
Jonesville – Donna Tiser
Keatchie – absent
Lake Providence – absent
Lake Village – absent
Plain Dealing, Cottage Grove –
Reneé Boggs
Plain Dealing, First – absent
Rayville – absent
Ruston – Buddy Johnson
Shreveport, Broadmoor – absent
Shreveport, First – Patti Shelton &
Mary Ann Whited
Shreveport, Hollywood – absent
Shreveport, St. Andrew – absent

Magnolia – Joanna Smith
Mansfield, First – absent
Mansfield, Red Lick – John Holmes
Monroe – absent
Monticello, First – absent
Monticello, Holmes Chapel –
Charles Peebles
Natchitoches – Donna Rose
Newellton – absent

Tallulah – absent
Texarkana – Charles Morgan
Tulip – absent
Vidalia – absent
Vivian – absent
Warren – absent
West Monroe – absent
Winnfield – absent
Winnsboro - absent

Ruling Elders Commissioned to Congregations

Charlotte Cobb – present
Edith Hill – present

Kay Childs Travis - present
Clyde Ray Webber – excused

Elders Enrolled in Presbytery

Corbet Lamkin – Present

Dana Stinson – Present

New Business Introduced

TE David Roberts introduced one item, and TE Mike Morgan introduced two items of new business.

Welcome

TE Erin Kaye, pastor of the host church, offered a welcome to the body.

Stated Clerk's Report

TE Dan Hignight presented the report. IT WAS VOTED to adopt the following recommendations:

1. That the Docket for this meeting of Presbytery be adopted with moving the report of the Congregational and Pastoral Care Committee be moved to 11:40 a.m.
2. That the Minutes of the February 21, 2015, and May 16, 2015, Stated Meetings be approved with the addition of John Scott on the list of ministers serving a church to the February minutes.

3. That all corresponding members be seated: James Norcross, Church of the Nazarene, Troy Pritt, Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, Drew Smith, Southern Baptist Church
4. That the *Gracious Separation Policy* tabled from the 112th Stated Meeting be withdrawn from consideration.
5. On behalf of the Session of First Presbyterian Church, Texarkana, the following resolution items are presented for vote:
 1. All minutes of Pines Presbytery for the previous two years should be placed on the Presbytery's website, so that they are available to everyone.

Approved

2. The minutes of the most recent Presbytery meeting shall be posted on the Presbytery's website within 45 days of the date of the meeting, with the notion "*not yet approved*". When these minutes are approved, together with any changes or corrections, these minutes shall be posted to the Presbytery's website with the notation "*approved*".

Approved

3. The current Presbytery meeting "*packet*" shall be placed on the Presbytery's website at 21 days prior to any Presbytery meeting. This "*packet*" shall include an agenda of the scheduled meeting, all reports, and all materials to be considered at the Presbytery meeting. All amendments to any proposed presbytery matter to be voted upon do have to be posted prior to the meeting but shall be included in the "*unapproved*" minutes that are to be posted within 45 days after the Presbytery meeting in which such matters or amendments were considered. Since Presbytery will not meet only twice a year, every Presbytery packet should include a financial report reflecting the current expenses and current revenues for comparison to the current approved budget.

Not Approved

4. If the Presbytery's Agenda has a stated starting time, then no business should be taken up until that time has been reached. For example, if the business of the Presbytery is to begin at 1:00 p.m., then no business should be conducted before that time since many there are Pastors and commissioned Elders that will not arrive until time stated in the Agenda

Not Approved

Order of the Day

The Order of the Day arrived and the Rev. Mr. James Giddens, recently received into Presbytery through the commission powers of CPCC, was introduced to the body, and offered a welcome.

Worship and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

The Council paused to worship Almighty God and celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Liturgists were: Pierre Boumtje, Susan Bensberg, Kay Travis, Nancy Bergeron, and Edith Hill. Dr. Drew Smith interpreted the Word. Gary Martin, presided at the Table. Donna Rose provided music.

Committee Reports

Congregational and Pastoral and Care Committee

RE Edith Hill, Moderator of the Committee, present the report. IT WAS VOTED to adopt the following recommendations:

1. That the report be received as information
2. That Presbytery receive as a member the Rev. Paul Andresen, a Teaching Elder from Grace Presbytery, and that he be enrolled as a Member-at-Large.
3. That Presbytery approve the Commission to Install the Rev. Jung Suk Seo on November 1, 2015, at 3:00 p.m. at the Shreveport-Bossier Korean Presbyterian Church:

Moderator, and Propound the Questions	RE Dana Stinson
Preach	TE Joe Hill
Charge the Pastor	TE Jim Freeman
Charge the Pastor	TE Steve Kim
Read Scripture	RE Hosuk Yu
Complete Commission	RE Patty Kim
Invited to Sit with Commission	Rev. Jungho Bae, Red River Korean Nazarene Church, pastor
4. That the Commission for Edith Hill to the Presbyterian Church of Ruston be extended for three years.
5. That Presbytery grant commission power to the Congregational and Pastoral Care Committee to extend existing commissions for CREs when the commission ends and the elder and session agree to extend the commission.
6. That presbytery grant honorable retirement to:
Lauren Moore effective August 1, 2015
Mark Kennedy effective September 30, 2015.
7. That Presbytery transfer TE Rosemary Stelz to San Francisco Presbytery effective today.
8. That Presbytery combine Travel/Professional Reimbursement with Continuing Education line items into a single reimbursable line item in Terms of Call.
9. That Presbytery set the minimum Terms of Call for 2016 at the following:

Effective Salary/Pension Base	\$41,000
Pension/Medical	15,700
Travel/Professional/CE Reimbursable	3,300
Social Security Offset	3,136.50

4 weeks vacation
2 weeks continuing education

Lunch Recess

At 12:15 p.m. the Moderator called for the lunch recess. TE Erin Kaye gave instructions for the meal and offered a prayer.

Reconvene

At 1:30 p.m. the Moderator reconvened the Council and offered a prayer.

Order of the Day

The time for the Order of the Day arrived, and the body was treated by the host church with a presentation by their Dall Smith Spiritual Enrichment Series speaker, the Rev. Dr. Drew Smith of Henderson State University. A time of discussion followed the presentation.

Committee Reports Resume

Business Affairs Committee

RE Corbet Lamkin, Moderator, presented the report. IT WAS VOTED to adopt the following recommendations:

1. That the report be received as information.
2. That presbytery *per capita* for 2016 be \$10.24 based on 2014 Statistical Reports.
3. That the Distribution of Revenue for 2016 be set at:
 - 90% for Presbytery
 - 5% for Synod of the Sun
 - 5% for General Assembly
4. That it be recorded that the Insurance Coverage of the presbytery has been reviewed and found to be sufficient and in order.
5. That Joe Hill be elected Treasurer for 2016.
6. That in the absence of a final, approved budget, the Treasurer of Presbytery be authorized to write checks as necessary, and distribute *per capita* only as received.
7. That it be noted that a challenge budget for 2016 was presented.

Vision and Mission Committee

TE John Scott, Moderator, presented the report. IT WAS VOTED to receive the report as information.

Nominations and Representation Committee

TE Beth Sentell, Moderator, presented the report. IT WAS VOTED to adopt the following recommendations:

1. That the report be received as information.
2. That the following individuals be elected to the respective positions:
 - Moderator of Presbytery* TE George Wortham

Moderator-Elect

RE Pierre Boumtje

Presbytery At-Large Trustees (2 year term):

RE J. N. Walpole (PC of Ruston)

RE Joe Nixon (FPC, El Dorado)

Commissioners and YAAD to General Assembly

TE Since both the Principal and Alternate have declined, the
N&RC was given commission power to fill this position

RE Nancy Bergeron, principal
Edith Hill, alternate

YAAD Jaclyn Smith, principal
Chet Andrews, alternate

Louisiana Board of Publications Class of 2018:

Barbara Calloway

Donna Rose

Business Affairs Committee (Class of 2017)

Moderator RE Corbet Lamkin

Vice-Moderator TE Susan Arnold

Recording Clerk TE Kathleen Hignight

RE Mike Dumas

RE John Knox

RE Maribeth Frazer

Congregational and Pastoral Care Committee (Class of 2017)

Moderator RE Edith Hill

Vice-Moderator TE James Freeman

Recording Clerk TE John-Nelson Pope

RE Dudley Glenn

TE Chris Currie

RE Pierre Boumtje

RE Sandra Watson

TE Philip Faris

Vision and Mission Committee (Class of 2017)

Moderator TE John Scott

Vice-Moderator _____

Recording Clerk _____

Re Karen Logan

RE Lisa Moon

TE David Roberts

New Business

TE David Roberts presented the following request. IT WAS VOTED to concur with the request:

“The Session of First Presbyterian Church, Monroe, Louisiana, requests the Presbytery of the Pines to concur with the decision of the Session to sell the property owned by First Presbyterian Church, upon the appropriate vote of the congregation to do so. This concurrence is valid until October 17, 2016.”

TE Mike Morgan introduced a proposed overture to the General Assembly. The item failed to gain support from the Presbytery.

TE Mike Morgan introduced a proposed *Gracious Separation Policy*. IT WAS VOTED to postpone the item until the next Stated Meeting.

Installation of Moderator

The Moderator and Stated Clerk conducted a Service of Installation where TE George Wortham was installed as Moderator of the Presbytery of the Pines for the following year.

Adjournment

With all business being concluded, Moderator Wortham declared the meeting adjourned and offered the closing prayer at 4:10 p.m.

PRESBYTERY OF THE PINES POLICY FOR GRACIOUS SEPARATION

Preamble

“Therefore, encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing”
(1 Thessalonians 5:11).

The Presbytery of The Pines (Presbytery) recognizes that we live in a complex and changing world. We therefore seek to serve the Lord by supporting, building up, and celebrating our common ministry with fellow disciples of Jesus Christ. Our work is best accomplished as we strive to exemplify the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit with our brothers and sisters in Christ, remembering the counsel of Paul to “love another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor” (Romans 12:10).

The Presbytery is committed to walking alongside pastors, sessions, and congregations that are considering or seeking dismissal from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (PCUSA). No matter the outcome, the Presbytery is determined to create a gracious context and process in which the will of God is sought for the life, ministry, and calling of the particular congregation. The Presbytery commits itself and invites all congregations within it to pursue God’s mission with a graciousness befitting those who claim Christ as Lord.

I. Introduction

The 218th General Assembly (2008) of the PCUSA approved Commissioners’ Resolution Item 04-28 which urged (quoting the then-current Book of Order): “that presbyteries and synods develop and make available to lower governing bodies and local congregations a process that exercises the responsibility and power ‘to divide, dismiss, or dissolve churches in consultation with their members’ (Book of Order, G-11.0103i) with consistency, pastoral responsibility, accountability, gracious witness, openness, and transparency. Believing that trying to exercise this responsibility and power through litigation is deadly to the cause of Christ, impacting the local church, other parts of the Body of Christ and ecumenical relationships, and our witness to Christ in the world around us, the General Assembly urges congregations considering leaving the denomination, presbyteries and synods to implement a process using the following principles:

- Consistency: The local authority delegated to presbyteries is guided and shaped by our shared faith, service, and witness to Jesus Christ.
- Pastoral Responsibility: The requirement in G-11.0103i to consult with the members of a church seeking dismissal highlights the presbytery’s pastoral responsibility, which must not be submerged beneath other responsibilities.
- Accountability: For a governing body, accountability rightly dictates ~~fiduciary and connectional concerns, raising general issues of property (G-8.0000)~~ and specific issues of schism within a congregation (G-8.0600). But, full accountability also requires preeminent concern with ‘caring for the flock.’
- Gracious Witness: ... Scripture and the Holy Spirit require a gracious witness from us rather than a harsh legalism.
- Openness and Transparency: Early, open communication and transparency about principles and process of dismissal necessarily serve truth, order, and goodness, and work against seeking civil litigation as a solution.”

This policy establishes principles for discernment in situations where withdrawal from the PCUSA is being considered. Each situation will be uniquely addressed on its own merits, using the principles set forth in this policy. This policy is expressly subject to all existing provisions of the Book of Order. No statement herein may be interpreted to contradict any specific provision of the Book of Order. Further, in the event that the principles stated in this policy are not being followed, Presbytery may invoke other Book of Order processes as needed.

II. Statement of Values of the Presbytery of The Pines

The Presbytery's overarching value is the mission of Jesus Christ. This mission leads us to several values in cases of discord within the body of Christ:

A. Unity

The congregations and members of the Presbytery seek to uphold one another and to respect each other's integrity, even as we acknowledge significant differences in our views of what the Bible teaches about a number of issues. We affirm the freedom of conscience of each member of the body of Christ. We desire to encourage peace and unity, while minimizing confrontation between our congregations and members, as we seek together to find and represent the will of Christ. In all that we do, it is our prayer to strive to be a church modeled on the body of Christ, a church made up of many different parts, all of which are necessary for its mission to the world

(F-1.0301). Our spiritual unity is derived from the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

B. Freedom of Conscience and Mutual Forbearance

Presbyterians have always celebrated and recognized significant differences of opinion on issues that matter. This ethos is currently noted in the historic language found at F-3.0105: "We also believe that there are truths and forms with respect to which men of good characters and principles may differ. And in all these we think it the duty both of private Christians and societies to exercise mutual forbearance toward each other." Our covenant demands that we strive to work together in peace and unity, even in the midst of our diversity. "I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1b-3). The duty is always to attempt to bring the estranged member back into the covenant community, and we promise to carry out that duty in our ordination vows.

Through our theology we understand that "Presbyters are not simply to reflect the will of the people, but rather to seek together to find and represent the will of Christ. Decisions shall be reached in councils by vote, following opportunity for discussion and discernment, and a majority shall govern" (F-3.0204 and F-3.0205). At the same time, the church is committed to being open to voices sharing minority opinions. At some points in our history, minority views eventually became those of the majority. Thus, the Constitution of the PCUSA recognizes "'The church reformed, always to be reformed according to the Word of God' in the power of the Spirit" (F-2.02).

There are also times when members find it impossible to go along with the majority. The Presbytery encourages all presbyters and congregations to "concur with or passively submit" to the vote and wisdom of the majority (footnote to G-2.0105). If their consciences will permit neither, the Presbytery will be generous in allowing congregations and presbyters with strong issues of conscience to pursue peaceable withdrawal through dismissal to another denomination that is doctrinally consistent with the essentials of Reformed theology as understood by the Presbytery and governed by polity that is consistent in form and structure with that of the PCUSA (Minutes, 2008, pp. 15, 545).

C. Dialogue and Reconciliation

The goal of this Presbytery will always be reconciliation and continued engagement in relationship for all congregations within the Presbytery, without the threat of isolation, estrangement, or blame. The Presbytery is to be a servant to the congregations God has entrusted to us, encouraging and supporting them toward becoming healthy, growing congregations. This is especially true for those congregations for whom the bonds of unity are stretched and ecclesiastical connections are frayed over issues of conscience to the point of considering disaffiliation.

"There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love" (1 John 4:18).

The Presbytery's commitment to this passage in how we dialogue with each other means that we are committed to engage the leaders of a congregation, or the congregation as a whole, without threat of punishment. It is likewise incumbent upon the leaders of congregations wrestling with issues of conscience to share their concerns with Presbytery leadership in a timely manner, being assured that the response will not be hostile, but instead one of prayerful dialogue and a commitment to act in love and in the best interests of the congregation as well as the Presbytery's mission.

Dialogue recognizes that our Reformed tradition includes broad historical differences between the great doctrines and themes of the church, and the specific theories and models which different communities have found useful in seeking to understand those doctrines in the practice of their faith. A Reformed stance allows room for a variety of legitimate perspectives and valid models of "essentials" that allow an understanding of underlying mysteries. Graciousness on both sides acknowledges this validity and seeks to honor rather than to demonize one another.

III. The Property Trust Clause

~~According to Section G-4.0203 of the Book of Order: "All property held by or for a congregation, a presbytery, a synod, the General Assembly, or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), whether legal title is lodged in a corporation, a trustee or trustees, or an unincorporated association, and whether the property is used in programs of a congregation or of a higher council or retained for the production of income, is held in trust nevertheless for the use and benefit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)."~~

~~"The Property Trust Clause (Trust Clause) is intended to evidence the interconnected relationship existing between the PCUSA and its congregations, as well as our unity in the covenant of common mission. Presbytery, as a corporate organization of the body, is responsible for ensuring ministry in its geographical area by guiding and coordinating the work of the congregations within its bounds in order to maximize their strength for effective witness to the broader community. Presbytery, therefore, has an inherent interest in the location and facilities of its member congregations to further this mission.~~

~~Under the Trust Clause, a particular congregation's property, including but not limited to land, buildings, and fixtures, is held in trust for the PCUSA. The congregation cannot sell, lease, or encumber it without the permission of Presbytery, unless having sought relief from this by an action of the Session prior to June 30, 1991 and reported to the Presbytery, nor can it take property with it to another denomination unless Presbytery voluntarily releases its claim upon the property. A congregation's financial and all other assets are also understood to be covered by the Trust Clause.~~

~~The Trust Clause also reflects our understanding of the church as a communion of saints across time, with responsibilities both to those who came before and those who will follow. When a congregation seeks to leave the PCUSA, it is breaking what is often a significant historic relationship; it is also departing from a fellowship in which its officers have participated, by whose polity they have pledged to be governed, and with which many members may feel bonds of affection. This policy therefore cautions any congregation seeking to separate from the PCUSA to consider its actions carefully.~~

~~The Trust Clause should not be used as a weapon to threaten civil action against a congregation. In considering enforcement of the provisions of the Trust Clause, it is important that Presbytery and its member congregations act graciously to one another. Scripture calls us to seek in all humility to resolve our disagreements and avoid the harm that is done to the Gospel and Christ's body when Christians resort to civil litigation and public disputes over property.~~

~~Presbytery will not preemptively initiate civil litigation based on the Trust Clause. If a congregation initiates civil action, the Presbytery may take legal action to defend its mission strategy for the Presbytery.~~

The Presbytery is committed to following the process described below. In the event the process breaks down, however, the Presbytery Assembly may appoint an administrative commission with the power of original jurisdiction to act on behalf of the Presbytery.

III. Process Concerning Possible Dismissal

A. Guiding Principles

There are times when our unity in Christ is tested and our ability to work together in mission is tried. Even in times of disagreement and conflict we will uphold one another, build up one another, respect one another, and love one another, to the end that the mission of Christ be fulfilled. Together we seek to further the peace, unity, and purity of the church. Thus, when a congregation or a substantial portion of the congregation begins to question its continued participation in the PCUSA, the following questions will be paramount for both the congregation and the Presbytery and will form the center of a shared discernment process:

- Is God leading this particular congregation toward restoration of fellowship in the PCUSA or to seek separation from the PCUSA?
- If God is leading this congregation toward restoration of fellowship, how can that be accomplished in a way that honors Jesus Christ and strengthens both the congregation and the Presbytery?
- If God is leading this congregation to seek separation, how can that be accomplished in a way that honors Jesus Christ and strengthens both the congregation and the Presbytery?

B. Listening and Understanding Phase

When any member of Presbytery becomes aware, through either formal or informal contacts with congregational leaders or members, that a congregation is considering withdrawal from the PCUSA, this information should be brought immediately to the attention of the General Presbyter. The General Presbyter, in consultation with the appropriate Presbytery staff and the Congregational and Pastoral Care Committee (CPC) will appoint two or more persons to contact the moderator of the congregation's Session to determine the nature and seriousness of the congregation's concerns. All teaching elders serving on the staff of the congregation shall be similarly consulted during this phase. The persons appointed by the General Presbyter may also serve on the Discernment Team, should a Discernment Team later prove necessary. During this initial inquiry, the congregation's identity will be kept confidential in Presbytery's communication.

The persons appointed to represent Presbytery will seek a time of prayer and conversation focused upon listening, understanding the issues, and identifying potential steps toward reconciliation. Discussions may be held with the pastor(s), congregational leaders, the Session, the congregation and/or small member groups as deemed appropriate. (More guidance for this listening and understanding phase is available in Appendix A.)

In the event of media coverage, the Presbytery and the Session will work together to create a media plan, designating who will provide information to the media from the Presbytery and the Session, and committing to work in concert on such contacts in order to maintain a witness to Christ in the world.

C. Discerning Phase

If it appears that reconciliation may not be likely and congregational leadership continues to express a desire to withdraw from the PCUSA, CPC and the Session will organize a Discernment Team. The team will be comprised of both teaching and ruling elders representing the Presbytery and the congregation, and may include active members of the congregation who are not ordained. The persons who participated in the listening and understanding phase may be invited to be part of this team. The Discernment Team will attempt to discern God's will for denominational affiliation. The membership of the team will be reported to the Presbytery and the congregation. There will be co-moderators, one elected from the Presbytery representatives and one from the representatives of the congregation. The co-moderators will remain in regular communication with their respective groups.

This phase of continued dialogue and discerning may extend over a number of months, during which the team will attempt to ascertain the extent of support for a dismissal request. This process will include an accurate assessment of the actual active membership of the congregation (G-1.0402). If it appears that progress can be made toward reconciliation through continued and constructive dialogue, congregational leadership and the team will establish a mutually agreeable timeline for talks to be held and proceed to engage in such dialogue. (More guidance for the discerning phase is available in Appendix B.)

D. Establishing the Negotiating Phase

When the Discernment Team is not able to establish a basis for reconciliation and withdrawal is a clear direction of the congregation, the team will recommend that the process move to a negotiating phase that will address terms for dismissal and formal validation of the congregation's desire to be dismissed.

A written report affirming this direction will be submitted to the CPC and the congregation, along with a recommendation about how to proceed with the negotiations. It may be the case that members of the Discernment Team can take a lead role in the negotiations, with both sides effectively working as a single team. Alternatively, it may be necessary to form two distinct teams with minimal overlap between teams involved in negotiations and members of the Discernment Team. In either case, because of the legal and financial issues that may be involved in a negotiated settlement, members of the congregation's finance, property, and personnel committees will need to become involved, as will representatives of similar groups within the Presbytery.

If CPC agrees with the recommendation of the Discernment Team, it will request action by the Session and/or congregation and the Presbytery Committee on Accountability to appoint persons to a joint or separate Negotiating Team(s), and grant authorization to negotiate on behalf of the Presbytery and congregation. At this point, negotiation of specific terms and a timeline for dismissal can proceed as expeditiously as possible. As the outcome of negotiations may influence a final decision by the Presbytery and/or the congregation about whether to approve a final dismissal, the discernment process can continue simultaneously with negotiations. Under no circumstances will a negotiated settlement be considered final until it is approved by the congregation and Presbytery as a whole as provided in Sections VII. and VIII. Below

IV. Negotiation Considerations

A. Constitutional Considerations

Consistent with PCUSA polity and General Assembly actions taken in *Anderson v. Synod of Florida* and *Strong and Bagby v. Synod of the Mid-South*, a congregation can be dismissed with property only to another denomination that is doctrinally consistent with the essentials of Reformed theology as understood by the Presbytery and governed by polity that is consistent in form and structure with that of the PCUSA (Minutes, 2008, pp. 15, 545). It cannot be dismissed to "independency." In the event a congregation seeks to leave the denomination outside this limit, the congregation needs to raise its request as early as possible in the process.

Notwithstanding anything contained herein, a congregation is not required to waive any provisions of any decisions or statutes of the state in which the congregation is located.

~~The decision of whether or not to release the Presbytery's claim to property used by a particular congregation can only be made by the Presbytery as a whole, bearing in mind its responsibility to deploy assets of people, real estate, and financial resources for the furtherance of the mission of the PCUSA within its bounds.~~

~~B. Mission of the Presbytery~~

~~As noted previously, the Presbytery views its role in interpreting the Trust Clause as a responsibility to act on behalf of the PCUSA and its member congregations to ensure ministry is coordinated and carried out effectively in its geographic area. The CPC, in conversation with the Vision and Mission Committee and the Committee on Administration, will therefore review the impact of the congregation's withdrawal on the mission of the Presbytery in the region and present its recommendations to the Presbytery for approval. Information about financial~~

~~and membership loss, clergy transfer, and the opportunity for new congregation development may be considered as part of this process. If approved by the Presbytery, the impact study shall be submitted to the Presbytery as a whole if a vote on dismissal is to be taken (see Section VIII.).~~

~~B. Impact of Dismissal on Members~~

~~It is important that, throughout the dismissal process, both the Presbytery and Session communicate carefully so that divisiveness is minimized between those members of the congregation who wish to withdraw and those members who wish to remain in the PCUSA. During the whole process there should be open communication with members of the congregation about where they want their membership to be located if the congregation is dismissed.~~

~~The negotiated dismissal should include provision for members of the congregation and the Presbytery who might be adversely impacted by dismissal. This includes, but is not limited to, members of the congregation who wish to remain within the PCUSA, members of the congregation who are candidates for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament, and teaching elders who wish to remain within the PCUSA.~~

~~1. Status of Members of Congregation~~

~~Final negotiated terms should include validation of the congregation's membership roll (based on the assessment conducted in Section IV.C. above) and provision for transferring membership of those persons who wish to remain in the PCUSA. Members being dismissed who serve on Presbytery entities will have their terms end officially on the effective date of the congregation's dismissal.~~

~~2. Status of Members under Care of Presbytery~~

~~Special attention should be given to members of the congregation who are preparing for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament and are under the care of the Presbytery. If the congregation is dismissed and the individual wishes to transfer his or her membership to another congregation within the PCUSA, the person will be assisted in seeking a waiver of the usual six-month requirement for congregational membership in order to maintain care status.~~

~~3. Teaching Elder Members of Presbytery~~

~~Teaching elders serving the congregation may choose to continue serving the ongregation or to seek another call within the PCUSA. If a teaching elder requests transfer to the Reformed body to which the congregation is requesting dismissal, this transfer will normally be approved unless the teaching elder is the subject of a pending judicial or investigative action (D-10.0105). If the teaching elder instead chooses to stay within the PCUSA, the teaching elder's call to the congregation shall be dissolved as of the effective date of the congregation's dismissal. The terms of dissolution shall include an adequate severance package.~~

D. Property and Assets

If a congregation seeking dismissal wishes to retain its real property, the Presbytery and Session will negotiate terms whereby Presbytery will release the property to the congregation in exchange for an agreed compensation. These terms should reflect the mission strategy of Presbytery and should, to the greatest extent possible, facilitate successful ongoing ministry by both Presbytery and the congregation. (Additional considerations beyond those listed below can be found in Appendix C.)

1. Review of Property and Financial Records

The Session will provide to the Negotiating Team copies of all executed documents concerning the congregation's incorporation and bylaws, real property, and other assets including, but not limited to, current deeds of trust, loan agreements, liens, property and casualty insurance, and statements of tangible and intangible assets. Representatives of the Session and the Negotiating Team and the Presbytery's legal advisors will review these documents to determine whether Presbytery, Synod, or any PCUSA entity is named therein and/or is exposed

to any liability claims which exist or may arise under these documents. In order for the dismissal process to proceed, steps must be taken to repay in full any indebtedness owed to or guaranteed by the Presbytery, the Synod, or the PCUSA, or to refinance such indebtedness through an independent creditor without support from the Presbytery, Synod, or PCUSA. Appropriate action must also be taken to amend any organizational documents, as necessary, and to ensure that adequate insurance coverage of all property is maintained until dismissal is completed.

Similarly, if the congregation has established a foundation or received grants or endowments, related documentation must be examined to identify any terms or restrictions affected by the proposed dismissal or involving Presbytery, Synod, or the PCUSA. Corrective action must be taken as appropriate.

Prior to finalization of the dismissal process, legal counsel will be retained to review the settlement agreement, prepare a quit claim by Presbytery to the congregation for any real property being released, and prepare an indemnification by the congregation to Presbytery against any and all future claims that may arise related to the property. All legal costs associated with this and any other corrective action noted above shall be borne by the congregation.

2. Appraisal of Real Property

The Session will provide to the Negotiating Team two current market appraisals of all of the land, buildings, fixtures, and contents held by the congregation. The cost of these appraisals, prepared by independent appraisers satisfactory to both the Session and the Negotiating Team, will be borne by the congregation. Fair market value will ordinarily be obtained by averaging the two appraisal amounts.

VI. Negotiation of Financial Terms for Withdrawal

A. The final negotiated terms will normally adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Compensation to Presbytery for the loss of the real property will ordinarily be based on a percentage of the appraised market value of the congregation's land, buildings, fixtures, and contents, with consideration given to whether the Presbytery has invested significant financial resources in the congregation.

2. The settlement terms will include a due date by which final payment must be made and will specify whether payments are interest-free or include interest calculated at a specified rate.

3. Title to the property will not be released by the Presbytery until all compensation for the property has been received.

~~B. In some circumstances, other concerns, such as the value of the property in relation to the size of the departing congregation, may dictate alternate forms of compensation. These may include, but are not limited to, the following:~~

- ~~1. A long-term lease of the property, under which the departing congregation retains full use of the building(s) but title remains with the Presbytery.~~
- ~~2. Sale of the property to a third party and allocation of the proceeds between the departing congregation and the Presbytery.~~
- ~~3. A negotiated dissolution, whereby the departing congregation would be dissolved as a PCUSA congregation and reestablished as a legal entity outside the PCUSA. Once the congregation is legally reestablished, it may seek to purchase the subject property and assets from the Presbytery.~~

V. Validation of Congregation's Request for Dismissal

After the Negotiating Team and Session have negotiated the terms of dismissal, Presbytery will formally call a meeting of the congregation to validate its desire for dismissal from the PCUSA and ascertain the congregation's unity in this decision. Because of the importance of the dismissal decision on the life of the congregation, at least 66% of the active members of the congregation shall be in attendance for this vote to take place. This quorum might be impractical for a larger congregation, and the Presbytery can approve a lower percentage if 66% is deemed unreasonable. Because the Holy Spirit works through the gathered body discerning together, proxy votes will not be allowed.

Notice of the called meeting of the congregation must be given at least 30 days in advance, and every effort must be taken to maximize participation of the members in this meeting. A written settlement agreement will be made available to the congregation. It is expected that representatives of the Discernment and/or Negotiating Teams and the Session will address the congregation and discuss any specific issues that will enable the congregation to make an informed decision based on facts and prayerful discernment. Steps will be taken to ensure that only active members of the congregation are permitted to vote, and voting will be by secret written ballot.

If 80% or more of those voting approve the request for dismissal and accept the terms of the negotiated agreement, the dismissal request will be deemed as validated by the congregation. ~~The congregational vote, however, is advisory only; the final decision to dismiss rests with the Presbytery as a whole.~~

If less than 66% of those voting are in favor of requesting dismissal, then it is recognized that the congregation is significantly divided and the congregation shall be declared as being in schism.

VI. Process for Presbytery Assembly to Approve Dismissal of the Congregation

Once the congregation has formally voted to request dismissal from the PCUSA, and the congregation and the Committee on Accountability have accepted the terms of the negotiated agreement for dismissal, the Committee on Accountability will present the terms of the agreement and dismissal of the congregation to the Presbytery Assembly for its vote, along with the findings of an impact study conducted by the Committee on Accountability and the Vision and Mission Committee. Representatives of the Presbytery who have been involved in the process will report on all phases of the process, as well as the settlement agreement and the congregational vote tally.

Renegotiation of the proposed terms for dismissal through the use of amendments from the floor of the Presbytery as a whole would invalidate months of work between the Presbytery and the congregation. Therefore, the proposed terms should be presented as a whole, with the understanding that they have been reached by good faith negotiations. Any motion to amend

that seeks to change the substance of the proposed terms would serve to make the adoption of the amendment equivalent to the rejection of the original proposed terms, and would thus be out of order [RONR (11th ed.), p. 138, ll. 13-20]. A Presbytery commissioner who wishes to change the substance of the proposed terms should instead make a motion to return to negotiations.

It is the Presbytery's prayer that, with the commitment of all parties to follow the above process in good faith, differences can be resolved reasonably and civilly, without resorting to litigation. To allow for an orderly transition, the effective date of dismissal or dissolution will occur no earlier than 90 days after the Presbytery vote.

VII. Determination of Members' Desire for Transfer

Within 30 days of the Presbytery Assembly's vote approving dismissal of the congregation to another Reformed body, the Presbytery will prepare a letter to members of the church informing them of their option to be dismissed with the congregation or to remain in the PCUSA. The congregation will mail the letter to all active members of the congregation promptly and will bear all costs associated with this mailing. The letter will direct that responses are to be returned to the Presbytery. The Presbytery through the Discernment Team will then ensure that contact is made with those members wishing to remain in the PCUSA.

VII. Completing the Dismissal

Recognizing that the departure of valued colleagues in ministry will be a matter of pain for all parties, it is appropriate for the Presbytery to hold a time of prayer giving thanks for prior shared ministry and prayers for the ongoing witness of both the departing congregation and of all the other congregations in the Presbytery and the PCUSA.

APPENDICE S

These appendices are provided to assist pastors, sessions, congregations and the Presbytery with establishing the teams and processes outlined in the body of the Policy for Gracious Separation. Appendix A provides guidelines for the listening and understanding phase.

Appendix B provides guidance for the discerning phase. (The steps presented in these two appendices are not binding on the parties involved.) Appendix C lists additional matters that may require consideration and should not be overlooked.

APPENDIX A

Suggested Guidelines for the Listening and Understanding Phase

1. Meetings with the Pastor(s)

Meetings with the pastor(s) of the congregation should be arranged. During those meetings, the appointed Presbytery representatives should present an overview of the process. The purposes of these gatherings are to pray for the pastor(s), listen to the pastor(s), begin to understand the leading of the congregation, and begin to discern God's calling for the church.

2. Meeting with the Session

A meeting between the appointed Presbytery representatives and the Session should be scheduled. The main purposes of this gathering are to pray for the Lord's leading, introduce the process, listen to the Session members, develop a further understanding of the leading of the congregation, and further discern God's calling for the church. At this meeting, dates may be set for two open meetings with the congregation.

3. Open Meetings with the Congregation

An announcement should be made in all worship services at least once before the scheduled open meetings with the congregation; when possible, a Presbytery representative should make at least one announcement of the upcoming open meetings. It should be made clear that the open meetings are informational only; there will be no votes taken at these meetings.

4. Open Meeting #1

The pastor will begin this meeting with prayer, and should then state briefly a history of the congregation. It will be helpful to inform the congregation that the appointed Presbytery representatives have met with the pastor(s) and the Session regarding this issue. After the pastor has brought the congregation to this point, the meeting will transition to an open forum, which will be moderated by one of the Presbytery representatives. This portion of the meeting will center on the question, "What specifically are the issues as you see them?" At the end of the open forum, time will be given for earnest prayer for the congregation, its leadership, the Presbytery, and the Lord's work in all involved.

5. Open Meeting #2

One of the appointed Presbytery representatives will open the meeting with prayer. This meeting should focus on information. A brief understanding of polity and a description of the Gracious Separation process will be given. The Presbytery representatives will address theological understandings as well as advantages of membership and compelling reasons to remain in the PCUSA. Along with a question and answer time, prayer will be integral to this meeting.

APPENDIX B

Suggested Guidelines for the Discerning Phase

1. First Discernment Team Meeting

During the first meeting, Discernment Team members should exchange introductions, sharing a portion of their faith stories and their perspectives of the differences of theological understandings.

Scripture teaches us to “honor everyone” (1 Peter 2:17). We recognize each participant in this process as a child of God, possessing a conscience formed by the Spirit of Christ under the guidance of Scripture. Presbyterian tradition recognizes that there are “truths and forms with respect to which persons of good characters and principles may differ;” and with regard to these differences, it is our Christian duty “to exercise mutual forbearance toward each other” (F-3.0105).

2. Second Discernment Team Meeting

For the second meeting, a guided dialogue on theological issues is suggested, facilitated by the co-moderators of the Discernment Team. Team members should be invited to share their personal understanding of various theological issues.

Again, it is recognized that there are differences in theological understandings and conscience. As children of God, we are to honor and respect each other. Scripture teaches us to be humble and gentle; patient, “bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:2-3).

3. Third and Subsequent Discernment Team Meetings

The content of the third and subsequent meetings will be determined mutually by the members of the Discernment Team. In determining the content of these meetings, the team will consider feedback received from members of the congregation and other Presbytery members. The Discernment Team will discuss at these meetings other matters pertinent to the dialogue, such as the care of those members wishing to remain united with the PCUSA.

It is the Presbytery’s hope that this process will be guided by the consolation we have from love, the sharing in the Spirit we have enjoyed, and the compassion and sympathy we have for one another. Above all else, we will seek to have within us the mind of Christ who came as servant to all (Philippians 2:1-11).

APPENDIX C

Additional Legal Matters That May Arise During the Negotiating Phase

- **Tax Status:** A congregation which ceases to be a member of the PCUSA is no longer included in the PCUSA’s “group revenue ruling” by which a Presbyterian congregation is granted 501(c)(3) non-profit tax-exempt status. Such status is required not only for exemption from tax payments to state and federal authorities and the filing of certain tax forms, but is required also for real estate tax exemption, for non-profit U.S. Postal Service bulk mailing permits, for grant-making foundations, and for the receipt of many forms of grants and bequests. Gifts to a congregation which does not have valid tax-exempt status may not be claimed as charitable contributions. Legal and other services will be needed to secure new 501(c)(3) status.
- **Corporate Status:** A congregation which ceases to be a member of the PCUSA will need to revise its corporate status, which may require the filing of new articles of incorporation and bylaws. In Illinois, it is necessary for a group of people to be incorporated in order to hold title to real property.
- **Insurance:** Since many PCUSA congregations have property and liability insurance which is available only to PCUSA congregations, new insurance provisions may need to be made.
- **Pension:** A Presbyterian teaching elder’s pension benefits are “vested.” A member (or survivor of a member) of the Presbyterian Board of Pensions’ plan has a non-forfeitable right

to receive a retirement pension based on contributions and increases once pension credits are vested.

- Medical Insurance/Death-and-Disability: The Board of Pensions' major medical plan and death-and-disability provisions require active participation in the plan, and participation is not available to clergy who are not on the roll of a presbytery. A member may be eligible to purchase continuation of medical benefits for a limited duration. Life (death) insurance and disability insurance policies are available commercially at varying rates.
- Tax Issues: A Presbyterian teaching elder is entitled to certain income tax benefits and provisions due to his/her ecclesiastical status in the PCUSA. "Independent" clergy may or may not be entitled to such benefits and provisions.