



Stated Meeting
Tuesday, December 5, 2023
John Knox Presbyterian Church, North Canton, Ohio and via Zoom
6:00 P.M. to 7:30 P.M.

Rev. Matthew Skolnik, General Presbyter, welcomed everyone to the meeting at 6:00 P.M. He explained that the entire meeting would be held in the sanctuary and the docket was online. Worship materials will be on the screens and attendees can use their phones, tablets, etc.

TIME OF WORSHIP:

Rev. Joe Svancara opened worship with the Call to Worship from Isaiah Chapter 60. The hymn, "Prepare the Way" was sung. Rev. Justin Hylden read the scripture from Malachi 3:1-4 followed by a brief meditation. Rev. Kathryn Ophardt read the scripture from Luke 1:46-55 on "Mary's Magnificat" followed by a brief meditation. She then explained that there were three (3) stations on the way to the Communion Table for all to participate. One was the Christ Candle in the Advent Wreath, with another viewing different pictures of Mary "Visio Divina" and the final station was to burn an idol one may have written on a piece of paper in the fire pit set up outside the church building. Karol Niehaus, CRE led communion, followed by the closing hymn of "Canticle of the Turning." Rev. Erin Guzman led the Benediction. All participants were members of the First Pastor's Cohort.

BUSINESS MEETING:

MVP Moderator Ruling Elder Jim Arganbright welcomed everyone and opened the stated business meeting with prayer.

Ruling Elder Alison Blondheim, Stated Clerk, declared a quorum was present and online.

MOTION Approval of the docket as presented online. **APPROVED**

General Presbyter, Rev. Matthew Skolnik recognized the following individuals for their service to Muskingum Valley Presbytery.

RE Sally Fusek who was finishing her term on COM.

Rev. Chris Stewart who was finishing his term on COM.

Rev. Mary Jane Knapp who was finishing her term as Synod Commissioner

RE Frank Walburg who was finishing his term on Mission Council

RE Jim Arganbright who was completing his term as MVP Moderator at the conclusion of tonight's meeting.

MOVING THE CHURCH FORWARD

Rev. Matthew Skolnik, GP

- Discussion was held on the Book of Order Section G-2.10 regarding Commissioned Ruling Elders. GP Rev. Skolnik talked about the need for training Ruling Elders to be available to lead Communion at churches in the presbytery in addition to their own church as a member.
- *G-2.1001 Functions When the presbytery, in consultation with one or more sessions or other responsible committee, determines that its strategy for mission requires it, the presbytery may authorize a ruling elder to be commissioned to limited pastoral service as a commissioned pastor also known as commissioned ruling elder as assigned by the presbytery. A ruling elder so designated may be commissioned to serve one or more validated ministries of the presbytery. The Presbytery, in its commission, may authorize the ruling elder to moderate the session of the congregation or congregations to which he or she is commissioned, to administer the Sacraments, and to officiate at marriages where permitted by state law. This commission shall also specify the term of service, which shall not exceed three years but shall be renewable. The presbytery shall review the commission at least annually.*
- Rev. Skolnik also reviewed the upcoming Ruling Elder Enhancement Workshops that will take place in 2024. The schedule is on the Presbytery website. Any Ruling Elders are encouraged to take as many of the workshops that may be of interest to them. They will be held on Saturdays during the coming months at the First Presbyterian Church in Uhrichsville. Completed workshops will count toward Commissioned Ruling Training.

Moderator Elder Jim Arganbright asked for a **motion** to approve the Muskingum Valley Presbytery stated meeting minutes from September 23, 2023.

MOTION Approval of the stated meeting minutes from September 23 , 2023. **APPROVED**

Moderator Elder Jim Arganbright asked for a **motion** to approve the Muskingum Valley Presbytery called meeting minutes from November 8, 2023.

MOTION Approval of the called meeting minutes from November 8, 2023, **APPROVED**

Ruling Elder Alison Blondheim, Stated Clerk led the next portion of the business meeting.

Motion coming from the Session of First Presbyterian Church of New Philadelphia to extend the term of current Deacon Jackie Stutz in the office of Deacon for the Class of 2026. This is deemed necessary due to lack of qualified or interested individuals to serve.

MOTION Approval to allow Jackie Stutz, a Deacon of First Presbyterian Church of New Philadelphia to serve as Deacon for the Class of 2026. **APPROVED**

Motion coming from the Session of First Presbyterian Church of Perrysville requesting that the Session term limit of no more than six consecutive years (G-2.0404) be waived for Elder Kathy Davis. The Session is requesting that she be allowed to serve for another term ending December 31, 2026. This is deemed necessary due to lack of qualified or interested individuals to serve.

MOTION Approval to allow Elder Kathy Davis of the First Presbyterian Church of Perrysville to serve an additional term as Elder for the Class of 2026 since she has already served two consecutive terms as Elder. **APPROVED**

Motion coming from the Congregation of Christ Presbyterian Church of Canton who met on May 7, 2023, and voted unanimously to accept the planned retirement of Rev. David de Vries effective May 30, 2024, and to begin the process of dissolving his pastoral relationship with the church.

MOTION Approval to accept the retirement of Rev. David de Vries from Christ Presbyterian Church of Canton effective May 30, 2024. **APPROVED**

Following this motion, there was a laying of hands and prayers offered by those present at the meeting for Rev. David de Vries.

Stated Clerk's Report

Rev. Joanne Cox (HR) has transferred to the Foothills Presbytery in South Carolina.

Presbytery Meeting Calendar for 2024

Saturday, February 10, 2024, at 10:00 A.M.

Wednesday, May 22, 2024, at 6:00 P.M.

Saturday, September 21, 2024, at 10:00 A.M.

Wednesday, December 11, 2024, at 6:00 P.M.

We are looking for churches to host, so please let us know if you have any questions on hosting a meeting in 2024.

Session Minutes Review

Two Session Minutes Review Sessions were held for Clerks of Session to have their church's 2022 Session Minutes reviewed. There were six other churches to date whose minutes were reviewed outside of these two sessions. If any other churches are ready to have their 2022 Session Minutes reviewed before the end of 2023, please contact Stated Clerk, Alison Blondheim.

General Assembly 2024 – Salt Lake City, UT - June 29 – July 4, 2024

The Nominating Committee will be presenting the nominations for Teaching Elder Commissioner and Ruling Elder Commissioner to the 2024 General Assembly. and if there are any Youth Advisory Delegate nominations.

Statistics for 2023

It will soon be time to begin preparing your congregation's statistical information for 2023 that will need to be inputted on the Office of General Assembly website. You will go to <https://oga.pcusa.org/section/churchwide-ministries/stats/statistical-reporting-faq/>

Please let Stated Clerk, Alison Blondheim, if you need assistance with any of it. She can provide your User ID and Password. It is important that these be completed each year. The website portal will be open from December 1, 2023, through February 15, 2024, for individual churches. After that, you will need to provide Alison with your statistics so that they can be input.

We will also want your Necrology Report for 2023. This would be any Elders or Deacons that passed away in 2023 that were members of your congregation and any Pastors that are still part of our Presbytery and served or formerly served your congregation. The names will be remembered at our February 10, 2024, MVP Stated Meeting.

Boundaries Training

Reminder to all Pastors (both ordained Teaching Elders and Commissioned Ruling Elders) that if you did not complete Boundaries Training in 2023 due to scheduling conflicts, you will need to complete it in 2024. Synod of the Covenant will again offer the training approximately three (3) times in 2024. This is required every three (3) years per the Book of Order, but Muskingum Valley Presbytery requires it every two (2) years.

Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)

Edith Ophardt, who Chairs CPM reported that the First Call Cohort led by Rev. Ben George continues to meet regularly. She thanked them for leading worship this evening.

Na Yang and Tim Pollock, CRE continue with their seminary M.Div. studies.

There are not enough applicants to begin CRE training in 2024 as originally planned. She again referenced the Elder Enhancement workshops that will be offered by the presbytery beginning in February 2024. Participation in these workshops can be applied toward the CRE program in the future.

Nominating Report

Joan Brode gave the Nominating Report.

The committee would like to place in nomination the following persons:

- 2024 MVP Moderator -Rev. Li "Dolly" Dong
- Moderator Elect – RE Lisa Machar
- Council RE Member at Large – Kathleen Adams
- Council TE Member at Large – Rev. Mary Jane Knapp (HR)
- COM South Region – RE Mark Nutter
- CPM TE – Rev. Chris Stewart
- CPM TE – Rev. Eniko Ferenczy
- Synod Representative (Class of 2026) – Rev. Mary Jane Knapp (HR)
- GA 2024 TE Commissioner – Rev. Deborah Bowsher
- GA 2024 RE Commissioner - TBD
- PJC for the Class of 2030
 - TE Rev. Kathryn Ophardt
 - RE George Brode

MOTION Approve the above-named candidates to serve the Muskingum Valley Presbytery in the designated roles. **APPROVED**

Moderator Jim Arganbright installed Rev. Li “Dolly” Dong as MVP Moderator for 2024 and RE Lisa Machar as Moderator Elect who will serve in 2025.

The Financial Report was presented by Mike Mast, Treasurer. It was received as presented with no additional questions.

The Stated Meeting was adjourned with closing prayer by Moderator Elder Jim Arganbright at 7:30 p.m.

Upcoming MVP 2024 Stated Meetings – SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, February 10, 2024, at 10:00 A.M.

Wednesday, May 22, 2024, at 6:00 P.M.

Saturday, September 21, 2024, at 10:00 A.M.

Wednesday, December 11, 2024, at 6:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Stated Clerk, Alison Blondheim