



Stated Meeting
Wednesday, May 22, 2024
In Person and via Zoom at 6:00 P.M.
Trinity Presbyterian Church, Zanesville, OH

Rev. Deborah Bowsher opened at 6:14 p.m. and welcomed the Presbytery to Trinity Presbyterian Church. The refreshments were provided by the area churches in Muskingum Valley Presbytery.

WORSHIP SERVICE

Rev. Darla Revenaugh opened with a prelude.

Tara Mitchell, CRE led the Call to Worship and Opening Prayer.

Rev. Mark Katrick led the Prayer of Confession.

Rev. Derek Wadlington read the Scripture passage from Luke Chapter 15.

Dr. Matt Aragon Bruce from the Synod of the Covenant offered the message on "The Prodigal Son."

Tara Mitchell, CRE gave the offering prayer.

Rev. Derek Wadlington led the commissioning service of the General Assembly 2024 Commissioners who were Rev. Deborah Bowsher, Teaching Elder and Tara Mitchell, CRE, Ruling Elder.

Communion was presided over by Rev. Deborah Bowsher and Rev. Mark Katrick

Rev. Matt Aragon Bruce offered benediction.

There was a brief break before the business meeting began at 7:45 p.m.

Rev. Li "Dolly" Dong, Moderator, welcomed everyone to the stated business meeting at 7:45 p.m. both in person and via Zoom. She opened with prayer.

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

Motion was made by Rev. Derek Wadlington and seconded by Rev. Mark Unrue to approve the docket as printed on the MVP website. (Appendix 5.22.2024.1)

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

General Presbyter, Rev. Matthew Skolnik (Matt) presented **Moving the Church Forward.**

- Reflections on the Board of Pension Changes

- Need for more leadership in our churches and not downsize as we tend to do.
- Theology of Call
 - Pastor or Elder – ordination and call – external and internal call – fit and congregation – spiritual discipline – what does it look like for a local congregation to have a call.
- Conversations Across the Synod
 - Developing conversations across the various Presbyteries that comprise the Synod of the Covenant. Plans are underway for an overnight gathering of Presbytery leaders later in the summer.

Stated Meeting Minutes

Moderator Rev. Li Dong asked for a **motion** to approve the Muskingum Valley Presbytery stated meeting minutes from February 10, 2024.

MOTION Approval of the stated meeting minutes from February 10, 2024 **APPROVED**

Request from Central Presbyterian Church of Massillon

Motion coming from Central Presbyterian Church of Massillon would like to request permission for Elder Kenn Kanipe to serve a third 3-year term as Elder. He agrees to serve this third 3-year term for continuity of the session during the church transition period.

MOTION Approval of Elder Kenn Kanipe to serve a third 3-year term as Elder of Central Presbyterian Church. **APPROVED**

Approval of Proposed Bylaw:

CHAPTER I: THE PRESBYTERY

Section 1 The Bylaws set forth herein are the provisions for the governance and operation of the Council called Muskingum Valley Presbytery (hereafter “Presbytery”), a member presbytery of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), a Reformed denomination.

Section 2 The Presbytery is a non-profit corporation that is organized and existing under the laws of the State of Ohio and exercises ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the PC(USA) congregations in Ashland, Carroll, Columbiana, Coshocton, Harrison, Holmes, Guernsey, Southern Medina, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Richland, Stark, Tuscarawas, Washington, and Wayne counties.

Section 3 The Presbytery is an organization formed exclusively for religious purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (as amended) and shall be operated exclusively for the religious purposes set forth in the Presbytery’s Articles of Incorporation.

Section 4 These Bylaws shall at all times be subject to the provisions of the Bible and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Applicable provisions in the Constitution shall take priority over any provision in these Bylaws. These Bylaws are also subject to the Ohio Revised Code and the Articles of Incorporation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on file with the Secretary of State.

Motion to replace Chapter 1: The Presbytery - Section 2 with the proposed following wording:

Rationale for the change – After an Office of General Assembly study of maps within all of the Presbyteries in the Synod of the Covenant it was found that our geographical boundaries were off as stated in our current bylaws.

Section 2. The Presbytery is a non-profit corporation that is organized and existing under the laws of the State of Ohio and exercises ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the PC (USA) congregations as follows:

The geographic district of the Presbytery of Muskingum Valley consists of the counties of Ashland, Carroll, Columbiana (the townships of Franklin and Hanover), Coshocton, Guernsey, Harrison (the townships of Franklin, Freeport, Monroe, Morefield, Nottingham, and Washington), Holmes, Medina (the townships of Canaan, Guilford, Rittman City, and Seville Village), Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Richland (excluding the township of Sharon), Stark, Tuscarawas, Wayne, and Washington (excluding the township of Grandview), all in the state of Ohio.

MOTION Approval of the Bylaws Amendment was **APPROVED**.

MOTION to approve the following list of Elders who completed Communion Training so that they can administer the Lord's Supper at their local congregation. **Approved**

Rick Taff - First Presbyterian Church of Minerva

Launa Truxall - First Presbyterian Church of Minerva

Joy Yacklin - First Presbyterian Church of Minerva

Beth Durbin - Church of the Covenant, Canton

Nita Riemenschneider - Church of the Covenant, Canton

Colleen Kelly - First Presbyterian Church of Minerva

Shanna Butler - First Presbyterian Church of Minerva

Eric Taggart - First United Presbyterian Church, Alliance

Marilyn D. Lesk - Seville Presbyterian Church

*Cathy Bigler - Church of the Covenant, Canton

*Mark Nutter - Pioneer Presbyterian Church

*Mike Moran - First Presbyterian Church of Minerva

**Don McDonald - Central Presbyterian Church, Massillon

***Peter Wolfgang - Conesville United Methodist Church

NOTES: *The three names have been previously trained and authorized by Presbytery to Administer the Lord's Supper, but they need new certificates.

**The name has previously been trained and authorized, still has his certificate, but just was going through the training again.

***The name is a Methodist Pastor. He is not a Ruling Elder in the PC(USA) but is going through CRE training.

MOTION Approval to extend the commission of CRE Bonnie Donnelly to serve as a chaplain in the southern portion of Muskingum Valley Presbytery **APPROVED**

MOTION Approval for Rev. Mark Unrue to retire as of December 31, 2024, and to dissolve his pastoral relationship with the Uhrichsville Presbyterian Church as of July 1, 2024. Mark will be serving at Coshocton Presbyterian Church starting in the fall. Terms of Call to be approved soon. **APPROVED**

Those in attendance came up front for the laying on of hands for Rev. Mark Unrue and prayers were offered for his years of pastoral service and upcoming retirement.

Stated Clerk's Report – Alison Blondheim

Session Minutes Review

We will again hold Session Minutes Review sessions for 2023 Session Minutes. These will not be scheduled until later in the summer of 2024. I will need a couple of churches willing to host us, preferably one church in the northern part of the Presbytery and one in the southern half of the Presbytery.

Stated Clerk Travels

I did attend the Board of Pension Meeting in Philadelphia with Rev. Mark Unrue on April 30 and May 1, 2024. I learned a great deal regarding Pastors medical benefits at those two days than what I had known before that. Each congregation that has an installed Minister of Word and Sacrament will need to review the medical coverage for 2025 on a case-by-case basis. We have Luke Choi as our Board of Pensions Representative with us this morning to offer assistance as we navigate this new normal.

Also, I had the opportunity to attend Wooster Westminster Presbyterian Church's 150 Anniversary Celebration on Sunday May 5, 2024. There was a wonderful worship service and then followed by a lovely luncheon.

Administrative Commission with Reedurban

The Administrative Commission with Reedurban Presbyterian Church is in its final stages and will be presenting their final report at the next meeting of Presbytery.

Committee on Ministry Report

See updated Terms of Call (attached Appendix 5.22.2024.2)

There will be a Pastor Connection held on May 29, 2024, at Uhrichsville Presbyterian Church.

There will be an installation service held on Sunday, June 9, 2024, at Christ Presbyterian Church for the installation of Rev. Ben George and Rev. Michael Wallace as designated co-pastors.

Boundaries Training

Synod of the Covenant through LeaderWise will offer a couple of additional Zoom opportunities of Introduction to Boundaries Training for up to 40 participants each in 2024. (This includes training on sexual misconduct but NOT Childhood Sexual Abuse Prevention training.). Here are the dates:

- Saturday September 28, 9:30 am to 4:30 pm
- Tuesday and Wednesday October 15 and 16, 6:00 to 9:00 pm
- Thursday November 7 9:30 am to 4:30 pm
- September 11 and 12 from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm
- October 8 and 9 from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm
- The sign-ups are already available at [Synod of the Covenant — LeaderWise](#), which is linked from our website via [Equipping Leaders | Synod Of The Covenant \(synodofthecovenant.org\)](#).

If you did not take Boundaries Training in 2023, you will need to take it in 2024. This is for all our installed Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Commissioned Ruling Elders serving at a designated ministry, Ministers serving as a long-term Supply Pastor, and Ministers from other denominations serving as a Pastor at one of the churches in MVP.

Elder Enhancements Sessions are going well. Some of the programs may be videotaped. Next one is Saturday, June 8 with the topic of teaching Bible study for lay leaders.

Rev. Mark Unrue spoke on the WEE KIRK Conference 2024 to be held on October 14-16, 2024 at the Laurelville Retreat Center in Mt. Pleasant, PA. This is special this year since Edith Ophardt will be one of the featured speakers at the conference. The conference aims to encourage small churches and provide some rest for their pastors and laity.

Board of Pension Updates – Luke Choi, representative

Luke Choi, area representative from the Board of Pensions presented a PowerPoint presentation on the proposed changes for medical insurance for 2025 for Installed Pastors of Word and Sacrament and other church leaders.

- Covenant Package – non-installed pastors who work at least 20 hours a week but can be offered to any church employee who works 20 hours or more per week – 10% of effective salary.
- Congregational Pastors Package – all installed pastors and CRE's are eligible – at least 20 hours per week- 16% for pastor member only – currently 29% for pastor/family coverage –
- Transitional Package for up to 3 years

- Shared Ministry Program – two congregations share a full-time minister – Positions may be installed or non-installed – Benefits Dues subsidy - 50% of the cost of pastoral benefits – up to a maximum of \$10,000 for 3 years.

For additional information, see the website at www.Seasonofrebuilding.pensions.org

Contact Lchoi@pensions.org

Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)

Edith Ophardt, who Chairs CPM reported on the Elder Enhancement Workshops that began in February and being held at First Presbyterian Church of Uhrichsville. Anyone can register for any of the workshops. Participation in these workshops can be applied toward the CRE program in the future. There is the hope to have enough CRE applicants for a cohort beginning in 2025.

Administration Report

The Financial Report for the period ending April 30, 2024, was presented by Mike Mast, Treasurer. It was received as presented with no additional questions. (Appendix 5.22.2024.3)

The Budget for 7/1/2024 through 6/30/2025 was presented as approved by the Administration Committee. (Appendix 5.22.2024.4)

MOTION Sheila Ellenberger made the motion coming from Council to approve Rev. Matthew Skolnik's Terms of Call for 2024-2025 with a small raise of \$2,500. **APPROVED** (Appendix 5.22.2024.5)

Synod Report

Rev. Matthew Aragon-Bruce who was present at tonight's meeting gave the Synod of the Covenant Report. He thanked MVP's Synod Commissioners who are Rev. Mary Jane Knapp and Frank Walburg. Synod Executive, Rev. Chip Hardwick sent his regrets that he could not be at the meeting. Higher Education scholarships are available through the Synod. He shared his PowerPoint presentation that can be viewed on the Synod website. He will be starting his Cultivating of Preaching program in June 2024 with a week at Alma College in Michigan. He has 23 participants to begin the program from the 11 Presbyteries throughout the Synod. His

The Stated Meeting was adjourned with closing prayer by Rev. Li Dolly Dong, Moderator at 8:50 p.m.

Upcoming MVP 2024 Stated Meetings – SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, September 21, 2024, at 10:00 A.M. at Milton Rittman Presbyterian Church

Wednesday, December 11, 2024, at 6:00 P.M. Canton Christ Presbyterian Church

Respectfully submitted by Stated Clerk, Alison Blondheim