

**MINUTES OF THE STATED MEETING OF  
MUSKINGUM VALLEY PRESBYTERY**

Specially-Called Meeting

**Wednesday, July 30, 2014 (3:00 pm)**

JIM's Place

228 West High Avenue, New Philadelphia, OH



In 1992, the First United Methodist Church of New Philadelphia bought an empty building across the street from the church and renovated it for mission outreach. The former car dealership and shop was renovated to provide a low-cost space for community gatherings and meetings. Through the Clothes Closet, located in the front of the building, approximately 45,000 items of clothing are given away each year. The Lighthouse program brings area teens together for winter and spring dances, and the First UMC congregation's singles ministry also meets at the space. The center's name is an acronym for "Jesus In Ministry," and also honors Jim Reifenschneider, who donated many hours of labor during the lengthy renovation project.



**MUSKINGUM VALLEY PRESBYTERY**

*Journeying with Jesus to touch the World!*

**OUR VISION**

***Journeying with Jesus to touch the world—Empowered by the Spirit  
to Make Disciples, Nurture Our Faith, and Serve the Needs of the Community***

"The Presbyterian form of government set forth in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is grounded in scripture and built around the marks of the true Church. It is in all things subject to the Lord of the Church. In the power of the Spirit, Jesus Christ draws worshiping communities and individual believers into the sovereign activity of the triune God at all times and places. As the Church seeks reform and fresh direction, it looks to Jesus Christ who goes ahead of us and calls us to follow him...." *PCUSA Book of Order F-1.0401*

The July 30, 2014 specially-called meeting of Muskingum Valley Presbytery began with Presbytery Moderator and Commissioned Ruling Elder Tim Pollock (Bloomfield) calling the meeting to order with a reading from Psalm 139 and prayer at 3:18 pm. The docket for the meeting is included at Appendix 1.

It was confirmed that there was a quorum of teaching and ruling elders present, as defined in MVP bylaws, and as verified by the following roll of those who registered their presence:

**THE ROLL**

(Attendance Key: P = Present; E = Excused)

<b>Presbytery Officers</b>		
Moderator	Commissioned Ruling Elder Tim Pollock (Bloomfield)	
Vice Moderator	Teaching Elder Mike Parker (First Ashland)	
Stated Clerk pro tem	Jim Wilson	
Treasurer	Council Elder Joan Brode	
Council Moderator	Teaching Elder David deVries (Christ, Canton)	
General Presbyter	Teaching Elder Deborah Rundlett	

<b>Installed Pastoral Relationships with a Particular Church (AEOD<sup>1</sup> #101)</b>			
Allison, Dennis (Zanesville Trinity)		Morrison Jr., Ray (Zanesville Central)	
Armour, Burnetta (Clark & Millersburg First)		Parker, Mike (Ashland First)	P
Baer, Jennifer (New Harrisburg)	P	Phillips, Alice (Creston)	P
Barnes, Alex (Rittman Milton)		Revennaugh, Darla (Dresden-Madison)	P
Behrendt, Carolyn (Dennison First)	P	Rice, David (Wooster First)	
Carlisle, Jon (Coshocton)	P	Skinner, Suellen (Zanesville Brighton)	P
Coetzee, Andries (Wooster Westminster)	P	Smith, David (Marietta First)	P
DeVries, David (Canton Christ)		Stewart, Christopher (Hopewell & Shreve)	P
George, Benjamin (Minerva First)	P	Unrue, Mark (Uhrichsville First)	P
Holmes, Richard (Canton Northminster)	P	Van Bulck, Marc (Seville)	P
Houston, Tom (North Canton John Knox)		Watt, William (Canton Church of the Covenant)	P
Kaufman, Linda (Plymouth)		Weirich, Anne (New Concord College Drive)	P
Krankovich, David (Carrollton & Scroggsfield)		Wright, Karin (Bellville)	
Lalama, Larry (Massillon Central)			
Leach, Keith (Cambridge First)	P		
McCurdy, Jim (Alliance First United)	P		
Meyer, Bob (Wayne)			
Morrison, Barbara (Deerfield & McConnelsville)	P		

<sup>1</sup> "AEOD" – Authorized Ecclesiastical Occupational Designations per the Presbyterian Church (USA) 2011.

<b>Temporary Pastoral Relationships with a Particular Church (AEOD #105 and 108)</b>			
Baker, Mike (Canton Calvary)		O'Connor, Tom (Beverly)	
Ballantine, Bruce (Wooster First)	P	Pinkowski, Jacquelyn (New Philadelphia First)	
Berger, Tim (High Hills)		Shetzer, Lynn (Cambridge Unity)	P
Birks, Virginia (Dalton)	P	Steele Jr., Rollin (Norwich)	
Gerhart, Andy (Veto)	P	Tate, Terry (North Salem)	
Hale, Ryan (Stillfork, Augusta-Corinth, Mechanicstown)		Thomas, Ellen (New Concord Westminster)	
Hyland, Susan (Senecaville)		Timson, Terry (New Lexington & Roseville)	
Jack, Larry (Cambride East Union)		Walker, Ron (Linden Road)	P
McGlawn, Burt (Carrollton First)			

<b>Ruling Elder Commissioned to a Particular Church (AEOD #107)</b>			
Allmon, Tom (Bethesda & Hanoverton)		Melick, Annie (Alliance First United)	P
Edsall, Donna (Muskingum)	P	Perry, Herb (Zanesville Putnam)	
Gibson, James (Buffalo Cumberland & Rix Mills)	P	Pollock, Tim (Bloomfield)	P
Johanning, Ryan (North Canton John Knox)		Walkerow, Kathleen (Loudonville & Perrysville)	
Hastings, Rick (Barlow & Belpre Pioneer)		Wentworth, Merlin (Antrim & Old Washington)	
McConnell, James (Freeport & Nottingham)			

<b>Member of Another Denomination – Temporary Membership G-2.0506 (AEOD #151 and #158)</b>			
Heskett, Jake (Nankin Federated)		Randas, Jim (Lexington)	
Hutchinson, Charles (Cambridge Mt. Hermon)		Sinnett, Bob (Watertown)	
Kamphuis, David (Duncan Falls)		Svencara, Joe (Waynesburg)	
Lewis, Helen (Sharon)		Walther, Kenneth (Orrville First)	
Mathewson, Peter (Bakersville & Fresno)			

<b>Honorably Retired Member of Presbytery (AEOD #299)</b>			
Barnard, L. Wayne		Keesee, Harold	
Barr, Walter Stuart		Knapp, Mary Jane	P
Barrett, J. Edward		Kress, Cloyd	
Bartow, Don		Lane, John Robert	P
Bean, J. Edgar		McClelland, William	
Berry, Hugh B.		Millspaugh, Robert	P
Briggs, Williams		Naftzger, Roger	
Brown, Keith		Patton, Doug	P
Callihan, Jean		Rila, James	
Collier Jr., James		Russell, John	
Cox, Joanne		Scherpenisse, Richard	
Cureton III, Charles		Schmidt, Sue Ann	P
Dawson, Jack		Schumacher, James	
Dryer, J. Richard		Snyder, Jerry	
Field III, Dudley		Starr, Floyd H	
Fleming, Ron		Sykes, L. Elizabeth	
Fogal, Ralph		Tait, Gordon	
Gooch, Ross		Trubee, Eldon	
Green, Ralph		Watt, James	
Greenwood, Richard		Wereley, Richard	
Hartzfeld, David		Yoder, William	
Holmes, Darrell			

Kearns-Preston, David			
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<b>Presbytery / Synod Councils (AEOD #302)</b>			
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Rundlett, Deborah (General Presbyter)			
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<b>Serving Another Denomination or Non-Denominational Agency (AEOD #501)</b>			
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Bacon, Nancy		Behrendt, Mark	
Bartholomew, Barbara			

<b>Educational Institute (AEOD #641 and #644)</b>			
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Dickson, Sue (Faculty)		Nutt, Rick (Faculty, Muskingum University)	
Morgan-Clement, Linda (Ashland University)	P	Watson, Joanne Ford (Faculty)	
Mullins, Will (Muskingum University & Caldwell First)		Farris, Karol (Muskingum University Intern)	P

<b>Military Services (AEOD #761)</b>			
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Lantz, Diana (Navy Chaplain)			
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<b>Other Validated Ministry and Members-at-Large (AEOD #791 and 797)</b>			
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Arble, Cathleen		Skolnik, Matt	
Bausman-Gray, Wendy		Story, Jim	
Morgan, C. David		Thomas Jr., Herbert	
Pinkowski, Jacquelyn	P	Williams-Neal, Frances	

<b>Council Elders (if not otherwise registered)</b>			
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<b>Parish Elders (if not otherwise registered)</b>			
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Nutter, Mark (Washington/Noble)		Lilley, Deb (Holmes)	P
Westfall, Donna (Coshocton)	P	Ashland/Richland (Vacant)	

<b>Enrolled Enquirers &amp; Candidates</b>			
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Bergeson, Jeff	P		
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<b>Visitors</b>			
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Jirles, Darwin (Cambridge Unity)	P	Lane, Paula (Massillon Central)	P
Jirles, Celeste (Cambridge Unity)	P	Piekarski, Cathy (Marietta First)	P
Friend, Gary (St. John UCC)	P	Ridgeway, Susan (North Canton Northminster)	P
Kellum, Becky (Cambridge Unity)	P	Dicks, Allen (John Knox)	P
Lang, Loren (Hopewell & Shreve)	P	Foster, Cindy (UOUP)	P
Nussbaum, Maggie (Zanesville Trinity)	P	Bate, Terri (Canton Christ)	P
Coetzee, Beth (Wooster Westminster)	P	Ophardt, Edith (Canton Christ)	P
Meadows, Dan (John Knox)	P	Apel, David (Creston)	P
Meadows, Martha (John Knox)	P	Wiles, Richard (Creston)	P
Blondheim, Allison (John Knox)	P	Potter, Lana (Ashland First)	P
Cassady, Robert (New Phila First)	P	Barb Schie (Presbytery staff)	P
McMath, Candice (Presbytery staff)	P	Umberger, Nancy (Cambridge Unity)	P

<b>Ruling Elder Commissioners</b>			
Alliance First		Massillon Central	
Antrim		McConnelsville First	
Ashland First	Michael Hudson	Mechanicstown Corinth	
Augusta Stillfork		Millersburg First	John Etsill
Bakersville		Minerva First	
Barlow		Muskingum	
Bellville		Nankin Federated	
Belpre Pioneer		New Concord, College Drive	
Beverly		New Concord, Westminster	
Bloomfield		New Harrisburg	
Caldwell First		New Lexington	
Cambridge East Union		New Philadelphia First	
Cambridge First	Connie Humphrey	North Canton Covenant	
Cambridge Mount Hermon		North Canton John Knox	Christine Wood
Cambridge Unity	Cindy Krause	North Canton Northminster	Susan Paradis
Canton Calvary		North Salem	
Canton Christ		Norwich	
Canton Reedurban		Nottingham	
Carrollton First		Old Washington	
Carrollton United		Orrville First	
Clark Community		Perrysville First	
Congress Federated		Plymouth First	
Coshocton	Donna Westfall	Rittman Milton	
Creston	Donna McIlvaine	Rix Mills	
Cumberland Buffalo		Roseville	
Dalton	Karol Niehaus	Savannah	
Dennison First		Scroggsfield	
Dresden Madison		Senecaville	
Duncan Falls		Seville	
Fazeysburg		Sharon	
Freeport		Shreve	Deb Lilley
Fresno		Veto	
Hanoverton		Warsaw First	Jim Lawrence
Hanoverton-Bethesda		Watertown	
High Hill		Waynesburg First United	
Hopewell		Wooster First	Yvonne Williams
Lexington		Wooster Wayne	Larry Amstutz
Loudonville First		Wooster Westminster	
Malta Deerfield		Zanesville Brighton	
Mansfield East Hills		Zanesville Central	
Mansfield Linden Road		Zanesville Putnam	
Marietta First	Hank Goehsing	Zanesville Trinity	

The Moderator welcomed the new pastors present at the meeting: Rich Holmes (Teaching Elder, Northminster Presbyterian Church, Canton, Ohio), Donna Edsall (Commissioned Ruling Elder, Muskingum Presbyterian Church), Darla Revenaugh (Teaching Elder, HR,

Dresden-Madison Presbyterian Church), and candidate for ordination examination in preparation for a call to Unity Presbyterian Church in Cambridge, Ohio Jeff Bergeson.

Opening worship was led by Teaching Elders Andries Coetzee and Andy Gerhart, both of whom served as Commissioners to the 221<sup>st</sup> General Assembly. The Order of Worship for this meeting was modified from a service utilized at GA and is attached to the minutes as Appendix 2.

After worship, the Moderator introduced the Chair of Parish Elders, Teaching Elder Chris Stewart. Rev. Stewart presented Bob Baird, chair of the PNC at Unity Cambridge. Bob gave an introductory statement on behalf of Jeffrey Bergeson, and officially presented the recommendation of the PNC that Jeff be ordained for ministry at Unity. His ordination materials are presented as Appendix 3.

Jeff gave a personal introduction and read his statement of faith. He then answered questions from the floor of presbytery. The motion was made to close questions for the examination and passed unanimously by voice. Bergeson was excused from the meeting while Rev. Stewart, on behalf of Parish Elders, made the motion to approve Jeff Bergeson as a candidate to be ordained as a Teaching Elder in the PC(USA), after which time he will be installed at Cambridge Unity Presbyterian Church. As this motion was already passed by Parish Elders, it did not require a second. The ordination is to be held at Unity Presbyterian Church in Cambridge, Ohio on August 31, 2014.

The motion was made to close discussion and move to a vote, and passed unanimously by voice. The motion presented by Chris Stewart on behalf of Parish Elders passed unanimously by voice, and the candidate was greeted with applause upon his return to the meeting. The doxology was sung and a prayer was offered by Moderator Tim Pollock with laying on of hands for Bergeson.

At 4:00, a brief recess was taken for members of Presbytery to get refreshments and to congratulate Bergeson on passing his examination. At 4:15, Teaching Elder Andy Gerhart called the meeting back into order and began the discussion of the Commissioners experiences with the 221<sup>st</sup> General Assembly and the outcomes thereof. Each commissioner (Coetzee, Gerhart and Elder Yvonne Williams) presented their views and experiences. All who attended the meeting received a copy of "The Assembly in Brief," attached as Appendix 4.

Gerhart broke those attended into small groups by table to allow a half hour for discussions among themselves regarding the impact of GA on their congregations. The small groups presented their discussions to the large group and a variety of viewpoints

were presented. Teaching Elder Barbara Morrison (Deerfield & McConnelsville) extended thanks to commissioners for their work that was met with applause.

Those assembled acknowledged that the impact of the 221<sup>st</sup> General Assembly will continue to be felt and dealt with. Moderator Tim Pollock made the motion to close the meeting with prayer at 5:35 pm. It passed unanimously.

These minutes prepared by Ministry Coordinator Candice McMath.

## The Presbytery Gathers for Business

**July 30, 2014 - 3:00 pm**

*JIM's Place*

*228 West High Avenue, New Philadelphia, OH 44663*

**3:00 pm**      Registration

### **The Presbytery Gathers with Prayer**

Call to Order with Prayer

Pastor Tim Pollock,  
Moderator

### **The Presbytery at Work and Service**

**3:15 pm**      Examination of Jeffrey Bergeson for ordination as he accepts his call to Unity Presbyterian Church in Cambridge, Ohio;

Parish Elders

**4:30 pm**      A conversation to allow the Commissioners from MVP to the 221<sup>st</sup> General Assembly of the PC(USA) to debrief the presbytery on their experience and create the means by which to engage the presbytery in conversation around the decisions coming out of GA 221.

GA Commissioners:  
Pastor Andy Gerhart  
  
Pastor Dries Coetzee  
  
Elder Yvonne  
Williams



## Appendix 2: Order of Worship

The following liturgy is adapted from the Opening Worship of the Standing Committees of  
221st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on Sunday, June 15, 2014

### **CALL TO WORSHIP – FROM I CORINTHIANS 12**

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;  
and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord;

**and there are varieties of activities,**

**but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.**

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. . . .

**If one member suffers, all suffer together with it;**

**if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.**

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

**With glad and grateful hearts, we come together to worship, work and witness together as the leadership of the 221st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA).**

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

In the gift of this new day,

in the gift of the present moment,

in the gift of time and eternity intertwined

let us be thankful

let us be attentive

let us be open to what has never happened before,

in the gift of this new day,

in the gift of the present moment,

in the gift of time and eternity intertwined.

**Amen.**

## CANDLE LIGHTING

### HYMN #386 – “COME WORSHIP GOD” – STANZA 1

*Come, worship God, who is worthy of honor;  
enter God's presence with thanks and a song!  
You are the rock of your people's salvation  
to whom our jubilant praises belong.*

**SCRIPTURE: Romans 15:13** (Read 3 times: one voice, **all voices**, one voice)

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**REFLECTING ON SCRIPTURE:** What is Paul's message to you as we consider the work of the 221st GA?

### HYMN #386 – STANZA 2

*Ruled by your might are the heights of the mountains;  
held in your hands are the depths of the earth.  
Yours is the sea, yours the land, for you made them,  
God above all gods, who gave us our birth.*

**OUR VALUES:** That the common life of the whole church, as evidenced in our meetings, may reflect the mind of Christ, demonstrating consolation, spiritual sharing, compassion and sympathy... We yearn to be in full accord and strive to model the faithful, obedient, humble

and self-emptying witness of Jesus Christ.

**REFLECTING ON OUR VALUES:** How do you hope the worship, work and witness of our Presbytery will reflect this value?

### HYMN #386 – STANZA 3

*We are your people, the sheep of your pasture;  
you are our Maker, and to you we pray.  
Gladly we kneel in obedience before you;  
great is the one whom we worship this day!*

**OUR VALUES:** May our engagement with one another in the ministry of the gathered church reflect the transforming love of God, enabling us to discern God's will together. May we use our gifts on behalf of

one another and the world, giving glory to God. May we love genuinely and hold fast to all that is good. May we rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering and

persevere in prayer. May we live in harmony with one another.

**REFLECTING ON OUR VALUES:** As you engage with your sister and brother considering the work of the 221<sup>st</sup> General Assembly, how do you hope our Presbytery's time together today might reflect the transforming love of God, enabling us to discern God's will together?

#### **HYMN #386 - STANZA 4**

*Now let us listen, for you speak among us;  
open our hearts to receive what you say.  
Peace be to all who remember your goodness,  
trust in your word, and rejoice in your way!*

#### **LITANY OF HOPE FOR THE 221ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Eternal and gracious God, as we reflect and act as Muskingum Valley Presbytery on the work of the 221<sup>st</sup> General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA), we offer you thanks and praise.

We give you thanks for

our faith in your sovereign love,

guiding and grounding our prayers and deliberations,

**and this opportunity for new and renewed friendships,**

**confessing that we are the body of Christ together.**

Pour out your Holy Spirit anew we pray, that

our common life reflects the mind of Christ,

seeking God's guidance through our worship, prayer, discernment and action,

**and our engagement with each other demonstrates the transforming love of God,**

**enabling us to discern God's will together.**

Lead us beyond our private concerns and petty perspectives,

that our experience together centers on

learning from Presbyterians and many others across the United States

and around the world,

**discovering God's presence through worship, devotions, fellowship  
and Christ-centered conversations,**

witnessing with joy and thanksgiving the emergence of new leaders for the church,

**making decisions through contemplation, prayer and heartfelt sharing,  
centered on the call of Christ,**

and growing in our personal and churchwide understanding of God's will and ways.

In our life together, give us the courage

to participate in discussion, deliberation and discernment

in ways that are fair and honest and open,

**to be quick to listen and not so quick to speak,**

to engage with one another in love, humility and grace,

**and to proclaim with clarity and determination**

**the great good news of the Gospel.**

Through our time together, grant anew that

this meeting may represent the bond of union, community and mission

among all the congregations and councils of our church

**to the end that the whole church becomes**

**a community of faith, hope, love and witness,**

**to the glory of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.**

**Amen.**

#### **CLOSING HYMN #410 – "GOD IS CALLING THROUGH THE WHISPER"**

*God is calling through the whisper  
of the Spirit's deepest sighs,  
through the thrill of sudden beauties*

*that can catch us by surprise.  
Flash of lightning, crash of thunder;  
hush of stillness, rush of wonder:  
God is calling—can you hear?  
God is calling—can you hear?*

*God is calling through the voices  
of our neighbors' urgent prayers,  
through their longing for redemption  
and for rescue from despair.  
Place of hurt or face of needing;  
strident cry or silent pleading:  
God is calling—can you hear?  
God is calling—can you hear?  
God is calling through the music  
of sublime and human arts,  
through the hymns of earth and angels,  
and the carols of our hearts.  
Lift of joy and gift of singing;  
days and nights our praises bringing:  
God is calling—and we hear!  
God is calling—and we hear!*

## **BENEDICTION/BLESSING**

Approach this gathering filled by the God of hope with all joy and peace in believing!

**We go abounding in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Alleluia! Amen!**

And may the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

**And also with you. (*Signs of peace may be shared with your neighbors.*)**

## **RESOURCES:**

The Prayer of the Day is from *Sounds of the Eternal* by John Philip Newell.

The questions for Reflection are based on the Values Statement contained in the Report of the Committee to Review Biennial Assemblies.

The Litany of Hope was crafted by The Rev. Glen Bell, Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Sarasota, FL, and member of the Committee to Review Biennial Assemblies

## Appendix 3: Bergeson Ordination materials

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### **Jeff Bergeson's Biographical Statement for the Muskingum Valley Presbytery**

I was born and raised in Connecticut. My parents have been divorced for most of my life. Growing up, I primarily lived with my dad and step-mom. I have an older sister, a younger sister, and two younger half-siblings. My siblings and I were all raised as Christian Scientists, and I believed and practiced the teachings of Mary Baker Eddy my whole life up through high school. College was a time of moratorium for me. More out of apathy than intentional decision, I began to drift away from Christian Science. Then, just after my sophomore year, during the summer of 2001, I was in the proverbial pit. I had returned to Connecticut for the summer, but my then girlfriend from Ohio Wesleyan University (OWU) broke up with me. I was devastated. To make a long story short, by the grace of God through a co-worker sharing the gospel with me, I accepted Jesus Christ that summer.

In the Fall, I returned to campus with my newfound faith but no direction. God provided by immediately connecting me to CCO (Coalition for Christian Outreach) Campus Ministry staff at OWU. Through their faithfulness and commitment to discipling students, I grew in my faith by leaps and bounds. Among other things, they taught me that all things belong to God, and God is redeeming every area of life (cf. Col 1:15-20). I was hungry to learn how to follow Jesus, and they showed me what it looked like to begin thinking about living faithfully in all areas of life.

I was baptized in January of 2003, I graduated in May of 2003, and got engaged to a godly Christian woman that July. Kelly and I married in 2004, and we moved to the Boston area for my wife to pursue a Master's degree in Social Work. Through our involvement in a local congregation there and my own personal reading and discussions, I continued to grow. As my wife was completing her degree, we sensed God's call for me to campus ministry. I was hired by the CCO in 2006, and we moved back to Ohio. Throughout those four years of campus ministry at Kenyon College (2006-2010), God molded me in ways I had not anticipated when I began, teaching me to trust him, and shaping me for pastoral ministry. The Holy Spirit has continued to cultivate my faith and prepare me for pastoral ministry during my time at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, both through the seminary and others. I did not take for granted my time at seminary. I was very intentional about trying to balance work and family, not wanting to neglect either, which is why I was a full-time student on the four-year-plan, instead of the three-year-plan. I love Jesus, and I want to glorify him in all my work, play, rest and relationships.

My wife and I are happily married and just celebrated our ten-year anniversary. Our marriage is rooted in Jesus Christ and his love for us. We have learned much about faithfulness and forgiveness during our time of marriage. I love my wife very much; she is my best friend and dearest sister in Christ. I look forward to continuing to grow with her in faith and marriage. We have three children. Our first two children were born in Ohio during our years of campus ministry, and our third was born in Pittsburgh during my time in seminary. We have a seven-year-old daughter, a six-year-old son, and a two-year-old daughter. I have learned much about our Heavenly Father and his own loving and gracious dealings with us from my own experience as a father. My children bring me great joy, and it's been amazing to watch them develop and begin to learn of the love of God in Jesus Christ.

I believe Jesus is calling me to be a Teaching Elder. I believe he has given me gifts for just such a calling. I love Jesus, I love people, and I love the Bible. He has given me a heart that loves people and a passion to share his love with them. Essentially, he has given me a pastor's heart. He has also given me the ability to comprehend and bear witness to him. That is, he has given me a preacher's mind. In hindsight, I see that he has been preparing me for this for a long time, but I was first aware of God's call (i.e. inward call) and how he was preparing me for

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pastoral ministry during my time doing campus ministry, at which time I also started to receive confirmation from others (i.e. outward call).

I believe our Lord Jesus has called me to love his Church and to be a shepherd within his Church, preaching his gospel, and calling people to—and showing people how to—follow him in faithfulness, holiness, and humility. Furthermore, I believe that Jesus is calling me to do this as a Teaching Elder in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). I believe the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ has been and will continue to shape me for—and by—this call on my life, to the glory of God our Father. This is not something I am endeavoring to enter into by my own means or desire. I am simply trying to be obedient to my Lord and Savior, and as far as I can tell, he is choosing me to enter this role in and for his Church. While this is daunting, I am joyfully pursuing this call.

#### **Jeff Bergeson's Statement of Faith**

I believe Jesus is Lord, and, therefore, I believe in the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, who, by his Spirit and Word, created everything good and in love. The Triune LORD specially created humans in his image and likeness to rule and care for the world, in relationship with him and in obedience to his holy and loving will. Instead, humans went their own way, and all of creation has suffered the curse because of our sin. God created humans to be in loving, unhindered relationship with him, other humans, themselves, and the rest of creation, but sin has separated us from God, corrupted all of creation, and negatively affects all relationships.

I believe that the Blessed Trinity, who is loving, merciful, holy, and just, was unwilling to let us remain separated from him forever or to ignore human sin. Therefore, the LORD set in motion his plan of salvation for the world and called out a covenant people for himself. Through this people, and in the fullness of time, God the Father sent his only Son to be born of a woman by the power of the Holy Spirit, and to live, die, and rise from the dead. The Lord Jesus' incarnate life and amends-making death on the cross demonstrates God's righteousness, grace and his great love for us, and makes it possible for humans to be reconciled to God the Father, saved and forgiven of sins, and justified by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. His resurrection brings us new life now and assures us of the future resurrection. His ascension to the Father's right hand raised up our human nature to the very throne of God, where, even now, Jesus intercedes for us and makes it possible for humans to receive the Holy Spirit sent in his name by the Father.

I believe that the Holy Spirit dwells in, teaches, guides, convicts, and sanctifies all who believe in Jesus Christ, confessing him as their Lord and Savior and believing in his salvific death and resurrection. The Holy Spirit binds the "one, holy, catholic and apostolic" Church together by uniting us with Christ, baptizing us into Jesus' death and raising us to new life in Christ, incorporating believers as the Body of Christ with Christ Jesus as our Head, through whom alone we may approach the Father as our Father by the Spirit and join in the communion of saints proclaiming the Lord's death until he comes again and participating in the divine life, love, and on-going mission of the Trinity in and to the world. I believe that Jesus will return in glory to judge the living and the dead, to completely nullify the curse and its effects, to bring about the consummation of his redeeming work on the cross, and fully usher in his eternal Kingdom on earth.

## Appendix 4: The Assembly in Brief



**THE ASSEMBLY  
IN BRIEF**

221st General Assembly (2014) of the  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
June 14-21, 2014

@PresbyGA #ga221 vimeo.com/pcusaoga pcusa.org/ga221

Spirit of GA

### The Assembly of Yes ... mostly

The 221st General Assembly (2014) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (GA221) will most likely go down in history as one that said “yes” on a number of controversial issues that have been before various Assemblies without resolution.

GA221 took purposeful action on the questions of same-gender marriage, divestment from companies pursuing non-peaceful business practices in Israel-Palestine, including the Confession of Belhar in the *Book of Confessions*, and reorganizing and revitalizing synods.

The 654 commissioners spent a great deal of time crafting messages and means for interpreting their actions, emphasizing the importance of individual conscience in Presbyterian polity, and devising plans for church leaders to visit all 171 presbyteries to seek as much reconciliation as is possible in a deeply divided church.

And they chose a leader with conciliatory style and a ready smile.



Ruling Elder Heath Rada of Western North Carolina Presbytery was elected Moderator of the Assembly on the first ballot. Rada, who is retired and living in Montreat, N.C., is a former president of the Presbyterian School of Christian Education in Richmond, Va., and former chief executive officer of the Richmond branch of the American Red Cross. A skilled mediator, Rada told the Assembly: “We need to find ways for people to live together and disagree. A mediator can help find significant common ground.”

Rada’s Vice-Moderator is the Reverend Larissa Kwong Abazia, a Chinese-American pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Forest Hills, a multicultural, multiethnic congregation in Queens, N.Y. She echoed Rada’s-and the Assembly’s-call for reconciliation. “If we can share our stories so we can learn and build relationships, we won’t feel so isolated or disconnected from the larger church,” she said.



## 'Yes' to divestment from three U.S. companies

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Commissioners voted 310-303 (51%-49%) to divest from three companies whose business practices the Assembly determined are contributing to non-peaceful pursuits in Israel-Palestine. The companies are Caterpillar, Hewlett-Packard, and Motorola Solutions.

A similar measure was defeated by the 2012 Assembly 333-331. The Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee has been attempting corporate engagement with the three companies, without success, since an action by the 2004 General Assembly.

The Assembly emphasized that the vote was not a vote to divest from Israel and did not represent in any way endorsement of the more controversial BDS (boycott, divestment, sanctions) Movement and in a preamble added to the divestment action said:

*"The PC(USA) has a long-standing commitment to peace in Israel-Palestine. We recognize the complexity of the issues, the decades-long struggle, and the pain suffered and inflicted by policies and practices of both the Israeli government and Palestinian entities. We further acknowledge and confess our own complicity in both the historic and current suffering of Israelis and Palestinians [yearning for justice and reconciliation.]"*

②

## 'Yes' to same-gender marriage: pastoral discretion and a new definition

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By a vote of 371-238 (61%-39%), the Assembly approved an "authoritative interpretation" of section W-4.9000 of the Book of Order to grant pastors discretion in determining whether or not to conduct same-gender marriages in civil jurisdictions where such marriages are legal. The ruling, which currently applies to 19 states and the District of Columbia, effectively removes a ban on Presbyterian pastors conducting marriages for same-gender couples in those jurisdictions that was imposed by an authoritative interpretation issued by the 1991 General Assembly. The authoritative interpretation takes effect immediately.

The Assembly also proposed an amendment to W-4.9001 that would change the constitutional definition of marriage from "between a man and a woman" to "two people, traditionally [between] a man and a woman." The vote on the proposed amendment-which goes to the denomination's 171 presbyteries for ratification during the next year-was 429-175 (71%-29%). (cont'd on p.3)



Jeff Bridgeman and Rebecca Tollefson, moderator and vice moderator of the Committee on Civil Union and Marriage Issues- by Danny Bolin

(same-gender cont'd)

The dual actions came after the 2010 Assembly appointed a special committee to study marriage issues for two years. The 2012 Assembly then called for an additional two years of churchwide study.

The Assembly was careful to protect the consciences of pastors on both sides of the issue, including protective language in both measures. A clause in the proposed amendment states:

*"Nothing herein shall compel a teaching elder to perform nor compel a session to authorize the use of church property for a marriage service that the teaching elder or the session believes is contrary to the teaching elder's or the session's discernment of the Holy Spirit and their understanding of the Word of God."*

### 'Yes' to the Belhar Confession

The Assembly voted 551-87 (86%-14%) to send the Confession of Belhar-which has its roots in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa in the 1980s-to the 171 presbyteries for their votes to include it the PC(USA)'s Book of Confessions.

The confession-which addresses justice, reconciliation, and unity-must now be approved by two-thirds of the presbyteries and then by the 2016 General Assembly for it to become part of the denomination's doctrinal statements. The 2010 Assembly approved Belhar 525-150, but it failed to gain approval by the presbyteries, falling eight votes short (108-63) of the required super-majority.

### 'Yes' to new synod boundaries

The Assembly voted 449-128 (78%-22%) to reduce the number of PC(USA) synods from 16 to between 10 and 12, including the Sinodo Boriquén in Puerto Rico. It will be up to synods and the presbyteries that comprise them to decide where the new boundaries are drawn and which services each synod will provide.

The recommendation is based on a report from the second of two Mid Councils Commissions that have been addressing the role and function of synods-and presbyteries to a lesser extent-since 2010. The 2012 General Assembly, responding to the first of the commissions, rejected a proposal that synods be eliminated as ecclesiastical units of the PC(USA). The second commission recommended that synods be reduced "to no more than eight."

Synods and their presbyteries were directed to reconfigure synod boundaries "based on an emerging sense of purpose, partnership, context, and call."The Assembly concluded:

*"... Synods continue to have a vital role within our life as a denomination. However, the time has come for fewer synods within a structure of mutual accountability that encourages each synod to discern God's call to find its unique role in affirming the creativity that already resides in our mid council system."*



Commissioners in small groups before difficult votes were made. - by Danny Bolin

## 'Yes' to leaders of General Assembly agencies

The Assembly confirmed the elections of Presbyterians to head three of the national agencies of the PC(USA):

- Ruling Elder Linda Valentine was confirmed to an unprecedented third, four-year term as Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. A former corporate attorney in Chicago, she is a member of Highland Presbyterian Church in Louisville.
- The Reverend Tom Taylor was confirmed to a second, four-year term as president and CEO of the Presbyterian Foundation. A former pastor in southern California, Taylor also served as deputy executive director for mission for the Presbyterian Mission Agency.
- Ruling Elder Frank Spencer, a candidate for ordination as a teaching elder in the PC(USA), was confirmed as the new president and CEO of the Board of Pensions. He was most recently executive director for Habitat for Humanity in Charlotte, N.C.



Linda Valentine, Executive Director of PMA - by Michael Whitman

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## 'Yes' to PC(USA)'s continuing commitment to peacemaking

The Assembly sent five "affirmations" related to the PC(USA)'s commitment to peace and non-violence to the presbyteries for their comments and advisory opinions. The affirmations, developed by the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, are part of a six-year churchwide peace discernment process initiated by the 2010 General Assembly.

The affirmations uphold the essential role of peacemaking for Christians, confess Christian complicity in the world's violence, reclaim Christ's authority as the Prince of Peace, and commit the church to non-violent responses to conflicts in daily living, communities, and the world.

In other peacemaking issues, the Assembly:

- Declared its opposition to targeted killings by drones unless due process is followed and called on the U.S. Congress to pass legislation that would restrict the use of drones;
- Urged the U.S. government to lift all restrictions on travel to Cuba by U.S. citizens and requested the Obama administration to remove Cuba from the list of state sponsors of terrorism;
- Called for development of a policy addressing human trafficking around the world as a human rights issue to monitor the status of companies that have signed the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism;
- Addressed conflict zones around the world, including Egypt, Syria, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Western Sahara.

## 'Yes' to preventing gun violence

Measures to prevent gun violence won resounding approval by the 221st General Assembly (2014).

By consent, the Assembly voted to address gun violence by calling for:

- Formation of support, healing, and advocacy groups for those who have experienced gun violence;
- Opposition to legislation that exempts gun manufacturers and marketers legal liability and financial accountability for medical and security costs "of predictable gun misuse";
- Opposition to "stand your ground" and other legislation that entitles gun owners to shoot before taking alternative measures "in perceived defense of persons or property";
- Encouraging sessions and PC(USA) entities to declare their premises and gatherings "gun-free zones";
- Raising the age for handgun ownership to 21;
- Supporting legislation to ban semiautomatic weapons, armor-piercing handgun ammunition, and large caliber rifles; and
- Advocacy in support of federal and state legislation to regulate ammunition.

On other social justice issues, the Assembly:

- Approved 425-170 (71%-29%) a statement of principles and recommendations on justice in taxation, including resources for study, from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy entitled, "Tax Justice: A Christian Response to a New Gilded Age," offering recommendations seeking a fairer tax system in the U.S.
- Rejected 465-133 (78%-22%) an

committee to review the PC(USA)'s policies on abortion and to propose new policies if needed;

- Approved 317-260 (55%-45%) an overture calling for a two-year churchwide study to discern how to advocate for more effective drug policies in the U.S.
- Approved by consent measures to call for a national moratorium on the death penalty; a study of end-of-life issues; measures to promote "food sovereignty"-The right of all people "to safe, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food and food-producing resources"; affirming the importance of prenatal and post- birth nutrition; adoption by presbyteries and denominational agencies of more generous parental leave policies; and "actions to counter a new wave of voter suppression."

## Working for the common good with people of other faiths

By a hand vote the Assembly approved a policy statement entitled "The Interreligious Stance of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)." The policy states that the denomination "at all levels will be open to and will seek opportunities for respectful dialogue and mutual relationships with entities and persons from other religious traditions. It does this in the faith that the church of Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, is a sign and means of God's intention for the wholeness of all humankind and all creation."

The Assembly rejected-506-72 (88%-12%)-an overture calling for the creation of materials that would distinguish between the biblical land of Israel and the modern State of Israel.

## 'Study' to fossil fuel divestment

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The Assembly voted 469-110 (81%-19%) to refer an overture that would have called for divestment from all fossil fuel companies within five years. The Assembly instead referred the measure to the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee, which has engaged companies over their corporate behavior on behalf of the PC(USA) for 30 years. Under the MRTI rubric, divestment has historically been the action of last resort after other corporate engagement efforts have failed.



## 'Educate a Child, Transform the World'

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Presbyterians were called on by the Assembly to provide quality education to 1 million children in the U.S. and around the world in the next four years as a way to alleviate poverty, especially for women and children.

The initiative, co-sponsored by World Mission and Compassion, Peace and Justice Ministries of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, has already attracted support. The Reverend Tim Hart-Andersen, pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Minneapolis, announced his church, along with Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago and Second Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis, had pledged \$1.65 million to the Educate a Child initiative's effort in South Sudan.

The Assembly approved a second Presbyterian Mission Agency initiative, "Living Missionally," which encourages PC(USA)

⑥ congregations to engage in mission activities beyond their walls.

And the Assembly celebrated the continuing success of the "1001 New Worshiping Communities" initiative. More than 240 such communities have registered since the initiative was launched at the 2012 General Assembly. Presbyteries were encouraged to propel the movement by conducting educational and training events and every presbytery was asked to start at least one new worshiping community during the next two years.

## Peacemaking Offering expanded

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By a hand vote, the Assembly voted to retool the annual Peacemaking Offering after 2016 to include global witness. Since its inception 20 years ago, the Peacemaking Offering has been designated for the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program.

By including world mission efforts in the retooled offering—which will be called the Peace and Global Witness Offering—the PC(USA)'s Special Offerings Task Force hopes to make greater progress toward the church's goal of roughly doubling receipts from the four special offerings—Peacemaking, Christmas Joy, One Great Hour of Sharing, and Pentecost—to \$20 million by the year 2020.



## The Bottom Line

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Actions taken during the Assembly added \$295,119 to the General Assembly mission budget for 2015 and \$68,418 for the 2016 budget. Therefore, the Assembly approved revised mission budgets for the two years of \$73,671,744 and \$78,226,389 respectively. The 2016 budget is higher because in that year the next Presbyterian Youth Triennium will be held, drawing thousands of Presbyterian young people to the campus of Purdue University in Indiana.

Similarly, other Assembly actions added \$14,800 to the 2014 per capita budget, \$124,945 to the 2015 budget, and \$61,165 for 2016. As a result, the Assembly voted to increase the per capita apportionment by five cents each of the next two years-to \$7.07 per member in 2015 and to \$7.12 in 2016.



Commissioners speak to various issues at the Assembly - by Michael Whitman



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