

**Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky
Called Meeting Minutes
January 17, 2024
Beechmont Presbyterian Church
417 W. Ashland Ave., Louisville KY 40214**

The moderator, Rev. Christine Coy Fohr, opened the meeting with prayer.

First time Ruling Elders and guests were introduced.

There were no corresponding members to seat.

Teaching Elders Present: S. Barnes, D. Bush, A. Earley, J. Edlin, M. Eldred, C. Fohr, A. Gage, M. Galvan-Valle, J. Garrett, J. Gingerich, A. Hartmans, R. Hogle, J. Kim, J. Kubar, P. Lloyd-Sidle, G. Meester, K. Ockels, J. Odom, A. Pomerville, R. Spencer, J. Van Marter, B. Stewart, T. Vandergriff, E. Zavala

Ruling Elders Present: A. Bloos (Bardstown Road), R. Charles (Peace), G. Cohen (Springdale), M. Hong (Beechmont), S. Hong (Beechmont), L. Rittman (LaGrange), E. Sherby (Beechmont), A. Stoess (Pewee Valley), D. White (Shawnee), G. Zavala-Sherby (Beechmont)

Visitors: F. Arzino, I. Beasley, A. Kris, J. Rittman, M. Sherby

Rev. Marissa Galvin-Valle welcomed the presbytery to Beechmont Presbyterian Church.

Rev. Jerry Van Marter, Stated Clerk, advised the moderator that a quorum was present. The moderator declared a quorum. The roll was established as follows:

The moderator called on the stated clerk to review the docket.

4:45 p.m. Registration

5:00 a.m. Gathering All Together – Moderator Christine Coy Fohr

- Opening prayer
- Welcome to our first time Ruling Elders and Guests
- Welcome and seating of any Corresponding Members
- Welcome from the host church
- Declaration of a quorum and approval of the docket.

5:10 p.m. Consent Agenda (from Church Administration Committee)

FOR ACTION: Approve four proposed amendments to the Constitution of the PC(USA) and forward them to the 225th General Assembly for action:

1. On amending G-2.0505a (extending maximum term of temporary pastors from 12 to 36 months)

2. On amending G-3.0306 (membership of non-retired ministers)
3. On amending G-2.0504a (terms of service for installed pastors)
4. On amending G-2.0503 (requires all non-retired clergy to keep an active Personal Discernment Profile, or PDP, in the Church Leadership Connection system).

Note: any proposed amendment pulled from the consent agenda will be considered immediately following the examination of Ellen Sherby.

5:20 p.m. Commission on Ministry report: the examination of candidate Ellen Sherby for ordination as Minister of Word and Sacrament.

FOR ACTION: to approve Ellen Sherby for ordination as a Minister of Word and Sacrament.

6:30 p.m. Closing prayer and adjournment: (if the consent agenda is approved, the closing prayer of Ellen Sherby's examination will be the closing prayer for the meeting).

The Stated Clerk reviewed the docket and explained that the overtures presented by the Church Administration Committee would need to be approved, concurred, and submitted by February 26, 2024. This would have been enough time to approved the overtures at the February 24 presbytery meeting; however, this would not have allowed time to get concurrences to the overtures by a second presbytery in time for submission. Therefore, this was the reason it was decided to add the overtures to the earlier called meeting in order to allow time for concurrence.

The Consent Agenda:

The moderator brought forward the consent agenda. The following items were removed from the consent agenda by members:

2 - On amending G-3.0306 (membership of non-retired ministers)

4- On amending G-2.0503 (requires all non-retired clergy to keep an active Personal Discernment Profile, or PDP, in the Church Leadership Connection system).

1 - On amending G-2.0505a (extending maximum term of temporary pastors from 12 to 36 months)

3 - On amending G-2.0504a (terms of service for installed pastors)

All four items were removed from the consent agenda.

There was a motion to approve the docket with these changes. There was a second. The motion was approved.

Examination:

The presbytery participated in the "Liturgy for the Examination of a Candidate for Ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament".

The presbytery sang, "God is Here".

The chair of the Commission on Ministry, Marissa Galvan-Valle, invited the candidate, Ellen Shelby, forward.

Ellen prayed for the meeting. She preached before the presbytery using the scripture: Matthew 16:24-26. Ellen shared a brief word of her faith journey and hopes for sharing in ministry as she moves forward.

The presbytery examined the candidate. There was a motion to arrest the examination. There was a second to the motion. The motion was approved.

The candidate was excused from the meeting.

On behalf of the Commission on Ministry, Marissa moved to ordain the candidate, Ellen Shelby, as a Minister of Word and Sacrament.

There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously. The candidate was invited back into the meeting. There was celebration. There was a prayer for Ellen, and thanksgiving for her work and gifts.

The presbytery took a break and then returned to order.

Church Administration Committee:

The Church Administration Committee moved the following overture to the 226th General Assembly (2024) for approval:

1) On amending G-2.0503 –

RECOMMENDATION: The Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky overtures the 226th General Assembly to amend G-2.0503 of The Book of Order by adding the following sentence at the end of the section as follows: "All non-retired ministers of word and sacrament shall keep an active Pastor Discernment Profile (PDP) in the Church Leadership Connection system," so the section reads: "A minister of the Word and Sacrament is a member of a presbytery and shall be engaged in a ministry validated by that presbytery, a member at-large as determined by the presbytery, or honorably retired. All non-retired ministers of word and sacrament shall keep an active Pastor Discernment Profile (PDP) in the Church Leadership Connection system."

RATIONALE: All ministers of Word and Sacrament, congregations and presbyteries should be in the constant process of discernment of call and open to the movement of the Holy Spirit. By having all ministers of Word and Sacrament active in the Church Leadership Connection system, transparency in the discernment process is more assured and new possibilities emerge as pastors, PNCs and presbyteries consider the whispers of the Holy Spirit and new calls that had not or expected. If the purpose of the Church Leadership Connection system is to "level the playing field," then universal participation in the Church Leadership Connection system would best achieve that aspiration. Because the CLC offers the best hope for a denomination-wide data base of church employees, universal participation in CLC would give the PC(USA) its best data base. Universal participation in the CLC would standardize the information that every employing agency receives from prospective staff members.

There was discussion.

There was a motion to table this amendment. There was a second to the motion to table. The motion to table was approved by a two-thirds majority.

The Church Administration Committee moved the following overture to the 226th General Assembly (2024) for approval:

2) On amending G-2.0505a –

RECOMMENDATION: The Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky overtures the 226th General Assembly (2024) to amend G-2.0505a of The Book of Order be amended by striking the word “twelve” and replacing it with the word “thirty-six,” so that the section reads: “Titles and terms of service for temporary relationships shall be determined by the presbytery. A person serving in a temporary pastoral relationship is invited for a specified period not to exceed twelve thirty-six months in length, which is renewable with the approval of the presbytery.”

RATIONALE: An increasing number of congregations are being served by temporary pastors. Extending the specified period of service from 12 to 36 months will provide these congregations a stronger sense of stability. It would save both sessions and presbyteries considerable time and paperwork if they did not have to renegotiate a contract every year, giving them more time to attend to the tasks of interim/transitional ministry rather than continuous contract negotiation. Finally, given that the average time that it takes to move a congregation from the end of one pastoral relationship to the start of another pastoral relationship is longer than 12 months, the church should make provision for temporary pastor contracts that are longer than 12 months.

There was no discussion. The motion was approved.

The Church Administration Committee moved the following overture to the 226th General Assembly (2024) for approval:

3 - On amending G-2.0504a –

RECOMMENDATION: The Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky overtures the 226th General Assembly (2024) to amend G.2-0504a of The Book of Order by striking the words “for an indefinite period” and inserting the words “of not fewer than four years or more than eight years, renewable,” so the section reads: “A minister of the word and sacrament may be installed in a pastoral relationship for an indefinite period or a designated term of not fewer than four years or more than eight years, renewable determined by the presbytery in consultation with the congregation and specified in the call.”

RATIONALE: In an era when congregations are experiencing declining membership and church attendance and are thus increasingly stressed financially and pastoral relationships are increasingly fraught, pastors, congregations and presbyteries increasingly need regular, predictable times of discernment. Indefinite terms of pastoral service discourage regular windows of discernment to determine the congregation’s health and vitality and resulting needs and desires for pastoral service. For installed pastors the median term of service is 6 years and 10 months; for associate pastors the median is 5 years and 4 months. Thus, a definite

term of between four and eight years would provide a vast majority of pastors and congregations ample opportunities for ongoing discernment and would set a time parameter that would account for sabbatical leaves (typically after 7 years of service) and would help address the issue of congregations having to de-install pastors due to declining resources.

There was discussion.

There was a motion to table the amendment. There was a second. The motion to table failed.

The main motion also failed.

The Church Administration Committee moved the following overture to the 226th General Assembly (2024) for approval:

4 - On amending G-3.0306 –

RECOMMENDATION: The Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky overtures the 226th General Assembly (2024) to amend G-3.0306 by striking the word “ordinarily” and adding the words “non-retired” so the section reads: “Every non-retired minister of Word and Sacrament shall ordinarily be a member of the presbytery where his/her work is situated or of the presbytery where he/she resides.”

RATIONALE: The underlying issues addressed here are accountability and service to the life of the presbytery. If a minister of Word and Sacrament doesn't live or work in the presbytery of membership, there is little incentive to be an active participant in the life of the presbytery of membership. Being active in the life of the presbytery is both a privilege and a Book of Order requirement of ministers of Word and Sacrament. If there is a disciplinary issue, it is more difficult for a distant presbytery to hold a minister of Word and Sacrament accountable.

Additionally, it is difficult for the presbytery to provide support, resources, and nurture to ministers of Word and Sacrament who neither reside nor work in their presbytery of membership.

There was discussion. The motion failed.

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting. There was a second. The motion to adjourn the meeting was sustained.

The moderator closed the meeting with prayer at 6:55 p.m.

Christine Coy Fohr, Moderator

Jerry Van Marter, Stated Clerk

Andrew Hartmans Recording Clerk