

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PRESBYTERY OF THE MIAMI VALLEY

Tuesday, March 27, 2018

Memorial Presbyterian Church, Dayton, Ohio

The special meeting was convened with prayer at 4:00 p.m., on Tuesday, March 27, 2018, by Ruling Elder Gidget Collins, Moderator, at the Memorial Presbyterian Church, Dayton, Ohio.

LEGEND:

P – Present E – Excused Blank – Absent *Italics* – attendance recorded in more than one category

OFFICERS OF THE PRESBYTERY OF THE MIAMI VALLEY

<i>Ruling Elder Cheryl (Gidget) Collins</i> , Moderator	P
<i>Teaching Elder Margaret Gillespie</i> , Vice Moderator	P
<i>Teaching Elder Kelley Shin</i> , Leadership Council Chair	P
<i>Ruling Elder Larry Hollar</i> , Stated Clerk	P
Ruling Elder Marge Morgan, Recording Clerk	P

TEACHING ELDERS ON ACTIVE ROLL

Adams, Garth		Evans, Michael		Linville, Deborah	P
Allen, Todd		Garrigan, Carmen		Locke, Kenneth	P
Avotri, Solomon		Gillespie, Margaret	P	Maguire, Brian	P
Bain, Marciana		Haddox, Clifford	P	Martin, Christopher	
Baker, Jeri		Haddox, Emily	P	McCormick, Dwight	
Baker, Richard		Hamilton, Susan	E	Neely, John	E
Bartel, Lawrence		Helling, Michael	P	Pelaez-Díaz, Francisco	
Beres, Benjamin		Hernandez, David		Ramsey, Tom	
Birdsong, Nancy		Hess, Lisa		Schenck, Angela	P
Brakemeyer, Randall		Hinds, Kathryn Blocher		Shin, Kelley Wehmeyer	P
Brown, Beau	P	Hodgkins, Nancy		Soards, Marion	
Burslem, Kathleen		Ingram, Steven	E	Sparks-Franklin, Sarah	
Cassedy, Karen	P	Isaacs, Michael	P	Tidwell, Melissa	
Circelli, Diana		Kukuk, Terry	P	Weaver, Denise	P
Dardaganian, Brad		Lawler, Kevin	P	Wiley, Shelley	P
Dennis, Ted	P	Lawrence, Ronald	P	Worthen, Merritt	
Dozeman, Thomas		Lee, Sang Un		Young, Darryll	
Edmonds, Hart	E	Lewis, John		Ziegler, Diane	P

MINISTER MEMBERS FROM DENOMINATIONS IN CORRESPONDENCE

Saari, Aaron		Miller, Herbert	P
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HONORABLY RETIRED TEACHING ELDERS (Excused unless attendance indicated)

Amidon, C. Forrest		Garcia, Nehemias		McConnel, George H.	P
Barr, Judith Dunlap	P	Gerhart, Andrew	P	McNulty, Edward	P
Battin, Barbara		Girbert, David A.		Meyers, JoAnne	
Brown, Edward		Godfrey, Norman		Niece, Linda	P
Conn, Arbuth		Graham, James		Nowak, Jacqueline	P
Creager, Ronald		Hinds, Joe. M III		Philips, William	
Davis-Dudding, Kay		Hookey, Joseph R.		Phleger, Terry	
Edmonds, Cheryl	E	Horrigan, Kevin		Righter, Richard L.	
Edwards, Robert L.		Howard, Kenneth		Schechter, Richard	
Fleming, David L.	P	Kester, Gordon L.		Sheldon, Jocelyn J.	
Foubert, David		Kim, Soo Kwang		Smith, Robert B., Jr.	
Fulton, Robert		Kingsbury, Edwin		Sparks, W. Franklin	

Stewart, Donald M.		Wade, Robert		Yanney, William
Stewart, Raymond	P	Wall, Evan		Zuercher, John
Swaim, Gerald G.		Walthour, William		
Thompson, Glenn E.		Warren, Patrick	P	
Thornton, Jesse		Williams, Russell D.		

ROLL OF CHURCHES (RULING ELDERS PRESENT)

BELLBROOK		DAYTON: SUGAR CREEK		OXFORD
1 – Seiler, Sue	P	1 –		1 –
BELLE CENTER		DAYTON: TRINITY		PIQUA: GOOD SHEPHERD
1 –		1 – Coleman, Gail	P	1 –
BELLEFONTAINE		DAYTON: WESTMINSTER		PIQUA: WESTMINSTER
1 – Day, Bob	P	1 –		1 –
BLUE BALL		2 –		REILY
1 -		3 --		1 –
BRADFORD		EATON: FIRST		RUSHSYLVANIA
1 – Buker, Mike (CRE)	P	1 –		1 -
2 –		FAIRBORN: FIRST		SEVEN MILE
CLIFTON		1 – Seewer, Michael	P	1 – Ault, Lee (CRE)
1 –		FARMERSVILLE: SLIFERS		2 -
COLLINSVILLE		1 -		SIDNEY: FIRST
1 – Gabbard, M. (CRE)		HAMILTON: THE P. C.		1 –
2 -		1 –		SPRINGBORO: COVENANT
COVINGTON		2 -		1 – Ritzinger, John
1 – Schultz, Ron	P	HAMILTON: WESTWOOD		P
DAYTON: BATH		1 -		SPRINGFIELD: COVENANT
1 – Drake, Verna	P	HUBER HEIGHTS: FAITH		1 –
DAYTON: CENTRAL		1 – Adams, Cyndi	P	SPRINGFIELD: NORTHMINSTER
1 –		HUNTSVILLE		1 –
DAYTON: COLLEGE HILL		1 –		TROY: FIRST
1 –		JAMESTOWN		1 –
DAYTON: CORINTH		1 –		2 –
1 – Hamilton, Kim	P	MIDDLETOWN: FIRST		URBANA: FIRST
DAYTON: FAIRMONT		1 –		1 –
1 – Diller, David	P	2 –		WEST LIBERTY
2 – Akers, Terry	P	MIDDLETOWN: ST. LUKE		1 -
DAYTON: IMMANUEL KOREAN		1 -		WILMINGTON
1 -		MONROE		1 – Gillette, James
DAYTON: MEMORIAL		1 –		P
1 -		NEW CARLISLE: HONEY CREEK		XENIA: MEMORIAL UNITED
DAYTON: SOUTHMINSTER		1 –		1 –
1 –		NEW PARIS		XENIA: WESTMINSTER
2 –		1 –		1 –
				YELLOW SPRINGS: FIRST
				1 –

RULING ELDER MEMBERS OF PRESBYTERY

Courtney, Donna (LC)	E	Hollar, Larry (SC)	P	Niece, Don (LC)	P
Collins, Cheryl (Mod)	P	Mauntler, John (LC)	E	Shoemaker, Matt (LC)	
		Mauntler, Marge (CPM)	E	Welborn, Diane (LC)	

CORRESPONDING MEMBERS AND THOSE GRANTED VOICE (not otherwise registered): Ruling Elder Marge Morgan (Recording Clerk); Teaching Elder Nancy Kahaian (Presbytery of Cincinnati); Teaching Elder Aaron Meadows (Eastminster). Also granted voice by presbytery vote were Ruling Elder Marvella Lambright (Dayton: College Hill) and Ruling Elder José LaMont Jones (Dayton: College Hill).

INQUIRERS AND CANDIDATES (not otherwise registered): None

STAFF MEMBERS OF PRESBYTERY (not otherwise registered): Tom Oxley

CALL OF THE MEETING

Today's special meeting was duly called by the Moderator at the request of the Leadership Council (in compliance with the Bylaw requirement that the request come from two teaching elders and two ruling elders from different churches). Pursuant to the presbytery Bylaws, notice was given to all church sessions, Teaching Elders and Ruling Elder members of the presbytery by email and by U.S. Mail on March 16, 2018.

The purpose of the meeting was to request that the presbytery approve two motions related to Overture 052 to the 223rd General Assembly, "On Establishing an Administrative Commission to Address Issues in the Synod of the Covenant—From the Presbytery of Cincinnati." No other matters were in order at this meeting.

REPORT OF THE STATED CLERK: Following the convening prayer by the Moderator, the Stated Clerk attested to a quorum being present, and on motion and second, presbytery approved the roll of the meeting being formed by signatures obtained at registration. The Stated Clerk attested to the call of the meeting, and clarified the purpose and the process to be undertaken at the meeting, with particular attention to the process for concurrence in Overtures to General Assembly. On motion and second, the presbytery seated TE Nancy Kahaian (General Presbyter, Presbytery of Cincinnati and a member thereof) and TE Aaron Meadows (Vice Moderator of Synod of the Covenant and a member of Eastminster Presbytery) as corresponding members, and granted voice to Ruling Elder Marvella Lambright (Dayton: College Hill) and Ruling Elder José LaMont Jones (Dayton: College Hill).

By signatures, the attendance was as follows: twenty-eight (28) teaching elders, one (1) minister member from denominations in correspondence, thirteen (13) ruling elder commissioners (representing twelve (12) churches), and three (3) ruling elder members of presbytery: forty-five (45) voting members. Also present and not otherwise registered were three (3) corresponding members, seven (7) visitors (of whom two were granted voice by presbytery vote), and one (1) staff member of the presbytery. Including duplicate categories, total registered attendance of fifty-six (56).

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL – Teaching Elder Kelley Shin, chair

The chair was recognized and, on behalf of the Leadership Council, offered the following motion:

Motion 1: That the presbytery concur in the following overture to the 223rd General Assembly: Ovt 052, On Establishing an Administrative Commission to Address Issues in the Synod of the Covenant—From the Presbytery of Cincinnati (see *Appendix A for the text of the Cincinnati Overture and Rationale, and Appendix B for the Leadership Council explanation of its position*).

Following opportunity for questions and discussion, including statements by TE Nancy Kahaian and the three representatives of this presbytery to the Synod of the Covenant (Commissioners TE Ronald Lawrence and RE Marvella Lambright (Dayton: College Hill), and the Moderator of the Hispanic/Latino Caucus of the Synod, RE José LaMont Jones (Dayton: College Hill)), Motion 1 was approved by voice vote.

The chair then offered the following motion:

Motion 2: That the presbytery authorize the Leadership Council to appoint an overture advocate to assist in presenting the matter to the assembly committee, and provide sufficient funds from presbytery resources to enable the overture advocate's presence at the General Assembly for that purpose.

Following opportunity for questions and discussion, Motion 2 was approved by voice vote.

All business having concluded, the meeting was adjourned with prayer by the Moderator at 4:37 p.m. The next Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley will be at the Dayton: Sugar Creek Presbyterian Church, 4417 Bigger Road, Kettering, Ohio, on Tuesday, May 8, at 3:00 p.m.

Attest:

APPENDIX A

Overture 052, On Establishing an Administrative Commission to Address Issues in the Synod of the Covenant—From the Presbytery of Cincinnati

The Presbytery of Cincinnati overtures the 223rd General Assembly (2018) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to establish an Administrative Commission to address disorder in the Synod of the Covenant, as provided in G-3.0109b(5) of the Book of Order and Standing Rule K.2. of the Manual of the General Assembly. The Commission, which shall consist of not fewer than seven (7) persons appointed by the Moderator (or Co-Moderators), shall:

1. Conduct Special Administrative Review (G-3.0108b; Standing Rule K.2.) for the purpose of inquiring into and settling the following allegations of disorder:

a. Failure to determine a satisfactory method to fulfill the principles of participation and representation found in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103 in proposed amendments to the by-laws of the Synod, or adequately to consult with the presbyteries and racial-ethnic caucuses of the Synod in the preparation of said by-laws;

b. Failure to adequately support the ministry and mission of its presbyteries as they seek to support the witness of congregations (G-3.0401);

c. Failure to adequately facilitate communication with and among its presbyteries (G- 3.0401a);

d. Failure to adequately exercise pastoral care among its presbyteries in order that the synod may live in the unity represented in the Sacraments (G-3.0401b);

e. Conflict between the Synod Executive and the Racial-Ethnic Caucuses of the Synod, and with the Cabinet on Ethnic Church Affairs of the Synod;

f. Loss of trust and mutuality between the Synod and its constituent presbyteries;

g. Loss of trust and mutuality between the Synod Executive and multiple presbyteries of the Synod;

h. Loss of trust and mutuality between the Synod Executive and the elected and/or administrative leadership of multiple presbyteries of the Synod.

2. In its exercise of Special Administrative Review, and in consultation with the Personnel Services Committee of the Synod, conduct a comprehensive performance review of the Synod Executive, including feedback from Commissioners, Synod Staff, Racial-Ethnic Caucuses, Presbyteries, Presbytery Executives, and others as it may determine helpful to its task; and to direct the Synod regarding the remediation of performance deficiencies, which may include recommendation to terminate employment if it deems the mission of the Synod imperatively demands it.

3. Have full authority to enforce the findings and recommendations of its Special Administrative Review, granting fair notice and an opportunity to be heard to all parties. The process for termination of employment, if recommended, shall conform to the Personnel Policies of the Synod in effect at the time the request for Special Administrative Review was initially filed.

4. Refer to judicial process any irregularities or offenses it may discover in the conduct of its review that cannot be remedied through administrative review.

RATIONALE OF THE PRESBYTERY OF CINCINNATI FOR OVT 052

The Synod of the Covenant is experiencing serious conflict and dysfunction. At its August 2017 Synod Assembly, amendments to the Synod By-Laws were introduced which would have the effect of disempowering and marginalizing the racial-ethnic caucuses of the Synod from the decision-making processes of the Synod. These by-laws were constructed and presented with little, if any, consultation with the persons directly affected, and with no consultation with the presbyteries of the Synod. The given rationale was that "When a synod meets, it shall be composed of commissioners elected by the presbyteries" (G-3.0401), disregarding the Synod's obligation stated in the very same paragraph, "[to] determine a plan for the election of commissioners to the synod, as well as the method to fulfill the principles of participation and representation found in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103; both plans shall be subject to approval by a majority of the presbyteries in the synod" (emphasis added). The proposed by-laws have never been distributed to the presbyteries, nor are they available on the Synod website.

The process seems set up to exclude the very voices synods are charged to protect. The proposed by-laws remove racial-ethnic voices from the council commissioned to make decisions for the body between Assemblies, on which persons elected by the Synod (as opposed to the presbyteries) may legally serve (see Request 90-1, Minutes, 1990, Part I, p. 254).

The process for the proposed amendments to the by-laws reinforces perceptions that they are a response to ongoing conflict between the Synod Executive and the racial-ethnic caucuses of the Synod which comprise the Cabinet for Ethnic Church Affairs (CECA). In defending the proposed by-laws at the August 2017 meeting, the Synod Executive allegedly accused those registering objections as being "greedy for power."

In addition, the qualities of trust and mutuality in the relationships between the presbyteries and the Synod, and presbytery leaders and the Synod Executive, have strained to the point of breaking. The Presbytery of Mackinac was recently blindsided by a request for a called meeting of the Synod to appoint an administrative commission to take original jurisdiction of the presbytery without any prior consultation or inquiry. Only threatened ecclesiastical suits alleging a violation of due process prompted the presentation of a substitute motion limiting the Commission's powers to inquiry only. No rationale, other than the receipt of four anonymous letters - the contents of which were withheld - were presented for the motion in the call.

Several presbyteries, including Maumee Valley, Scioto Valley, and Detroit have withdrawn some or all of their participation in the life of the Synod. Serious conflicts exist between several presbytery executives and the Synod Executive. Recently all five female presbytery executives refused to participate in an executive forum because of conflicts or concerns involving the synod executive.

There are serious, chronic problems in the dissemination of information from the synod to presbyteries and their leaders. Some presbytery executives have been told directly that they are not permitted at Synod Assemblies. Information regarding the timing and location of upcoming Assemblies, as well as agendas and supporting documents, are neither sent to the executives nor posted on the synod website.

At the November 2017 meeting of the Synod, the Personnel Services Committee indicated they had conducted a job performance review of the Synod Executive and a

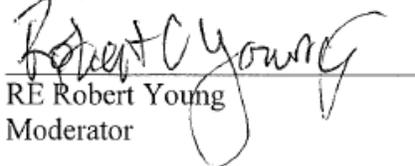
pay raise was being recommended to the Synod on the basis of that review. Email correspondence documentation indicates that the Personnel Services Committee did not meet in 2017, in direct contrast to their report filed in November 2017.

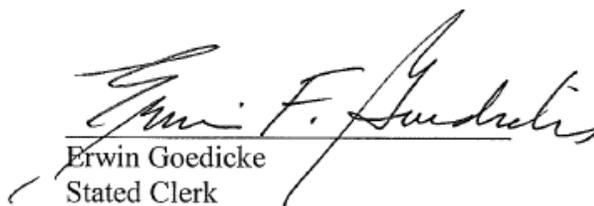
In November 2017, a question was publicly posed to the Chair of the Personnel Services Committee during a Synod meeting, inquiring if that committee would be willing to meet with the presbytery executives of the Synod of the Covenant. A direct response was deferred. The question was presented on additional occasions in email communication subsequent to the November 2017 Synod meeting, and the response from a Synod officer indicated it was inappropriate to make such a request. In addition, in December 2017, a Presbytery Executive requested a meeting between Presbytery Executives and the Synod Executive, and that direct invitation was refused by the Synod Executive.

Due to the severity of the issues involved, we believe time is of the essence in conducting this review.

Adopted by the Presbytery of Cincinnati at its stated meeting held in at Madeira-Silverwood Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati, Ohio, on Saturday, February 24, 2018.

Attest:


RE Robert Young
Moderator


Erwin Goedicke
Stated Clerk

APPENDIX B

EXPLANATION OF THE PRESBYTERY OF THE MIAMI VALLEY LEADERSHIP COUNCIL FOR RECOMMENDING AN AFFIRMATIVE VOTE ON MOTIONS 1 AND 2

Over the past several months, the Leadership Council of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley has become more acutely aware of an on-going and worsening conflict within the leadership of the Synod of the Covenant, a conflict that is deeply affecting the 11 Presbyteries which are part of the Synod of the Covenant, including our own.

The Leadership Council has heard in detail about the dysfunction and conflict at the Synod from the Synod Commissioners from the Presbytery of the Miami Valley, Teaching Elder Ronald Lawrence and Ruling Elder Marvella Lambright, as well as from Ruling Elder José Jones, Moderator of the Hispanic/Latino Caucus of the Synod.

The conflict and disorder at the Synod consists of but is not limited to failures of communication, representation, support, trust, and proper procedure. Specifically the conflict and dysfunction have had the effect of disempowering and marginalizing the racial-ethnic caucuses of the Synod.

The Presbytery of Miami Valley is not alone in experiencing the disorder and disruption at the Synod of the Covenant. Many presbyteries of the Synod have been affected and relationships between presbyteries and the Synod have been broken and some completely destroyed.

The Presbytery of Cincinnati has submitted an overture to the 223rd General Assembly (Appendix A) to form an Administrative Commission to address the disorder in the Synod of the Covenant, and has invited other presbyteries in the Synod to offer a concurrence to this overture. The Presbyteries of Mackinac and Detroit have already concurred in this overture, assuring that the overture will be referred to the General Assembly.

The Leadership Council of the Presbytery of Miami Valley voted unanimously on March 8 to recommend concurrence with the overture and to request that the Moderator of the presbytery call a special meeting of the presbytery under Section 4.02 of the Bylaws for the purpose of voting to concur in this overture from the Presbytery of Cincinnati.

Leadership Council felt strongly that we must show our support of our Synod Commissioners through this action. Thus far the Synod itself has not been able to take effective steps to address the causes of its dysfunctions. Requesting the assistance of an Administrative Commission of the General Assembly, with appropriate authority to act, is the next logical step to make progress in resolving these issues. The overture does not make final judgments or single out any one person or entity as responsible for these issues at the Synod, but invites a thorough Administrative Review to get to the underlying causes and help address them.

Since the 2012 General Assembly approved the requirement that each overture from a presbytery receive at least one concurrence from another presbytery, the Presbytery of the Miami Valley has not actively considered concurring in overtures proposed by other presbyteries. It is an indication of the seriousness of the Synod situation that Leadership Council decided to bring this matter before our presbytery for consideration.

The concurrence that Leadership Council requests the presbytery to approve applies to the overture language itself. While our presbytery could submit additional rationale along with our concurrence, Leadership Council determined that the rationale from the Presbytery of Cincinnati provided adequate grounds for the overture.

Presbyteries concurring in overtures may send one overture advocate to assist in presenting the matter to the assembly committee and to seek support for approval of the overture. If Motion 1 is adopted, Motion 2 would authorize the Leadership Council to appoint a person for that role and provide financial resources for transportation, lodging, meals and other essential expenses to enable that person to carry out the overture advocate duties at General Assembly. Leadership Council would oversee those expenses to ensure prudent use of presbytery resources.