

Informal Summary of Major Actions
Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley
Tuesday, September 8, 2020, 3:00 pm to 5:02 pm
Via Zoom

Documents for this meeting are at http://www.miamipresbytery.org/pmv_presby_docs.htm. Page numbers below from pp. 1 to 76 are in the September advance packet; pp. 77 and higher are in the supplemental packet.

Our Moderator, Ruling Elder Alice McCollum, presided at this meeting, our fourth meeting done completely by electronic means.

Process for Holding Virtual Meetings — Presbytery adopted by a required 2/3 vote (77 Yes--0 (zero) No) Bylaw and manual provisions to guide how we do presbytery and Leadership Council meetings via Zoom or other electronic means (pp. 7-9). The rules ensure that presbyters “have reasonable notice of the electronic meeting and the ability to discuss, deliberate, discern the will of God, and vote on business items.” The rules addressed the need to create a roll of attendees, allow presbyters to be recognized to speak and engage in simultaneous aural communication, and vote. The Stated Clerk also explained to presbyters which buttons and tabs on their devices they would use during this meeting.

Worship—Former Moderator Bruce Saunders led presbytery in worship, reflecting on the changes in the way we do the work of the church together in these days, and reminding us of the ways the people remembered the songs of Zion in exile in Babylon. Bruce completed his year-long term as Moderator in May during our first Zoom meeting and did not have a chance to lead his final worship until today. Later, during a mid-meeting break, Ruling Elder Eliot Heflin (Dayton: Trinity) offered a recorded cell-phone chorus of “It Is Well With My Soul.”

Consent Agenda—The presbytery approved a Consent Agenda (pp. 12-53) with much of the day’s business:

1. From the Stated Clerk: Approved presbytery meeting minutes for the May 12, June 10 and August 12, 2020 meetings (pp. 14-36); and meeting minutes from the Administrative Commissions for Dayton: Memorial (pp. 37-40) and for the Xenia Churches (p. 41).
2. From the Leadership Council: Approved the Independent Accountant’s Audit Report regarding the presbytery’s 2019 financial statements (pp. 42-53).

Presbytery heard an important report from Rev. Dr. Douglas Portz, senior church consultant with the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). As he does each year, Doug brought information on new programs the Board is offering to help ensure the well-being of pastors and church staff. Key timelines for benefits to be offered and accepted are coming soon. See pp. 10-11 for a summary of significant changes for 2021, or visit pensions.org for more details.

Our Executive Presbyter, Minister of the Word and Sacrament Terry Kukuk, reminded us that many churches are not currently worshipping in their buildings but the people are still doing church. She encouraged everyone to watch the presbytery web site for virus-related resources. In the midst of the anxiety that pastors and church leaders are feeling, self-care remains vitally important. Terry described the strong partnership with Brethren Disaster Ministries in the use of the former Dayton: Memorial Church facility for tornado reconstruction teams. She commended us to look for the new things God is doing among us; for places the Spirit is at work; and ways we can witness to Christ’s love.

From Leadership Council—

1. **Anne Paquette, Young Adult Advisory Delegate to the 224th General Assembly**, described her experiences at the all-virtual Assembly in June which had elements of order and disorder, and left her with words like “scary, uncomfortable, and blessed.” Anne’s written report, along with those of GA commissioners Michael Isaacs and Bruce Saunders, are at pp. 55-58.
2. **2021 Budget Guidance for Churches**—Trustees chair Ruling Elder Georgie Woessner advised churches that, based on the preliminary 2021 presbytery budget that will be voted on in November, Leadership Council is proposing that Presbytery Connectional Support payments from churches for 2021 be \$40 per active member, based on 2019 active membership, the same rate as last year. 2021 General Assembly per capita will be \$8.98 and Synod per capita \$3.25 per active member, for a total request of \$52.23 per active member (pp. 59-61).
3. **Kirkmont Center obligations**—In two motions adopted by identical votes of 74 Yes and 0 (zero) No, presbytery agreed to:
 - a. Return the four remaining \$10,000 Kirkmont mortgages received by the presbytery at the dissolution of the Morning Sun United Presbyterian Church back to Kirkmont Center Mortgage Group, LLC; and
 - b. Forgive the three unsecured loans that the presbytery holds for Kirkmont Center totalling \$45,005. (p. 54)
4. **Representation and Diversity Committee**—Committee co-chair Ruling Elder Pat Meadows introduced committee members and noted plans for conversations with each standing committee about diversity and inclusion opportunities in their work (pp. 62-65). She invited presbyters to a Presbyterian Outlook webinar on Choosing Faith over Fear.
5. **Blessing and Farewell for PMV Office Manager Tom Oxley**—Led by Staff Support chair MWS Diane Ziegler, Executive Presbyter Terry Kukuk and former EP Ruling Elder Margaret Haney, the presbytery wished Tom Oxley well as he leaves the staff and begins a business manager position with a local church. Tom has been a vital member of the staff for 20 years. His compassion, dedication and procedural knowledge have been invaluable to our work over the years. Our prayers go with you as God leads your next steps, Tom!
6. **We again welcomed Minister of the Word and Sacrament Charles (Chip) Hardwick, Interim Executive of the Synod of the Covenant**. Chip focused on promoting Synod racial/ethnic and new covenant grants and higher education and COVID/emergency scholarships, underscoring the timelines for applying and when applications will be reviewed (p. 85). See more at www.synodofthecovenant.org.
7. **Council presented written information items and financial reports** (pp. 87-97).
8. **Council invited presbyters to direct their offering for this meeting** to a food bank in their area.

From the Nominations Committee— Presbytery elected six new committee and council members (p. 86) by a vote of 76 Yes and 0 (zero) No. The committee expressed gratitude to all who serve the presbytery in this way.

Moderator’s Report—Moderator Alice McCollum noted that her tenure has been entirely by Zoom meetings, but she is available to the presbytery. She encouraged people to reach out to others, including those for whom technology is difficult, in a time when isolation and despair are real but hope will see us through.

From the Committee on Ministry—

1. We noted new ministry statuses for three colleagues: Minister of the Word and Sacrament Chip Hardwick as a new member of our presbytery by transfer from Chicago; MWS Steve Schumm now transferred from the Mennonite Church (USA); and Ruling Elder Gidget Collins as Commissioned Ruling Elder at Seven Mile. Presbytery also remembered two ministry colleagues who died recently: Dr. Solomon Avotri, long-time professor of Biblical Studies at Payne Theological Seminary, and MWS Thomas

Martin, who served at Xenia: Memorial and other churches in our presbytery. COM chair Marge Morgan led prayers for the new ministers among us and offered a memorial remembrance for our departed friends in ministry (pp. 79-80).

2. Presbytery approved the **2021 Pastors' Compensation Recommendation**, providing no change in the minimum Effective Salary or Continuing Education reimbursement for 2021 (pp. 66, 73-76). The vote was 75 Yes and 0 (zero) No.
3. Presbytery by unanimous consent **granted the status of Honorably Retired to Minister of the Word and Sacrament Angela Schenck**, effective September 30, 2020 (p. 66). COM chair Marge Morgan offered prayers and thanks for Angie's service to the Lord.
4. **Information**--COM presented numerous information items (pp. 66-71).

From the Committee on Preparation for Ministry—

1. The committee noted it had enrolled a new Inquirer, Emily Knoth (Springboro: Covenant); completed processes both for Rev. Steven Schumm and CRE Gidget Collins; certified Candidate Susan Brasier Goud ready to receive a call; and continued outreach to inquirers and candidates under care (p. 72).

From the Stated Clerk—

1. The Clerk listed **former Permanent Judicial Commission members** who might be asked to serve in the future if the current PJC lacks a quorum. This is a required annual report (p. 82).
2. The presbytery's minutes for 2019 have been reviewed during a Synod gathering of presbytery clerks on August 18, but the results of the review are not yet known (p. 83).
3. **New presbytery directories for 2021** are now available by contacting the presbytery office.
4. **Seated as corresponding members or granted voice** for this meeting by vote of presbytery were Rev. Dr. Doug Portz (Pittsburgh), Anne Paquette, Ruling Elder Margaret Haney, Thomas Oxley, and Ruling Elder Eliot Heflin. Three minister excuses were also approved.
5. **Approximately 92 people attended the actual Zoom presbytery meeting, and about a dozen more viewed the livestream on the presbytery's YouTube channel.** This included a number of people living distant from Dayton who normally would not get the chance to participate in an in-person meeting.

UPCOMING STATED PRESBYTERY MEETINGS—

Note: These meetings may become virtual gatherings depending on the situation at the time

Saturday, November 14, 2020, 9:00 a.m., Virtual by Zoom

Saturday, February 13, 2021, 9:00 a.m., at Dayton: Trinity

Tuesday, May 11, 2021, 3:00 p.m., at Huntsville

Tuesday, September 14, 2021, 3:00 p.m., at Hamilton: TPC

Saturday, November 13, 2021, 9:00 a.m., at Huber Heights: Faith United

Prepared by Stated Clerk Larry Hollar, September 24, 2020

(Formal and official minutes of this September meeting will be reviewed and approved at the November 2020 stated presbytery meeting.)