MINUTES

Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley

Synod of Living Waters

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Stated Meeting

August 18, 2016

**GOD CALLS US TOGETHER**

The Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley of the Synod of Living Waters of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) met in the Stated Meeting on August 18, 2016 at Edgewood Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, Alabama.

Throughout these minutes, Teaching Elders are indicated by an asterisk (\*).

The meeting was called to order at 12:30 p.m. by Moderator Jim Toomey, who opened the meeting with prayer.

# ORGANIZATION

On advice of the Stated Clerk, a quorum was declared by the Moderator.

Moderator Toomey advised that the Executive Council had approved the proposed docket which includes the traditional explanation of the offering received, that is – 50% of the offering to CPM for candidates and 50% to be used as for the Presbytery Discretionary fund for pastoral care. We have received a request to dedicate today’s Presbytery offering to the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance’s response to the flooding in Baton Rouge and surrounding areas. Is there a motion to amend the proposed docket to dedicate today’s offering to PDA in response to the flooding in Louisiana? **A motion to amend the docket as described above was moved, seconded and approved by acclamation.**

**Adoption of the Docket**

The docket was adopted as amended by common consent.

**Teaching Elders**

Ministers Present (53) Excused (49) Absent (20)

Abernethy, Barrett P

Acton, Ben P

Adams, Nan A

Alexander, Frank HR E

Anderson, Mike P

Atkerson, Rick P

Bang, Yo Chang A

Becker, Lindsay E

Bird, Shelaine P

Booth, Ben HR E

Brock, John A

Brooks, Richard , HR E

Brown, Taylor, HR E

Broyles, Vernon, HR P

Bruchey, Wayne HR E

Burgess, Sid, HR P

Carl, Bill P

Carleton, Rhon HR E

Carter, Clyde HR P

Casey, Lydia P

Chandler, Doris E

Chaney, Patsy HR P

Chinula, Donald A

Cho, Timothy A

Clark, Molly HR P

Clayton, Susan P

Clendenin, Monty HR E

Coker, Jeff HR P

Copeland, Brian P

Crutchfield, Bob HR E

Dantzler, Bill HR E

Davis, Becky P

Davis, Lant P

Duke, Mickey HR E

Durham, Charles HR P

Durham, Erica E

Edwards, Robert E

Ephraim, James P

Epting, Bobbie HR E

Feagin, Debbie P

Frease, Matthew A

Free, Zana A

Genau, Joe P

Goodlet James P

Goodrich, Cat P

Goodrich, Elizabeth P

Hanna, Richard A

Harmon, Dawson, HR P

Hay, Robert P

Hayes, Jeff A

Hibbard, Norman HR E

Homer, John HR E

Hoop, Cathy P

Hurley, Ed P

Hurst, Clyce HR E

Inman, Robert F. HR E

Japhet, Catherine A

Jeong, Junmo A

Jones, Steve P

Kang, JD A

Kelso, Hugh, HR E

Kesler, Randy P

Kim, Sung Woong A

Kim, Young A

Laney, Susan, HR E

Love, Bill, HR E

McCarter, Neil HR P

McClendon, Bruce A

McClure, John A

McCormick, Mark P

McElrath, Pete HR E

McElveen, William HR E

McLaughlin, Wayne, HR P

McKean, Mac HR E

Moon, Hak Bae A

Mylalsingh, Emerson HR E

Newland, Terry E

Northen, Margaret HR E

O’Neill, Elizabeth E

Oh, Jyung, Ho A

Oliver, Catherine P

Patton, Finley HR P

Patton, Roger HR E

Penson, Gozie HR E

Pope, Sam HR E

Porter, Mary HR E

Price, Sandra HR E

Pyburn, Richard, HR E

Rains, Tom HR E

Reed, Leanne P

Reed, Kathy E

Reed, Nick P

Scarbrough, Leeann P

Scrivner, Joe P

Seitz, Craig, HR E

Sellers, Lou Ann P

Shelton, Jack HR E

Sherwood, Paul P

Sims, Charles HR P

Slane, Joe E

Speaker, Cary E

Stanford, Jim HR E

Stephens, Dan P

Stephens, Gerald HR E

Taylor, Sherwood HR E

Thompson, Ben HR E

Tingle, Terry, HR P

Todd, Taylor A

Truesdell, Jim A

Turner, Lucy P

Wade, Lindsey P

Waters, Dana HR P

Watson, Cody E

Webster, J. Shannon P

Wells, Jim, HR E

Wilkins, Jay P

Wills, Bill HR P

Winter, Rachel P

Winter, Tom HR P

Winton, Carlton, HR E

Yarboro, Jonathan P

**Commission Ruling Elders with Vote**

Present (4) Excused (2) Absent (3)

Arellano, Ben P Haynes, Ernie P

Bonner, Jeff P Harrison, John A

Dodson, Beverly P Sauser, Bill E

Eich, Sharon A. A Veasey, Lin E

Emerick, Robert A

**Executive Council Members/Presbytery Officers w/Vote**

**Present (**7**) Excused (2)**

Carter, Eva P Jenkins, Tyler E

Frennea, Rick P Toomey, Jim P

Hamrick, Debbie P

**Christian Educators, Presbyterian Women and Trustees Moderator w/Vote**

Jenny Thagard P Bill Stribling E Dotty Lessley P Bill Christians P

**Elders**

Number in parenthesis by church name indicates the number of commissioners authorized. “NR” indicates that the church did not have elder representation. There are seventy-nine churches in Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley. Forty-four Commissioners were present.

Alexander City First (1) Nancy Coley

Annemanie Arlington (1) NR

Anniston Church of the Covenant (1) Janet Bain

Anniston Church of the Good Shepherd (1) NR

Anniston First (1) Margaret Porter

Anniston First United (1) Debbie Miller

Anniston Korean (1) NR

Auburn First (2) Susan Stanley

NR

Bessemer Good Hope (1) NR

Birmingham Bold Springs (1) NR

Birmingham Bryan Memorial (1) NR

Birmingham Center Point (1) Paula Haynes

Birmingham Chapel in the Pines (1) Brian Massengale

Birmingham Edgewood (1) Don Hagan

Birmingham Fairfield Highlands (1) NR

Birmingham First (1) Mark Aldridge

Birmingham First United of Forestdale (1) Terri Jones

Birmingham Five Mile (1) David Knox

Birmingham Independent (5) April Deal

Verna Lyons

Lee Walthall

Elise Warren

Bo Grisham

Birmingham Korean (1) NR

Birmingham Mountain Brook (1) Carroll Barrett

Birmingham Oakmont (1) Judy Mann

Birmingham Riverchase (1) NR

Birmingham Second (1) Catherine Rodenhauser

Birmingham Shades Valley (1) Joe Rives

Birmingham South Highland (2) Cathie Bonner

NR

Birmingham Southminster (1) Mark Hopkins

Birmingham Westminster (1) Lorino Hendricks

Cuba Cuba (1) NR

Camden New Trinity (1) NR

Carbon Hill First (1) NR

Dadeville First (1) Evelyn Pangburn

Dadeville Woods (1) NR

Eufaula First (1) NR

Gardendale Gardendale (1) Rodney Mewbourne

Goodwater First (1) NR

Green Pond Green Pond (1) NR

Jacksonville First (1) NR

Lafayette Lebanon (1) NR

Leeds Leeds (1) NR

Livingston First (1) Jean Harwell

Magnolia Rock Springs (1) NR

Marion Junction Marion Junction (1) NR

McCalla Shepherd of the Valley (1) Becky Jinright

Montevallo Montevallo (1) Judy Rogers

Montgomery Calvary NR

Montgomery Immanuel (1) NR

Montgomery Korean (1) NR

Montgomery Memorial (1) Kathy Sweezey

Montgomery Westminster (1) Bette Lewis

Moundville Saint James (1) NR

Northport Bethel (1) NR

Odenville Odenville (1) NR

Opelika Korean NR

Oxford Dodson Memorial (1) Connie Roberson

Phenix City First (1) NR

Piedmont First (1) NR

Plantersville Mount Pleasant (1) NR

Reform First (1) NR

Selma Northern Heights (1) Barbara J. Fears

Selma Pisgah (1) NR

Selma Valley Creek (1) NR

Springville Springville (1) Frankie Tatum

Sylacauga First (1) Patsy Shuttleworth

Talladega First (1) NR

Troy Williams Memorial (1) NR

Trussville Cahaba Springs (1) Jon Scholl

Tuscaloosa Brown Memorial (1) Charles Nash

Tuscaloosa Covenant (1) Diane McGee

Tuscaloosa First (3) Amy Perkins

Ellen Potts

Shelley Hancock

Tuscaloosa Korean (1) NR

Tuscaloosa University (1) Jerry Lamme

Tuskegee First (1) NR

Tuskegee Ramsay Memorial (1) NR

Tuskegee Institute Westminster (1) Johnnie Faye Haygood

Union Springs Union Springs (1) Pam Salter

Wetumpka First (1) Jon Lambert

The assembly joined in singing *Gather Us In* followed by the prayer for illumination and a reading from Acts 8:26-40 and a meditation by the Rev. Catherine Goodrich. This is the story of Phillip and the Ethiopian eunuch. Wilderness Roads: sometimes our journey takes us to the back roads….the way, way, way back road roads. Wilderness roads seem to invite questions. When Philip and the eunuch meet on the road, questions are inevitable. Questions bring them together. Having a guide makes all the difference. Philip guides the Ethiopian. Are there those in your life who have guided you when you found yourself in the wilderness? The HS leads Philip in his responses to the eunuch. He becomes the first foreign convert. He finds a home in the family of God. He becomes the father of the Ethiopian church. The Ethiopian brings this powerful person (Philip) into his life by inviting him into his chariot.

Sometimes it feels as if the church is on a wilderness road…budgets, and money woes, and feeling ill equipped to find a way out. In focusing on these issues we often neglect to see the disenfranchised and hurting outside our doors. Where we are most reluctant to go may be the very place that we encounter our own Ethiopian eunuch. If we are willing to step out on an unknown road who knows where or with whom we may end up.

The good news is that wilderness roads may just lead us to a wonderful place. God shows up where we need him. The risen Christ/ Paul/ Jesus/Philip all on wilderness roads. Is there anything to prevent me being baptized, the eunuch asked. Philip knew that even Jesus broke the laws of his day and so Philip baptized the Ethiopian.

Where is the Spirit leading us? Are we listening? Are we ready and willing to take a wilderness road and come alongside those who need to hear about God’s grace and love? May it be so.

The offering was received and will be used for relief work in south Louisiana.

The Table of the Lord was presided over by Cat Goodrich\* and Joe Genau\* and all were invited to share at Table followed in singing *We Know that Christ is Raised*.

**Seating of Corresponding Members**

Clark Simmons, Board of Pensions

**Recognition of First-time Elders and Visitors**

The Moderator recognized all first-time elders who were introduced to the body.

We were welcomed to Edgewood by Joe Genau\*.

**Transitional Presbyter’s Report** – Jay Wilkins\*

[full report appears as Appendix A]

We are called to *partner with and equip present and emerging PC(USA) faith communities in central Alabama to serve Christ and our neighbors.* As we reflect upon the following questions, we were asked to write down one thing that we could do to free up and release the ……

**Stated Clerk’s Report** – Tom Winter\*

**Omnibus Motion**

1. Approval of May and July 2016 presbytery minutes
2. Approval of requests for excused absences for today’s meeting.
3. To record the reading of Session minutes of Covenant-Anniston, Goodwater, First-Sylacauga, Good Shepherd, First United-Anniston, First-Anniston, Riverchase, First United, Forestdale, Odenville, South Highland, Union Springs, First-Eufaula, Westminster-Tuskegee, First-Wetumpka, Covenant-Tuscaloosa, First-Tuscaloosa, Valley Creek, Bethel, University, Leeds, Edgewood, Southminster, Bold Springs, Chapel, Shades Valley, Gardendale and First-Birmingham.

**The Omnibus Motion was approved by acclamation.**

For Information

1. Report the receipt of commissions to install Paul Sherwood as Pastor of Oakmont and Lant Davis as Pastor of Mountain Brook.
2. The Synod of Living Waters has approved, without exception, the 2015 minutes of the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley.
3. Thanks to the 65 churches that have paid or are paying Per Capita. Please check with your treasurer to make sure your church’s per capita has been or is being paid.
4. The following churches have not had their minutes read. Please bring your minutes by the Presbytery Office or contact the stated clerk at [statedclerk@pslpcusa.org](mailto:statedclerk@pslpcusa.org) and he will come to your church to read them.

Arlington, Auburn-Opelika Korean, Brown Memorial, Calvary, Cuba, Dodson Memorial, Fairfield Highlands, First-Auburn, First-Carbon Hill, First-Dadeville, First-Jacksonville, First-Reform, First-Talladega, Five Mile, Good Hope, Immanuel, Independent, Korean-Anniston, Korean-Birmingham, Korean-Montgomery, Korean-Tuscaloosa, Lebanon, Marion Junction, Memorial, Montevallo, Mount Pleasant, Mountain Brook, New Trinity, Northern Heights, Oakmont, Pisgah, Ramsay Memorial, Rock Springs, Shepherd of the Valley, Westminster-Birmingham, Westminster-Montgomery, Williams Memorial, and Woods.

1. Sarah Diane Jones, First-Birmingham, has been selected to serve as a Young Adult Volunteer in Washington, D.C., for the upcoming year. If you would like to help support Sarah Dianne, please send your check to the Presbytery with her name and account no. EO51477. If you would like to learn more about Sarah Dianne and follow her blog, the link is: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/yav/yav-new/sarah-dianne-jones>
2. Katie McGee, First-Tuscaloosa, has been selected to serve as a Young Adult Volunteer in Little Rock, AR. If you would like to help support Katie, please send your check to the Presbytery with her name and account no. EO51479. If you would like to learn more about Katie and follow her blog, the link is:  <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/yav/yav-new/katie-mcgee>

University Presbyterian invites you to join in celebrating its 50 years of ministry on Sunday, October 9, at 2:00 p.m., with a reception following. The Rev. Jack Shelton will return to the UPC pulpit to preach to the community on this special day. As we work towards our exciting merger with Covenant, we also celebrate our bold and blessed history.

1. Received Administrative Commission Report on Westminster, Montgomery.

**Board of Pensions** – Clark Simmons

The changes to the BOP Plan coming in 2017 were reviewed.

**Executive Council Report** – Lou Ann Sellers\*

Our Presbytery’s statement of purpose ends with this recognition: “The Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley will itself need to be transformed *by the Holy Spirit* as it creates new structures, redirecting its mission, reconnecting its members and refreshing its leaders to better serve God’s people in this time and place.“ This report to Presbytery reflects this ongoing transformative activity within our bounds.

With the January, 2017 retirement of Associate Presbyter for Nurture Robert Hay and the decision not to re-staff this position, **Council is asking Presbytery to approve the creation of the Equip, Nurture, Connect (ENC) committee to carry on the activities the Nurture Division has historically done well: College Ministry, Main Event, Youth Council, Small Church Ministries, and Camp and Children. The motion was moved and approved by consensus.** The committee would be comprised of five members to be nominated and elected by Presbytery and one member from the EC to chair the committee. In November, we will rejoice with Robert in the ministry he has guided.

Together with the leadership of the student-initiated campus ministry at UAB, the UKirk Birmingham Task Force has completed its task of creating a plan of staffing and structure for a Birmingham UKirk campus ministry. Unanimously having approved the position and job description for the UKirk Birmingham Campus Minister and authorized the UKirk Task Force to become the search committee, **Council recommends Presbytery approve the funding for this position.** Ben Acton spoke to the work of the task team and this motion was **approved**. This task team is to be commended for its enthusiastic work including meeting with Council three times to both share vision and incorporate feedback. **The motion was moved and approved by acclamation.**

As we witness the camping ministry unfold at Living River, **Council recommends that Presbytery elect Scott Hayes (ruling elder, Montgomery) and Jonathan Yarboro (teaching elder, Wetumpka) to serve on the Living River Board. The motion was moved and was approved by acclamation.** The Board also expressed thanks for this past summer’s scholarships and requested that Presbytery continue to offer scholarship funding for campers in the summer seasons to come. Working towards a common future, members of the LR Board, the Presbytery’s camp committee and Executive Council took part in a day-long retreat in June led by Brian Frick from the Presbyterian Mission Agency for camping.

In wrestling with our desires for ministry and the funding we have, **Council is recommending the attached report of the Personnel committee for the staffing of Presbytery for 2017.** **The motion was moved and** **approved**. [see Appendix **B**] Although we are closer to reaching a balanced budget, there remains a shortfall for this year. Council’s approach is to view the staffing in a two-step, two-year approach. Recognizing Linda Burrowes’ wish to retire in December 2017, Council is working toward a staffing model with two, full-time positions and a balanced budget beginning in 2018. Council also formed a Stewardship Task team to explore additional funding possibilities.

In striving to do ministry better, Council has been progressed in policy writing in two areas. A Child Protection Policy has been completed and following review by legal counsel will be presented to Presbytery at the November meeting for approval. A task team reviewing the call process has presented guidelines to both Council and Commission on Ministry.

**Commission on Ministry** – Ben Arellano

**For Information**

1. Approve Rev. Ed Sellers (Episcopalian, retired (LTC) U.S. Army Chaplain for Pulpit Supply at Church of the Good Shepherd for the last two quarters of 2016, if the way be clear.

2. Transferred Lisa Tice to the Reformed Church in America.

**For Action**

**1.** Approve an Administrative Commission for the University-Covenant merger: Rev. Ben Acton, Chair; Rev. Mark McCormick; Clair Nichols (First-Tuscaloosa); Donna Winn (Brown Memorial); Bill Stribling (Trustee and South Highland); and Ex officio member as Real Estate Advisor, Rush Watson (Covenant-Tuscaloosa).

The commission shall have the power to:

a. Dissolve both congregations and establish a new one.

b. Approve future pastoral leadership.

c. Name the new church.

d. Make recommendations to presbytery trustees regarding the property.

e. Make other personnel decisions as needed.

**The motion was moved and approved.**

**2.** Examine and approve Brian Lays as Associate Pastor for Independent Presbyterian and to sustain his examination for ordination in his home presbytery (Denver), August 28, 2016.

Effective Date: August 28, 2016. Statements are attached.

Total Effective Salary $60,603; BOP dues $21,211; SECA $4,619; Supplemental group $126; Continuing Education $3,000; Moving provision $7,500. TOTAL PACKAGE $97,059

Installation will be Sunday, September 18th at 3:00 p.m. The commission consists of Teaching Elders Dr. William J. Carl III, Lou Ann Sellers, Joe Scrivner and Ruling Elders Jim Toomey (Presbytery Moderator and First-Birmingham) and April Deal, (Independent).

**3.** Examine and approve Rev. Michael Bailey for First-Tuscaloosa effective Dec. 1, 2016.

Statements are attached. Salary package: Salary and housing $120,000; BOP $43,800;

SECA $9,000; Con Ed $1,700; Books $500. TOTAL PACKAGE $175,000.

His installation will be February 19, 2017. His commission will be sent to the November Presbytery meeting for approval.

**4**. Examine and approve Rev. Dr. James (Jamie) McLeod for First-Anniston, effective date

August 11, 2016. Statements are attached. Effective Salary $60,334; BOP dues $22,022;

SECA $4,906; Travel $4,200; Continuing Ed $1,200. TOTAL PACKAGE $92,662.

His Installation Service will be Sunday, September 4 at 3:00 p.m. The Commission consists of Teaching Elders Terry Tingle, Terry Newland and Bill Wills and Ruling Elders Lin Veasey (First-Jacksonville); Carrie Hutcherson (First United-Anniston) and Minnie Watson (Church of the Good Shepherd).

**5.** Examine and approve Neeley Rentz-Lane for ordination and installation for First-Tuscaloosa as Associate Pastor, if the way be clear. Statements are attached. Effective Date: September 25, 2016. Salary package: Effective salary $50,000; BOP dues $18,250; Continuing Ed $2,000; and Entertainment $2,000. TOTAL PACKAGE $72,250.

Ms. Rentz-Lane’s Ordination and Installation is Sunday, September 25, 2016 at 5:00 p.m. Her commission consists of Teaching Elders Lou Ann Sellers, Joe Scrivner, and Ben Acton and Ruling Elders Jay Evans (First-Tuscaloosa), Patti Winter (First-Birmingham) and Jim Toomey (Presbytery Moderator and First-Birmingham). Sitting with the Commission are Teaching Elders Mike Anderson and James Goodlet and Ruling Elder, Lee Bush Perry of the Presbytery of Charlotte

Following a time of questions directed to these four, **the examinations were sustained**. Prayers were offered for the ministries and work that will be done by Neely, Michael, Jamie and Brian.

6**.** Examine and approve Banyon Allison for commission as CRE and adding him to our pulpit supply.Statements attached. **The examination was sustained and Banyon was approved for commission as a CRE.**

7. To approve Roger Thomas for commission to Dodson Memorial as CRE effective August 18, 2016. Statements attached. Roger was commissioned to Dodson Memorial as CRE.

[all statements appear in Appendix C]

**For Action**

**That Presbytery approve entering into a one year contract with PneuMatrix consultants to work with a cluster of up to eight congregations to assist them in facing adaptive challenges and helping them to discern faithful options for their future; further, that approval be given for funding of this contract in the amount of $30,000 + $10,000 for travel, the funds to be drawn from the Development Grant Fund of the Presbytery. The motion was approved.**

**Memorials for the Rev. Harold Knox** (by Leeann Scarbrough\*) **and the Rev. Bill Mullins** (by Neil McCarter\*)

Memorials appear in Appendix D

**Good News from Our Churches**

Lin Veasey – good news from the Jacksonville area that a great ministry is ongoing at Jacksonville State with an amazing UKirk ministry there. There is always a group of students who don’t want to be told what to do but appreciate being nurtured in their faith in order that they may make those decisions for themselves.

Ralls Coston – Volunteer Mission Coordinator, he has visited 21 of the churches in the presbytery listening to their stories and how they are involved in missions. Booklets are available that describe many of the missions that churches are involved in.

Jonathan Yarboro – invited everyone to Wetumpka for the meeting in November that First, Wetumpka will host. They will be in their new building and it will be dedicated on that day. His wife and her mother and father and uncle are in LA taking care of the home that her grandmother lives in that is underwater due to the rain/flood.

**General Assembly Commissioners Reports**

Leanne Reed shared many of her experiences at GA. She introduced the other commissioners: Eva Carter, George Miller, Robert Hay, Noah Foster (YAAD), Rachel Matthews (TSAD). She offered thanks for the trust that was placed in the commissioners by presbytery. This was the first time that GA had the opportunity to elect co-moderators. The 222nd General Assembly elected Jan Edmiston and Denise Anderson as co-moderators. She spoke of J. Herbert Nelson being elected as Stated Clerk of the denomination. And, the Confession of Belhar was approved to be included in our Directory of Worship. The Assembly created a 2020 Vision Team to guide the denomination as we move into the future. The commissioners also voted to create an Administrative Commission in response to concerns raised in review of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and OGA. The AC has the authority to determine the structure and function of GA agencies.

The Assembly also passed a comprehensive Protection Policy for children, youth and vulnerable adults. An amended version of the report for Human Values in the Absence of a Just Peace was adopted and reaffirmed our value of an Israeli/Palestinian State. GA222 disapproved overtures sent by 31 presbyteries to divest from fossil fuel and declined to approve an apology to LBGTQ persons for harms experienced within the church. There was, however, a statement expressing regret that *due to human failings, any person might find cause to doubt being loved by God* and reaffirmed the commitment to continue the journey as a denomination to become more open, understanding and accepting. [Gospel of Matthew 25]

Noah and Robert shared their own personal reflections on GA222.

**Trustees** – Beverly Dodson

**For Action**

**To forego mortgage payments from Korean Church of Tuscaloosa until January 2017.**

The congregation is smaller and the church is attempting to restructure expenses to meet the new income level, this will help in that effort. In January the Administrative Commission will make recommendations depending upon the situation at that time. **The motion was approved.**

**For Information**

Presbytery Owned properties for sale:

Robinson Memorial – Sold, closed July 15, 2016. After closing costs the amount of $92,700 was deposited.

Trinity, Birmingham – Arise continues to lease and the property continues to be actively marketed.

Harper Chapel- Continues for sale, no activity to date.

**Living River** – Keener Hudson

Living River is alive and well. The board approved the hiring of Rick Johnson who comes with a wealth of experience having directed the Ridgecrest Boys Camp and was the founding director of the WinShape organization where he worked until retirement in 2007. His employment began in mid July and will continue through the end of the year. Rick was introduced and welcomed.

The LR Governance committee has instituted a plan to immediately resume rotation of the Living River Board. Seven names will be presented to presbytery at the November meeting to begin serving in January, 2017. This process will yield three classes of eight members. The Board appreciates the presbytery’s encouragement and understanding in the long process of fund raising and building.

We are in the final stages of planning an adult lodge at Living River which will also involve fundraising but will be a key point in our sustainability.

Living River is so proud of the summer camping program that has touched the lives of so many children of this presbytery. This was the second summer camp at Living River.

**Nominating**

No report

**Pentecost Can Campaign** – Linda Burrowes

Churches that participated in the Pentecost CANpaign were acknowledged. 17,900 cans were collected this year but more can be done in the future. Representatives from Mtn. Brook, Centerpoint and Oakmont were acknowledged for their overwhelming participation in the Pentecost CANpaign.

The meeting was closed with prayers offered by Joe Geneau.

The next stated meeting of the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley will be held on November 10, 2016 at First Presbyterian Church, Wetumpka.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Rev. Tom Winter, Stated Clerk

Appendix A

**Transitional Presbyter Report**

**to the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley Meeting August 18, 2016**

*Role of the TP:*

1. *to assist and oversee maintaining current on-going programs and services of the PSL;*
2. *to assist and guide the study and evaluation of current programs and services and development of long range goals and priorities;*
3. *to assist and guide creation of a proposed permanent staffing structure;*
4. *to serve as the leader/coordinator of the present staff team;*
5. *to fulfill all constitutional responsibilities of the chief administrative position in the PSL.*

Who are we? Who is God calling us to be? For the time being, based on the Statement of Purpose adopted two years ago, listening and discerning now, we have said that we are called to “***partner with and equip present and emerging PC(USA) faith communities in central Alabama to serve Christ and our neighbors.***”

The Executive Council has been seeking to discern God’s vision for staff to support that identity, and budget to fund the staffing plan. The budget for this year, 2016, has a planned deficit of some $150,000. That is not sustainable. Costs will have to be reduced. Income will have to increase.

In working with my mentors, I have heard a question for all of us at this time:

**What is one thing that we can do**

**to release the energy and resources needed**

**to fulfill our calling to**

**“partner with and equip present and emerging PC(USA) faith communities in central Alabama to serve Christ and our neighbor”?**

Take a minute in prayer to listen to that question reverberate in your soul.

Take a minute to share what you have heard.

I give thanks for the opportunity to share this ministry with you.

Jay Wilkins

Transitional Presbyter

Appendix B

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| PERSONNEL STAFFING MODEL | | | | |
| PRESBYTERY OF SHEPPARDS AND LAPSLEY | | | | |
|  | | FISCAL YEAR 2017 |  | |
| **REVENUE POTENTIAL SOURCING (PERSONNEL COM TARGET OF $150,000 FOR SALARIES)** | | | | |
| PROJECTED FUNDS FROM 2017 BUDGET PROCESS (TARGET) | | | $150,000.00 | |
| LIVING RIVER PORTION OF ROBERT HAY'S SALARY FOR ONE MONTH | | | $2,610.97 | |
| INCREASE IN PER CAPITA INCOME (9500 MBRS X $2.50) | | | $23,750.00 | |
| POSSIBLE SOURCES OF REVENUE IF | | | | |
| REVOLVING LOAN FUND (880100) | | | | |
| PSL UNCOMMITTED RESERVE (880900) | | | $14,280.00 | |
| KING TRUST FUND (880210) | | | | |
|  | |  |  | |
|  | |  | $190,640.97 | |
| **SALARIES AND BENEFITS:** | |  |  | |
| **Transitional Presbyter, Rev. Dr. W. Jay Wilkins** | | | | |
| SALARY | | $50,000.00 |  | |
| HSING ALLOW | | $25,000.00 |  | |
| PENSION | | $8,250.00 |  | |
| D & D | | $750.00 |  | |
| MEDICAL | | $18,375.00 |  | |
| DENTAL | | $905.00 |  | |
| SUPPLEMENTAL DEATH | | | | |
| JAY | | $2,520.00 |  | |
| SPOUSE | | $1,260.00 |  | |
| CONT EDUCATION | | $1,000.00 |  | |
| SECA OFFSET | | $5,298.58 |  | |
| **TOTAL PACKAGE** | | **$113,358.58** |  | |
| **Associate Exec for Nurture/ Rev. Robert Hay, Salary for 1 month** | | | | |
| SALARY | | $5,891.50 |  | |
| PENSION | | $648.07 |  | |
| D & D | | $58.92 |  | |
| MEDICAL | | $1,443.42 |  | |
| DENTAL | | $36.92 |  | |
| **TOTAL PACKAGE** | | **$8,078.83** |  | |
| **Presbytery Administrator/Assistant to the Stated Clerk, Mrs. Linda Burrowes** | | | | |
| SALARY | | $38,957.00 |  | |
| PENSION | | $4,285.27 |  | |
| D & D | | $389.57 |  | |
| MEDICAL | $13,993.00 | | |
| DENTAL | $443.00 | | |
| **TOTAL PACKAGE** | **$58,067.84** | | |
| **Bookkeeper/Program Assistant/ Mrs. Tammy Strickland** | | | |
| SALARY | $35,720.00 | | |
| PENSION | $3,929.20 | | |
| D & D | $357.20 | | |
| MEDICAL | $12,337.00 | | |
| DENTAL | $443.00 | | |
| **TOTAL PACKAGE** | **$52,786.40** | | |
| **TOTALS** | $232,291.65 | | |
| SHORTFALL | $41,650.68 | | |
| Respectfully Submitted: |  | | |
| Eva Carter, Moderator, Personnel Committee | | | |

**Interpreting our Budget**

***“partner with and equip present and emerging***

***PC(USA) faith communities in central Alabama***

***to serve Christ and our neighbors”***

***1. F-3.0202 Governed by Presbyters***

**This church shall be governed by presbyters, that is, ruling elders and teaching elders. Ruling elders are so named not because they “lord it over” the congregation (Matt. 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life. Teaching elders shall be committed in all their work to equipping the people of God for their ministry and witness.**

The Presbytery of Sheppards & Lapsley normally meets four times a year to fulfill the above “principle of Presbyterian government.” In order to hold these meetings, the expenses include salary and expenses for the Stated Clerk, the Recording Clerk, the Moderator; some of the salary of the Office Manager, Bookkeeper/Program Assistant, and Transitional General Presbyter.

For 2016, the budgeted figures were **13 %** of the total budget:

Stated Clerk/Moderator’s per capita budget: $ 33,602

Office staff & Presbyter (25% of salary): $37,981

Supplies, Computer, Telephone, & Copier expense (25%): $6,150

***2. G-3.0101 Councils as an Expression of Unity of the Church***

**Councils of the church exist to help congregations and the church as a whole to be more faithful participants in the mission of Christ.**

Partnering with and equipping congregations to become more faithful participants in Christ’s mission is the heart of the Presbytery. The ministry of the camp team, the youth council, the leadership training committee, the small church task force, the children’s committee, the Associate Presbyter for Nurture, and Program Assistant are vital. The Congo Partnership and Hunger Action Enabler engage us in mission with others. Our Volunteer Mission Coordinator is getting our stories told and making connections across the Presbytery and the nation.

In 2016, the budget to support congregations’ participation in Christ’s mission were **22%** of total expenses:

Camp & other programs: $44,148

Mission: $2,500

Associate Presbyter Salary: $70,658

Program Assistant (25% of salary): $8,930

Office expenses (25%): $6,150

***3. G-3.0106 Administration of Mission***

**Mission determines the forms and structures needed for the church to do its work. Administration is the process by which a council implements its decisions. Administration enables the church to give effective witness in the world to God’s new creation in Jesus Christ and strengthens the church’s witness to the mission of the triune God.**

Administration and mission cannot be separated. The leadership of the Executive Council and its teams and committees, the Commissions on Ministry and Preparation for Ministry, the oversight of the Trustees, the wisdom of the Nominating & Representation and the Permanent Judicial Commission, all these provide an underlying structure to support the mission of Christ in our region.

In 2016, the administrative support budget was **37%** of the total:

Executive Council expenses: $ 16,225

Office staff & Presbyter (75%) salaries: $93,261

Benefits: $38,823

COM & CPM: $7,000

Trustees’ expenses for building: $53,373

Office Expenses (50%): $12,150

***4. G-3.0106 …. on the funding of mission***

**The funding of mission similarly demonstrates the unity and interdependence of the church. The failure of any part of the church to participate in the stewardship of the mission of the whole church diminishes that unity and interdependence. All mission funding should enable the church to give effective witness in the world to God’s new creation in Jesus Christ, and should strengthen the church’s witness to the mission of God.**

This Presbytery has been blessed with generous and faithful supporters of Christ’s mission in this region and throughout the world. We participate in that mission of the larger church through per capita giving and unified giving.

Our budgeted mission to the larger church was **28%** of budget:

Per capita to General Assembly: $74,774

Per capita to Synod of Living Waters: $38,017

Per capita to Alabama Campus Ministry: $10,502

Unified Giving to General Assembly: $25,000

Unified Giving to Synod of Living Waters: $15,000

***5. F-1.0301 The Church is the Body of Christ.***

**Christ gives to the Church all the gifts necessary to be his body. The Church strives to demonstrate these gifts in its life as a community in the world (1 Cor. 12:27–28): The Church is to be a community of faith, entrusting itself to God alone, even at the risk of losing its life.**

In 2016, we anticipate receiving funding as follows:

General Fund: $ 352,882

Unified Giving: $40,000

Per Capita of $13.84 per member: $145,348

**The Church is to be a community of hope, rejoicing in the sure and certain knowledge that, in Christ, God is making a new creation. This new creation is a new beginning for human life and for all things. The Church lives in the present on the strength of that promised new creation.**

The good news of 2016 has been the raising of more than $80,000 for our Congo mission to build two safe schools. We have contributed to the future well-being of Stillman College, and helped fund a new ministry with and for young adults, UPerk, in Tuscaloosa.

The not so good news is that this 2016 budget had a deficit of $150,912. The deficit was approved to be covered by available funds from the dismissal of First Church Opelika and the Revolving Loan Fund. This is not a long-term solution. Future staff and program plans will be financially sustainable.

Christ continually calls us into new ministries. The Presbytery has been gifted with funds designated for new opportunities. If you hear Christ’s call for a new mission project, reaching people Christ’s heart yearns for, for people not connected to a congregation, the Executive Council would love to talk with you.

Appendix C

[all faith statements and journeys appear here]

Faith Statement

**Brian Lays**

I believe in one Almighty and Eternal Triune God, Lord of all things, who is one in substance, yet distinct in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, to whom we belong in life and in death. I believe in the Father, who made all things, visible and invisible, whose will is both inscrutable and trustworthy, who governs all things with the power of love, wisdom, and faithfulness.

I believe in the Son, Jesus Christ, the Word of the Father, eternally begotten of the Father, coequal with the Father with respect to his substance. For us and for our salvation, the Father sent the Son to live and work among us. Jesus is fully human and fully God, revealing to us who God is by word and deed, proclaiming the Kingdom of God and embodying its humble posture by associating with the lowly. Those he came to save sought to crucify him, and Jesus willingly gave up his life. He was crucified, suffering the depths of human temptation and pain, yet without sin, and was buried. Three days later, the Father raised Jesus from the dead, giving him a new body, physical yet imperishable. Jesus ascended into heaven, where he sits at the right hand of the Father. Through Christ’s work, the world is reconciled to God through Christ’s forgiving of sin, which breaks the reign of all evil powers, and initiates the manifestation of the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life. The Spirit makes the work of Christ effectual by revealing to the elect their sin, eliciting their faith in Christ, and empowering repentance to a transformed life. The Old and New Testament Scriptures are the unique and authoritative word of God, together a witness to the revelation of salvation in Jesus Christ. The authority of the Bible is derived not from the inherent perfection of its words, but the perfection of the Holy Spirit, who illumines its meaning. The elect hear the word of God by the Spirit and are grafted into the one Universal Church. Christ is the Head of the Church, which pursues Christ’s mission by the Spirit to proclaim the Gospel in word and deed to the ends of the earth and to establish reconciliation among all peoples. The marks of the Church are true preaching of Scripture and proper administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, by which the Holy Spirit uses the common elements of water, bread, and wine to nourish us spiritually, and usher us into the Kingdom of God.

When Christ comes again to judge the living and the dead, the redemption won through Christ’s work will culminate in the reconciliation of all things. Justice will be achieved, evil will vanish, and all brokenness will be healed. The elect will be resurrected with imperishable, physical bodies, and the Church Triumphant from every nation will be united in eternal life to forever praise, love, and celebrate God. Until that day, we live without fear of any created thing, for nothing can separate us from the love of God.

**Faith Journey**

**Brian Lays**

I was raised in a Christian household, and was baptized as an infant at Wellshire Presbyterian Church in Denver, Colorado. Though my family was always involved in the life of the church, I wasn’t particularly engaged in my faith until the summer before I began high school. Then, on a mission trip to Mexico, the profound faith of my friends became something I desired and began to pursue. Ever since, my spiritual pilgrimage has progressed through a series of stages, which have emerged from and built upon one another. During confirmation class as a high school freshman, I first sensed a call to ministry. I took my faith into my own hands, telling everyone about my new interest in Jesus. Faith seemed easy and straightforward: I read the Bible frequently and prayed morning and night. Though I knew so little at the time about the complexities of faith, today I recall these days of simple trust in God with great fondness.

As I entered college, my faith initially shifted into a stage characterized by study. As I took Bible and theology classes, I discovered my love of learning and plunged into the depth of Christian knowledge, the scope of which I had only begun to discover. Soon, God ushered me into a season of despair and doubt. Faced with a series of painful losses, I struggled to trust God’s work in my life. I learned to pray even when I thought God wasn't listening. I emerged from the darkness of this phase feeling capable and sure of myself, and the last two years of college were full of pure joy. I discovered the richness of the fellowship of Christian community, and felt as though I finally lived fully as myself. After I graduated, I worked full-time in a church in Colorado, and my call to ministry was re-affirmed through the mentorship of the congregation and pastor there. I felt confident and accomplished, eager to begin seminary and the next chapter of my life.

If college was a period of discovering my capabilities, what I *can* do, seminary has been a period of discovering my limitations, what I *cannot* do. On paper, this spiritual paradox is difficult to detect: my grades remained high and my work experience grew a great deal. However, I would come to the painful realization that I can control very little of the world around me. Life *happens* to us, and until seminary I had lived in the illusion that I could more or less control the world around me with hard work and natural ability. Yet the most challenging learning during seminary would be the immense grief I faced in the midst of the deaths of my father to cancer and my favorite professor to a heart attack. My sorrow crippled me for a time, and I struggled to concentrate. I felt weak and vulnerable, and had to find time to cry, journal, and process my grief. I focused on weekly counseling and spiritual direction to guide me to the foot of the cross, where I felt helpless but embraced. I learned to depend upon God for strength as I had never needed to before. I realized that when I am weak, Christ is strong in me and for me. Perhaps most importantly, I became acutely aware that no success in this life comes apart from the grace of God, upon whom I am utterly dependent and apart from whom I can do nothing.

Today, I embark on the next stage of my pilgrimage with immeasurable gratitude for all of those who have supported and mentored me thus far. My pastors, professors, counselors, and mentors have been mediums through which God has shaped me. The grace of God stands above anything I have managed to accomplish, and I wish to do nothing more than bear witness to the crucified Savior, by whose wounds we are healed.

**Statement of Faith: Michael R. Bailey**

I certainly don’t want to plagiarize the Apostle’s Creed, but when you hear/recite something nearly every week of your life it not only informs, but shapes and guides your beliefs. And it certainly has done so for me. I do, indeed, believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. God created all things in wisdom with love and God continues that creative work still today. God is sovereign. Nothing happens that can undo God’s desired outcome for creation. In the end, God’s will *will be done.* That does not mean that everything we experience in today’s broken world is God’s will. It means that a loving, powerful, determined God will take all the broken and whole pieces and experiences of life and make of them a new creation. This new creation is beyond our imagining and description, but we have been promised in it a perfect peace, justice for all, a feast with plenty, an end to suffering, sadness, and pain, and the eternal experience of finally coming home. Not only will God do this in the future, but God is in the process of doing this even now.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, who is the redeemer of the world and my Lord and savior. God became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ to pay for the sins of humanity by dying on the cross. Through his ministry, life, death, and resurrection, Christ also pointed humanity to God’s coming kingdom and how we can live into this kingdom in our own day and time. We are living this life when we follow the example of Christ - literally doing the things he did - but also as we maintain a relationship with him through regular prayer, worship, study and reflection upon the scriptures, engagement in the communal life, and acknowledgement of his claim on all aspects of our lives.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, who with the Father and the Son, form the Trinity. The Trinity is a way of talking about and understanding a God who in reality is far beyond our words and comprehension. The Holy Spirit surrounds us all our days, and though often unbeknownst to us, is as near to us as breath. The Holy Spirit empowers, encourages, guides, and strengthens disciples to engage in the life of faith which honors God and helps bring about God’s kingdom.

The Old and New Testaments are God’s holy and inspired Word and guide the people of God in not only understanding God, but also understanding their part in God’s story. The Bible as a whole gives witness to a loving God who creates, redeems, sustains and simply will not be denied in destroying evil and establishing love, joy, peace and justice. As a people of the Word, we are to joyfully engage in God’s story by living lives which promote the establishment of these things.

The church, the body of Christ in the world, is the community in which we are called to live this life of faith. We can do more together than we can separately. We are called together to support and encourage each other, to comfort and correct each other, to be more effective and faithful followers of Christ. The church gathers together to proclaim, hear and respond to God’s Word, to celebrate the means of grace revealed in the Sacraments, engage in mission work, grow in faith, and to enjoy the gifts God so freely gives. This communal life was never intended to bless only those within it, but always to be a blessing to the whole world - especially to those who have been oppressed, denied, or excluded from those gifts that were truly intended for all.

While there is much more to my faith than is included here, pages and pages could be written and still fail to express my beliefs and more importantly my gratitude toward the loving God in whom I trust. Totally dependent on God’s sovereignty, mercy, love, and grace, following the example of Christ, while being led by the Holy Spirit, I hope, pray, and strive to live out these beliefs and demonstrate that gratitude throughout the lifelong journey of faith.

**Faith Journey: Michael R. Bailey**

I am a blessed individual. A greater understatement could not be made. Since my earliest recollection, God’s presence has been apparent and at work in my life, bringing about rich experiences, nurturing relationships and countless gifts through which much grace has been imparted. I was raised a Presbyterian in Atlanta, Georgia in a loving home by a family that nurtured my faith, education and overall well-being. Relatively early on I began to understand my call in life was to live out the gospel in all facets of my life. By the time I graduated from Furman University, I understood my vocational calling to be ordained ministry in the Presbyterian Church. While growing up, I was never too conscious of being a *Reformed* or *Presbyterian* Christian, but while at Columbia Theological Seminary, I learned that my previously unnamed (and underdeveloped) theology was indeed very much Reformed. While researching for an assignment in seminary, I asked my parents why they had chosen to raise their family in the Presbyterian Church, hoping to hear something about Calvin, the sovereignty of God, or the centrality of the Word. Their anti-climactic reply was, “The Presbyterian church had the best nursery.” Despite this humble reasoning behind being raised Presbyterian (which I later understood when I became a parent!), I honestly believe that for very legitimate reasons, God has called me to be a Presbyterian pastor, and I am very committed to the Presbyterian Church (USA). This church has nurtured and supported me and been a source of great joy and pride. Divisions and dissensions within the church have been painful to experience; however, I am firm in my resolve to remain a part of the body of Christ, which is the PC (USA), through struggles, challenges, joys, and celebrations.

Throughout my life, I have been tremendously blessed by friends, family and colleagues who have helped encourage me in life and in faith, both personally and professionally. I have the tremendous privilege of being married to my best friend, Laura – a woman of faith, encouragement, creativity and fun, whose support along life’s journey has been invaluable. Our three children, Hudson (13), Charlie (10), and Katherine (7), make daily life a joyous adventure in God’s grace and constant reminder of how dependent we are on faith, family and community.

My life has been so very enriched professionally and personally through the church communities in which I have served. Following graduation from seminary in 2000, I served as Associate Pastor at First (Scots) Presbyterian Church in Charleston, South Carolina. In Charleston I was blessed by wonderful mentors, gracious church members and many opportunities to learn and grow. In 2005, I was called to serve as Pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Morganton, North Carolina. Our time in Morganton has been absolutely wonderful. I have felt so loved, appreciated, and my gifts for ministry have been affirmed and strengthened during my time there. Words fail to describe the debt I owe to the church and community I have called home these last 11 years.   
 Not every part of life has been smooth sailing, but even the challenging times have proven to bring about growth and unforeseen gifts. As I said, I am a blessed individual. But as we see in the life of Christ and are reminded every time we gather at the Lord’s table, the one who has been chosen and blessed is also the one broken and given. If I am to follow the path of Christ and make his life patterns my own, then I am to understand the blessings and gifts given to me are ultimately given that they may be passed onto others and, through that, God be glorified. With God-given assurance and hope, I look forward to seeing how the next leg of my journey of faith will unfold.

**Statement of Faith by Rev. Dr. James D. McLeod, Jr.**

In the beginning, there was order and perfection; the book of Genesis recounts an idyllic setting in which humanity and all creation enjoyed a perfect relationship with the Divine and with each other. However, we also find in Genesis that humanity chose to disrupt that perfection by seeking a place in creation only occupied by the Divine. In the efforts of Adam and Eve to usurp the knowledge and power of God, they placed themselves above the place of God. The result of their actions was a rending of the relationship between God and creation. Humanity sought to go its own way, exploring creation as its own ultimate concern and ignoring both the will and the presence of God within creation and humanity. Genesis recounts humanity bringing death upon itself. As such, there is no hope for humanity apart from the saving grace and will of God. The brokenness of humanity continues in the violence that often dominates our relationships with one another. From the most basic interaction between individuals, to larger encounters between peoples of different places and races, humanity’s efforts to usurp the place of the Divine are unmistakable.

The emergence of Jesus of Nazareth becomes the most crucial moment within human history. Jesus evidences the power of God to emerge from the brokenness of first century Palestine to offer hope, radical love, acceptance, and resurrection. In the life of Jesus, we see one who brought a message that shook the foundations of a Jewish faith in which aspects had become stagnant and too connected to the controlling Roman power structure. For Jesus, the message of God was not one of military might nor identity with a specific community. In turning society upside down, Jesus told stories in which the heroes were Samaritans and faith was best shown by Roman centurions. In Jesus’ death, we see the ultimate revelation of God’s love as Jesus chose to bear the weight of the world on his shoulders and refused to recant his radical message in the presence of the powers that be, choosing instead to receive the punishment of death on a cross to evidence the love of God for all creation. In Jesus’ resurrection, we are shown that the power of God will not be overcome by the brokenness of humanity or creation. After death, even the death of Jesus, God’s love remains an active force within creation bringing about love from hate, peace from war, and life from death. It is in the shadow of the events from two millennia ago that the church remains active.

In the person of the Holy Spirit, the church affirms a powerful God who continues to emerge from the brokenness and death of creation to move individuals and groups to greater embodiments of God’s love, justice, wholeness, and peace. As we affirm the movement of the Spirit within creation, we also acknowledge the written word as a recounting of that movement.

Finally, we look for the overarching direction of God as affirmed in the Holy Spirit moving within creation working to reconcile all of creation as it seeks to bring all persons, communities, and peoples together again in a single holy people desiring to worship God with those who have come before and those who will come after. We look for God to pull us all out of the systems of brokenness in which we participate, and we search for the spirit of Christ to emerge daily within our own lives just as we seek Christ to emerge throughout creation at the end of days. Amen.

Journey of Faith

Rev. Dr. James D. McLeod, Jr

In many ways it seems as if the entirety of my life has been spent searching for the answers to the questions that sit at the base of the human experience. Where some might cast a single stone across the queries of life, my mind feels as if it is always on a quest for deeper understanding and knowledge of the mysteries of life, faith, and God. From the earliest age that I can remember my own journey has been undergirded by the Christian Faith and Presbyterian tradition. Presbyterianism runs deep within my family. My father still attends the Presbyterian church in which he was baptized. My family tree can be traced back to the early 18th century in Scotland and from that point to the present, everyone of my ancestors has grown their faith in the fertile soil of the Presbyterian Church. My own call to the ministry can be first found in that same family church where I would attend with my parents and brothers and sit with my grandparents. It was there, around the age of 10, that my grandmother, a wise woman who knew the Spirit of God intimately, said that she saw the spark of ministry in my soul. Through my formative years, I would nourished in the safe confines of the church. I was encouraged to ask questions, explore, and learn. I would sit in the pastor's study and talk with him about the previous week's sermon and what curiosities had stirred in my mind. I was active in my youth group, chancel choir, handbells, and Sunday School.

In college, the call to follow Jesus came all the more fervently as I spoke with different professors and chaplains about my own desires to enter into the ministry. I took just about every religion class that I could and found that classes that sought to locate the mystery of God in literature and scientific study advanced my own search for the Divine. The last religion class I took in college, a study of different texts from the writings of Mary Shelley to the inquiries of the astrophysicist Paul Davies, taught by a Presbyterian Elder, solidified my own desires to pursue the pastoral path.

In seminary, I became a sponge for all the knowledge I could possibly cram into my head. There were days when I would open and close the library, and spend much of the day exploring all the different texts that the school had on its shelves. The desert fathers, the mystics, John Calvin, Paul Tillich, James Cone, Cornel West, Elie Wiesel all these became my traveling companions. In the summers I worked for a Presbyterian camp in the Sandhills of North Carolina. On the dock by the lake at the camp, I would sit up at night and look at the stars and think about God and God's son Jesus. I would think about him standing before the 5,000 people hungry for bread and the word of God and them being fed. I thought about the nights he must have spent in the Garden of Gethsemane staring up at the same sky and thinking about his own journey. In those times, I believe I really was able to better understand the struggles that most people face in their own lives and have tried to take those with me into each call that I have had in the past 10 years. The place where I derive the greatest meaning and affirmation in my own journey comes in the opportunities that I have had to sit with people who find themselves surrounded by darkness and helping them to see even a faint amount of light.

I have worked in three different churches in differing regions of the United States, each with their own character, size, and needs. I have also had the opportunity to work in some of the poorest areas of the world, from the borderlands between the United States and Mexico to the undeveloped areas of Malawi, and have seen the need for those of us who seek to better follow Jesus to work for greater sharing of resources in order that all people in the world may have dignity, the chance to take care of their families, and can live life and live it in all its abundance. And while I have had the chance to live and work in several places around the world, it is the values and faith that I learned sitting next to my grandparents in a church in rural North Carolina that have always been the foundation for whatever else has transpired in my life and walk with Jesus. It is my desire to do all things with that in mind and in the hopes of bringing honor and glory to God and God's child.

**Neeley Lane – Statement of Faith**

As a child of God, a child of the Covenant, I am in awe of God’s activity. In the beauty of God’s people, I recognize God’s spirit and presence in my life. I recognize God in relationships, in the practice of forgiveness, in the asking of questions, in experience of the holy. I believe in God the creator of all things who is still creating. God is love, mercy, and compassion. God created us, formed us, and is continuing to shape us today as God’s beloved children. God initiated love first. Nothing can separate the unconditional love God gives us. God desires to be in relationship with us. We know this because God gave us God’s son, Jesus, who is fully human and fully God. Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary. Jesus walked with us, wept with us, broke bread with us, and taught us what it means to be a follower of God. God sent Jesus to be with us and Jesus modeled for us a way of living as faithful disciples. Jesus was mocked, beaten, and ultimately crucified on the cross. Through the resurrection, Jesus triumphed over the grave. Jesus ascended to heaven to be with God and reign with God. God gave us the gift of the Holy Spirit to be a presence with us in our daily lives along our journeys of faith. The Holy Spirit is God’s gift to the church. The Holy Spirit guides us as God chooses to reveal God’s self to us. God, Jesus, and Holy Spirit represent the trinity a divine dance three in one. It is through the scriptures that we learn of the Holy Spirit’s presence with us. The scriptures are the Word of God, inspired by God, are recorded by human kind. The scriptures are God’s story, the people Israel’s story, the gospel story, and our story. We are called to be God’s people and stewards of God’s creation. We are created in the image of God and created good. However, we are sinful. Our chief end is to praise God and live in response to God’s grace and love. Yet our brokenness causes us to stumble. The good news for us is that we are dead to sin. By the grace of God we are given new life through the death and resurrection of Jesus and sanctified through the Holy Spirit. We are called to participate in God’s activity in the world by being the church, a body of imperfect people desiring to be in communion with God. Church is fellowship, community, and the celebration of the sacraments. We recognize God in the breaking of bread and the drinking of cup as we remember and live in hope until Christ comes again. Communion is a celebration of remembrance of what God did in Jesus Christ and is doing today. We recognize God in the waters of baptism, a proclamation of God’s claim on our lives as children of God. The sacraments are visible signs of invisible grace. It is in the hope of the resurrection as people of faith that we will be united with God. I live in hope in God eternal whom I serve and praise. It is in the hope of our living God that we are called to live in obedience to the scripture, to be a voice to the voiceless and to recognize God’s transforming love in ourselves, in our homes, in our communities, and our world.

**Neeley Lane – Faith Journey**

My faith journey has been a journey of curiosity and questions. Nurtured in the faith by a small Presbyterian (USA) congregation in Dahlonega, GA, I was constantly in the pastor’s office asking questions of theology and humanity (Although, I didn’t know those terms at the time!). As a child attending a one room Sunday school model, the church for me then was a people, a family, who embraced love, grace, and acceptance. I can recall children’s sermons about loving neighbors; VBS with children from all over the community gathering as one; and youth group with youth from a boarding school for troubled teens. As my faith journey was shaped in my formative years, I experienced a tangible faith within my church family.

In my teenage years, curiosity and questions became more present. I didn’t understand why some churches didn’t invite all people to join worship or into church leadership. I was mocked for being Presbyterian in my little southern mountain town. I was told I wasn’t saved. Once again I would find myself in my pastor’s office. I attended many churches with my friends, sang in the Methodist choir, participated in Wednesday nights at the Baptist church, and worshipped at the Catholic Church. With this exploration, I realized as a youth, the PCUSA, was home. My questions were allowed as I served on Presbytery Youth Council and became a Montreat groupie. Perhaps this is why I love youth ministry!

I attended Presbyterian College in 2002. After leading an adult Sunday school class for my Uncle, I decided to pay attention to the external call I had been suppressing for years. Thus, I pursued Religion/Christian Education as my major. My faith journey was challenged as people continued to push me to positions of leadership in the church while in college: Celtic Cross, Pre-Seminary Intern for the Chaplains Office, and numerous internships. These experiences allowed me to be in conversation with God about this call of ministry I kept hearing but didn’t know if I could follow. Thanks be to God. I listened to the saints as I responded to God’s call by accepting my first church position as a Director of Christian Education at FPC Hartsville, SC. My faith development was full of excellent failures and holy joys while serving that congregation.

My faith journey is my vocation. My faith journey, daily walk with God, is the very essence of who I am as I continue to be curious about what God is up to and how God is calling me to participate in God’s activity.

Following FPC Hartsville, I served Covenant Presbyterian Church in Charlotte. I am thankful I was taught as a youth that curiosity, questions, and doubt are an essential part of ones faith journey. While at Covenant, I was stretched and challenged, and answered the call to attend seminary at Union Presbyterian Seminary in Charlotte. Once again, it was the voices of God’s people speaking to me about how they could see God working in my life. After almost seven years of service at Covenant, pursing a Masters of Divinity, the birth of two baby girls, God called out to my husband, Robert, and I once again. Thus, I have the privilege of now serving FPC Tuscaloosa!

I consider my faith journey a testament to the people God placed in my life. My path is one of curiosity, questions, doubt, wonder, and forgiveness. I continue to wrestle with my understanding of the Christian life and listen for God’s call on my life in the every day moments of marriage, motherhood, servant hood, and ministry. It is all the fibers of who I am and who God is creating me to be.

**ROGER THOMAS**

**FAITH STATEMENT**

I believe in the tenets of faith as stated in our Brief Statement of Faith. I believe in one God who created and sustains our world. I believe God is essentially and wholly good and that Jesus is the personification of basic goodness in our world. I believe humankind is allowed free will to accept this basic goodness or follow selfish self-interests.

The scriptures are our guide and roadmap for everyday living and provide a vivid history of God’s relationship with humanity through the ages.

The church serves as the voice of God that calls out to a hurting and broken world. It is a community for believers and those making the journey to belief. We are nourished in relationship with God and each other through the church. The church serves as an instrument of service for and to those in physical and spiritual need. We are made stronger as Christians when we are joined together in fellowship, worship and study.

The sacraments serve as a “real presence” of Jesus Christ and remind us of our call to service and dedication to our Savior who gave up his life for humankind. Also, communion is a reminder to me of God’s forgiveness, God’s love and our release from judgment.

Baptism is a public acknowledge and statement that we will raise the child in the church and will serve as teachers and mentors for the child within the Christian community. It is public acknowledgement of intent and faith in God who is accessed through Jesus Christ. As an adult, it also is an acknowledgement that we have received forgiveness of our sins and have been received into a new life with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

**ROGER THOMAS**

**FAITH JOURNEY**

My faith journey began with the teaching of my parents. Both parents were Southern Baptist and instilled in me at an early age that Jesus was the Son of God and that Jesus loves me “for the Bible tells me so.” However, as a teenager, I began to question and wanted to understand the concept of Jesus, God and the Trinity from a rationale, one might say humanistic perspective. When I began to question, I accumulated more questions than answers: Why should our salvation depend so strongly on faith; don’t good works count? Would a just God condemn a good person to hell for some failing of faith? How would God measure faith? What is hell, and would a just God allow such a place? As a Christian, we are required to suspend critical thinking and logical examination of God and accepted what we are told with “blind faith?” What about other religions; do they have no validity whatsoever? What is the disposition of the soul for these other believers?

I began to attend college in 1967 more so to avoid the draft and the Vietnam War than to continue my education. I had the good fortune to have some excellent instructors, but many questioned traditional Christian faith and some were atheist. I especially recall one rather sarcastic professor that said belief in God by rationale adults went out with spats. Because I was unable to reconcile my faith search with my questions within the Baptist church, I eventually discontinued attending church. I cannot say that I ever felt I had completely lost faith, but I had a lot of questions and was not getting many answers from the church. To me, my church seemed more interested in “blind” faith, judgment, and retribution than questions about the nature of God or how God is involved in humankind.

I was in my early thirties and living in the Eastlake section of Birmingham when the new pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Eastlake knocked on my door and invited me to the church just down the street. I must admit I was somewhat annoyed by Rev. Thorndell’s interruptions, and told, “I will come to see your show this Sunday.” Well, the rest is history. Sunday came and although I did not really want to go, I kept my promise to “see the show.” All I can say is that the people of that small congregation “love bombed” me into submission to the love of Jesus, and I began to perceive God and Jesus as grace and forgiveness and that we are called to serve God by serving all humankind. I eventually was asked to serve as an elder and accepted. I have grown in faith over the years, and now realize that faith is not logical; in fact, the whole story of the birth, death and resurrection is not logical. We can neither prove nor disprove the existence of God, and God cannot be found by application of what we call scientific methods. We accept the grace and love of Christ through faith and build on faith through the wisdom of the Bible and the instruction and interaction with others. Faith to me does not mean certainty, but this does not make God less real. However, we can grow in faith by “talking the talk,” and I think, even more so by “walking the walk.”

In 2013, I married Jacquline A. Folk, and she has enriched and helped me each in my faith journey.

**BANYON ALLISON’S BRIEF STATEMENT OF FAITH**

I believe that Jesus literally lived, died, and was resurrected for the sins of the world. Without this literal resurrection of the body, Christianity, while retaining many useful tenants is false and fails to achieve what it claims, everlasting life.

I believe that God is sovereign and ultimately does his will without the need for human understanding.

I believe that God’s love is greater than the hate of humanity.

I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, love made flesh.

I believe that the life force of Jesus Christ is revealed today through the Holy Spirit embodied in mankind’s human flesh.

I believe that those who accept the grace of Jesus Christ and then follow his teachings to the best of their abilities will be granted eternal life. While I am sure that the only way to eternal life is through the blood of Jesus, I am not sure that the only way to “heaven” is through expressive belief in Jesus Christ. God will save whom he chooses to save. This opens the door for the ***possibility*** of atheists, the non-professed, and those of other faiths to be granted entrance into his king’s majesty.

I believe that those who are saved will be entered into a state of eternal bliss with God (heaven) and those that are not saved will enter into a state of constant separation from God (hell). In this sense, I believe in a literal “heaven and hell” but not necessarily in the symbolic terms as described in the Bible.

I believe that God has given all a call to care for the disenfranchised in our society. These include those that are different – racially, ethnically, religiously, economically, and in terms of ability (physically, emotionally, and mentally).

I believe that God is particularly empathetic to those that have been rejected by the church and society-at-large, very similarly to the plight of Jesus. These include but are not limited to people of color, women, the GBLTQ community, and the poor with particular emphasis on the homeless.

I reject all facets of religious chauvinism expressed as religious fundamentalism throughout the world which is manifested through violence towards others.

Finally, I believe that ultimate expression of how you feel about God, God’s creation, and the afterlife is witnessed by how one resides in this life. We should exist in the present by not regretting the past nor worrying about the future. Each moment should be counted a blessing, thanking God for meeting our needs and many of our wants, giving us strength in times of weakness, and allowing us to “shine” with his glory when blessing are upon us.

**Dr. Banyon John Allison, Ed.D.**

**Journey of Faith**

**Commissioned Ruling Elder Program**

**May 12, 2016**

My name is Banyon John Allison. I am 43 years old. I was born on November 29, 1972 in Jasper, AL. My parents were Billy John Allison and Brenda Gay Townley (Allison). My grandparents were Lacy Allison and Nettie Ola Allison and Gurlie Townley and Lottie Townley. I have one brother, Michael Don Allison and two half-sisters, Audrey Rasmussen and Connie Daniels. My home life consists of my wife, Christina Kilgore, and my 5 year old daughter, Karma Kilgore. I live in Oxford, Alabama. I would consider my socioeconomic status as best described as upper-middle class.

My childhood was not stable. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was plagued with physical and emotional issues. They divorced when I was 12 years old. I did not attend church regularly as a youth. However, I was saved at approximately 14 years old at West Weaver Baptist Church. Accordingly, I was primarily motivated out of fear of the Lord and not out of Christ’s love for me.

I attended Weaver High School where I received an Advanced Diploma with Honors in 1991. I then attended Jacksonville State University on a football scholarship. I graduated with a B.S. Ed. in Biology and History in 1995, an M.S. Ed. in Biology and History in Biology and History in 1996, and an Ed.S. in 2002 in Educational Administration. I went on to complete my Doctorate in Education (Ed.D.) in Educational Administration in 2005 from the University of Alabama.

I am an educator. This is my 21st year in the Alabama public schools. I taught and coached for six years. I served for 13 years as an Assistant Principal (6 years-Wellborn High/7 years-Alexandria High). I am currently the Transportation Director for the Calhoun County Schools. My wife is an Assistant District Attorney in Talladega, AL.

I have been married for 17 years to my wife, Christina Kilgore. We have a five year old daughter, Karma Kilgore. My wife and I were “high school” sweethearts and dated 10 years before we were married. We have been together 27 years total.

The central theme to my story is this: I believe I am on a “quest” to know God in a more intimate way. I believe that by furthering my parochial education through the Commissioned Ruling Elder Program, I am taking the first step in my having a better understanding of the nature of God. I plan on using that knowledge to better serve Him and others in my community.

Appendix D

**Memorial for Harold Bertram Knox**

Harold Bertram Knox was born in Rockville Centre, NY on January 25, 1929. His family moved to Memphis, TN when he was 10, and he graduated from Central High School there in 1946. He graduated from Vanderbilt University in 1950 with a major in history and political science and attended Louisville Presbyterian Seminary while serving churches throughout the Tennessee Valley. He received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from Louisville Seminary in 2001.

Harold was ordained in 1952 at the Rock Spring Mitchell Memorial Church in Mount Hope, AL. He then was called to the First Presbyterian Church in Russellville, KY, where as a young, underfed single man he attracted the attention of his new neighbors, the Evans family—especially their daughter Bede. Many family dinners later, Harold and Bede were married and became an inseparable ministry team. They are the parents of two sons, David and John, and three grandchildren.

In 1963 he was installed as the pastor of Five Mile Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, where he served for almost 36 years. During the first nine years he also served the Inglenook Presbyterian Church until it merged with Five Mile. Harold was a wonderful parish pastor, but he was also interested in the work of the larger church. He served as Moderator of Western KY presbytery and the Synod of KY and held various offices in this and its predecessor presbyteries.

Most of us knew and remember him for his 25 years of service as the presbytery’s Stated Clerk. He was a charter member of the Association of Stated Clerks and was the go-to person for advice on PCUSA polity. Harold was passionate about it, and he saw it as ministry. He took his work as Stated Clerk seriously. We never had to worry whether the proper forms were filled out or if minutes were done, and if there was ever a question about Roberts’ Rules or the Book of Order, Harold knew the answer…

He also knew a lot about small church ministry. He had a passion for it and was a huge help to me (and I am sure to others) as I transitioned from working in large churches to small ones. His advice was always sound and given in love.

Harold was sometimes seen as something of a curmudgeon. He knew how things should be done and expected everything to be done that way. But he also had a wonderful, weird sense of humor….

You may be wondering why I am wearing these gaudy dimestore rings today… I am wearing them because Harold gave them to me. It was in a presentation when I became moderator in 2001. Harold started off so seriously with the moderators stole and cross and then he talked about the office and somehow likened it to the Pope and talked about what an honor it is to kiss the Pope’s ring. And then he gave me these so that people would have no trouble kissing my ring if they so desired—and as he gave them to me he could hardly speak because he was laughing so hard….

That was Harold in a nutshell—a precious child of God who knew the importance of his calling, but who also knew how to have a good time and enjoy the life he was given.

Harold was honorably retired from Five Mile in 1999 and became Pastor Emeritus. He died at home on May 27 of this year.

We are blessed for having known him. The Church is better because of his ministry. He truly was a good and faithful servant…Thanks be to God for the life and ministry of Harold Knox.

**Memorial**

**Edward Williamson (“Bill”) Mullins**

Edward Williamson (“Bill”) Mullins was born in Andalusia, AL, on December 23, 1932. He entered the church triumphant on May 22, 2016. Bill grew up in Tuscaloosa, and his family and he were charter members of Covenant Presbyterian Church.

Bill was a graduate and avid supporter of the University of Alabama. He also graduated from Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. He served two years in the U.S. Army and then worked for the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Agency from which he retired. He then served for eighteen years as the pastor of the Butler Presbyterian Church in Butler, AL.

Bill was a faithful presbyter in the life of this Presbytery. Many colleagues and associates in the Presbytery have a variety of memories of Bill and his service. In the years of his service with the Butler Church, commissioners to the quarterly Presbytery meetings could count on dealing with resolutions from the Butler Session on issues which were currently in the forefront of the church’s life. The resultant actions by the President was to defeat the resolutions. What Bill and his ministry did for the Presbytery is to remind the Church that persons like him who in the strength of their convictions challenge the larger Church to pay attention to different viewpoints in order to help the Church be clear about how the Church lives out the faith in the church’s life and mission.

There was another side to Bill’s life with which many may not be familiar. The motivation for his life and service was to witness to the life-giving gifts of God’s love, grace, and mercy through Jesus Christ. He knew the meaning of gratitude for God’s gracious presence in his life through the actions of kindness he experienced. When the tornado struck Tuscaloosa in 2011, Bill at the time was living in the house in which he grew up. It stood right in the path of the storm. The roof of his house was badly damaged and a tree limp was stuck in his car. The Sunday after the tornado, Bill attended worship at First Presbyterian Church. When he was asked how he was doing, he responded, “Just thankful to be alive . . .” That afternoon volunteers from First Church went to his home and nailed plastic over the largest of the holes in the roof and removed the limb from his car. Each time thereafter, when he attended worship at First Presbyterian he would express his gratitude and thanksgiving and praise to God for delivering him from the disaster. Just prior to his death, I was visiting with him in the nursing home. During this visit, Bill wanted to talk but understanding what he was saying was difficult, but at the end of the prayer, after I pronounced the “Amen,” he responded in a clear voice, “Amen.”

Bill responded to the call from God to witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ, who came into the world to meet it with all its pain and sorrow with the message of hope and God’s love. Thanks be to God for Bill’s faithful witness to God’s love and grace which has been revealed in the life and death of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.