

Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley
Synod of Living Waters
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Stated Meeting
November 21, 2024

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 November 21, 2024, hosted by Cahaba Springs Presbyterian Church in Trussville, AL.

Throughout these minutes, Ministers of the Word and Sacrament are indicated by an asterisk (*).

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Moderator Deborah Thomas, who opened the meeting with a prayer.

Organization

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

Adoption of the Docket (Appendix E-1)

The docket was amended and adopted by unanimous vote.

Recognition of First Time Commissioners and Visitors

Corresponding Members

The Rev. Tony Larson, Co-Moderator, of General Assembly

Omnibus Motion:

- 1. To approve the minutes of the August 15, 2024 meeting.**
- 2. To approve the requests for absences from today's meeting**
- 3. To adopt an "Electronic Meetings Rule" for this meeting so that virtual attendees seeking recognition from the Chair be allowed to unmute themselves and call for the attention of the Moderator for recognition and obtaining the floor.**
- 4. Approval of the former Permanent Judicial Commission members to serve to make a quorum: Lee Cleveland, Debbie Feagin, Mike Mastin, Mary Porter and Teresa Pulliam.**
- 5. To receive, record and approve the minutes of the Commission of the Presbytery to install the Rev. Cort Gatliff as Pastor of the South Highland Presbyterian Church on September 8, 2024.**

6. To accept these invitations to host meetings of the Presbytery: February 20, 2025 at First Presbyterian of Wetumpka; on May 15, 2025, at Grace Church of Tuscaloosa. Invitations are welcomed for the August 21 and November 20, 2025, meetings.

Approved

Ministers of the Word and Sacrament

Ministers Present (42) Excused (50) Absent (30)

Adams, Nan	A	Free, Zana	P
Atkerson, Rick	P	Gatliff, Abby	A
Bae, In Chan	P	Gatliff, Cort	P
Bailey, Michael	P	Genau, Joe	P
Bang, Yoo Chang	A	Goodrich, Elizabeth	A
Barnett, Caroline	A	Hamilton-Poore, Sam	P
Brady Becker, Lindsay	A	Hamilton-Poore, Terry	P
Bell, Jerome	A	Hanna, Richard, HR	P
Bird, Shelaine	A	Harmon, Dawson, HR	P
Brock, John	E	Hay, Robert, HR	E
Broyles, Vernon, HR	E	Hayes, Jeff	A
Bryson, Tom	P	Hibbard, Norman HR	E
Bruchey, Wayne, HR	E	Hurley, Ed, HR	P
Burgess, Sid, HR	E	Hurst, Clyce HR	E
Butler, Heather Jones	A	Inman, Robert F, HR	E
Carleton, Rhon, HR	E	Jeong, Junmo	A
Carter, Clyde, HR	E	Jo, Jae Seon	P
Casey, Lydia	E	Kelly, Caroline	P
Chaney, Patsy, HR	E	Kim, Samuel	A
Chang, Cecelia	P	Kim, Sun Jae	P
Cheong, Tae Ho	A	Kim, Sung Eun	A
Chinula, Donald	E	Kim, Sung Woong	A
Cho, Timothy	E	Kim, Young	A
Choomack, Jim, HR	E	Kukal, Chuck	P
Clark, Molly, HR	E	Laney, Susan, HR	E
Clayton, Susan	P	Long, Kevin	P
Clendenin, Monty, HR	E	McCarter, Neil, HR	P
Coker, Jeff, HR	E	McClendon, Bruce	E
Crutchfield, Bob, HR	E	McClure, John	A
Davis, Becky HR	E	McCormick, Mark	A
Davis, Lant	P	McElrath, Pete, HR	E
Dippenaer, Vic	A	McLaughlin, Wayne, HR	E
Durham, Charles, HR	E	Mathews, Rachel	P
Durham, Erica	E	Mjumbe, Lukata	A
Edwards, Robert	E	Mylalsingh, Emerson, HR	E
Ephraim, James, HR	E	Newton, Nicole	P
Feagin, Debbie, HR	P	Newland, Terry, HR	E
Frandsen, Emily	E	Northen, Margaret, HR	E

O'Neill, Elizabeth	P	Sims, Charles, HR	E
Oh, Jyung, Ho	A	Slane, Joe, HR	P
Oliver, Catherine, HR	E	Son, Junqkyun	A
Park, Daekeun	A	Spalding, Andrew	E
Patton, Finley, HR	E	Speaker, Cary	P
Patton, Roger, HR	E	Sprick, Petra	P
Pearce-Reed, Leanne	P	Stephens, Gerald, HR	E
Ponder, Luke	A	Thurman, Michael	P
Porter, Mary, HR	E	Tingle, Terry, HR	E
Price, Sandra, HR	E	Truesdell, Jim	A
Pyburn, Richard, HR	E	Turner, Lucy, HR	E
Reed, Kathy	P	Turpen, Sam	A
Reed, Nick	P	Wade, Lindsey	A
Roberts, Madison	P	Waters, Dana, HR	P
Scarbrough, Leeann	E	Watson, Cody	P
Schuler, Sharon, HR	P	Wells, Jim, HR	E
Scott, Katherine	E	Westfall, Sue	P
Scrivner, Joe	P	Wilkins, Jay, HR	P
Seamon, David	P	Wills, Bill HR	E
Seitz, Craig, HR	E	Wilson, Ron	A
Sellers, Lou Ann	A	Winter, Rachel	P
Shelton, Jack, HR	E	Winton, Carlton, HR	E
Shin, Dong-ouk	A	Yarboro, Jonathan	P

Commission Ruling Elders with Vote

Present (9) Excused (2) Absent (7)

Allison, Banyon	A	Hughes, Carl	P
Arellano, Ben	A	Kirkpatrick, deNay	P
Bonner, Jeff	P	Lyons, David	P
Dodson, Beverly	E	Martin, Carl	P
Eich, Sharon	A	McCrackin, Olympia	P
Emerick, Robert	A	Sauser, Bill	E
Fancher, Cherie	P	Tatum, Frankie	A
Haynes, Ernie	P	Thomas, Roger	A
Holt, Cal	A	Lin Veasey	P

Executive Council Members/Presbytery Officers w/Vote

Present (5) Excused (1) Absent (1)

Judith Baldwin	P	Terri Jones	P
Linda Burrowes	P	Deborah Thomas	P
		Donna Winn	P

Jothany James

A

Jean Russell

E

Christian Educators, Presbyterian Women, Commission on Ministry and Anti-Racism Moderators w/Vote

Jenny Thagard P

Kathy Tracey P

Debra Love P

Elders

Number in parentheses by church name indicates the number of commissioners authorized. "NR" indicates that the church did not have elder representation. There are fifty-seven (57) churches in the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley. Thirty-seven (37) Commissioners were present.

Alexander City	First (1)	NR
Annemanie	Arlington (1)	NR
Anniston	Church of the Covenant	NR
Anniston	First (1)	NR
Anniston	First United (1)	Debbie Miller
Anniston	Korean (1)	NR
Auburn	First (3)	Katie Forster
		Susan Stanley
		NR
Bessemer	Good Hope (1)	NR
Birmingham	Bold Springs (1)	NR
Birmingham	Edgewood (2)	Catherine Rodenhauser
		NR
Birmingham	First (2)	Carl Martin
		Brenda Toomey
Birmingham	First United of Forestdale (1)	Gloria Lee
Birmingham	Independent (4)	Caryl Privett
		Georgia Miller
		Anna Hartzog
		Carl Albright
Birmingham	Korean (1)	NR
Birmingham	Mountain Brook (2)	Karen Ogle
		NR
Birmingham	Oakmont Chapel (2)	Judy Mann
		James Barnes
Birmingham	Riverchase (1)	Margaret Bowman
Birmingham	South Highland (3)	Bill Stribling
		Suzanne Cornett
		John Gleysteen
Birmingham	Southminster (2)	John Schuler

Birmingham	Westminster (1)	Lydia Wilfong Linda Harris
Cuba	Cuba (1)	NR
Camden	New Trinity (1)	NR
Carbon Hill	First (1)	NR
Dadeville	First (1)	NR
Dadeville	Woods (1)	NR
Eufaula	First (1)	NR
Gardendale	Gardendale (1)	Cherie Fancher
Goodwater	First (1)	NR
Green Pond	Green Pond (1)	NR
Jacksonville	First (1)	NR
Lafayette	Lebanon (1)	NR
Leeds	Leeds (1)	Charles Gabert
Livingston	First (1)	NR
Magnolia	Rock Springs (1)	NR
Marion Junction	Marion Junction (1)	NR
Montevallo	Montevallo (1)	Mary Blakely
Montgomery	Calvary	NR
Montgomery	Immanuel (1)	Jon Broadway
Montgomery	Korean (1)	NR
Montgomery	Providence (1)	Kathryn Sweezey
Northport	Bethel (1)	Kathryn Strayer
Opelika	Korean (2)	NR
Oxford	Dodson Memorial (1)	NR
Piedmont	First (1)	NR
Selma	Pisgah (1)	NR
Selma	Valley Creek (1)	NR
Sylacauga	First (1)	Frances Wildsmith
Talladega	First (1)	NR
Troy	Williams Memorial (1)	NR
Trussville	Cahaba Springs (1)	Karen O'Brien
Tuscaloosa	Brown Memorial (1)	Angela Wright
Tuscaloosa	First (4)	Donny Potts James Tucker Jill Cilimberg NR
Tuscaloosa	Grace (2)	April Lane Cathy Andress
Tuscaloosa	Korean	NR

Tuskegee Institute
Union Springs
Wetumpka

Westminster (1)
Union Springs (1)
First (1)

Judith Baldwin
NR
Kathryn Ashmore

Welcome from the Host Church

deNay Kirkpatrick

Order of Worship

Prelude *Doxology*

Tony Larson gave the Gathering Prayer. Lynda McLean led us in the Call to Worship, and the body sang *God is Here!*

Julie Helmers led the body in the Call of Confession, the Prayer of Confession and the Assurance of God's Grace. deNay Kirkpatrick led the body in the Passing of the Peace.

David Perry gave the Prayer for Illumination and read 2 Kings 5:1-14, He then read Psalm 100. Julie Helmers and Kay Carter sang *Give Thanks*. deNay Kirkpatrick read Luke 17:11-19, prayed, and then gave the Sermon.

The body sang *We Praise You, O God!*

George Fritsma gave the Affirmation of Faith in unison with the body; then gave the Invitation for the Offering. The body sang the Doxology. deNay Kirkpatrick gave the Prayer of Dedication.

Ernie Haynes invited everyone to the Lord's Table. Along with deNay Kirkpatrick, they gave the Prayer of Great Thanksgiving and the Lord's Prayer, followed by Communion by Intinction and the Prayer after communion.

The body sang *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*, then deNay Kirkpatrick gave the Benediction.

Ministry Within our Presbytery

Greetings from the Co-Moderator, the Rev. Tony Larson (Appendix E-2)

Rev. Larson told the body about the church he also serves in Surfside, South Carolina and spoke of his family life. He opened his Greetings to questions from the body. He was asked about changing General Assembly from every year to every other year. He said the most exciting thing about his position was seeing what God is doing in our churches. Tony emphasized the importance of shared ministry and collective action, and encouraged the commissioners to trust in God's provision for their churches.

Greetings from Caminos Nacional and Presbyterian Home for Children (Appendix E-3)

Adalis Ortiz-Vega and Doug Marshall

The Synod approved the PHFC to go to other presbyteries to help mothers and children. The Caminos Nacional director shared about their work with unaccompanied immigrant minors and their efforts to provide support and resources to these children.

Executive Council (Appendix E-4)

Ed Hurley

Good News from Matthew 25 churches

Jonathan Yarboro

First-Wetumpka—Jonathan Yarboro shared about the tornado that destroyed his church. They had good insurance and were able to help people in Wetumpka with funds they received and didn't need.

Brown Memorial—Joe Scrivner talked about what they do for systemic poverty.

Grace—Caroline Kelly talked about the fund they have set up for contributions to help the less fortunate. They have a food pantry that serves 2,500 people each month and are members of Alabama Arise.

MOTION 1: Approve the request from The Board of UKirk Birmingham, the Session of Edgewood Presbyterian Church, and the Equip, Nurture Connect Committee for the future of its ministry and transfer UKirk funds being held at Presbytery to Edgewood. Approved (Appendix E-5)

MOTION 2: Approve the Transition Plan for the General Presbyter and Stated Clerk.

1. Conduct a mission study including a staffing study. As it happens, Jay Wilkins is currently installed in a three-year term that would be up in January 2026 as well and he has indicated that he is not intending to stand for re-election. We will have two positions open in January 2026.

2. Create job descriptions.

3. Complete an MDP and begin searching to fill the position(s) created. Theoretically, have a candidate(s) to present by the November 2025 Presbytery meeting with a start date for the new positions in January 2026.

Approved

Bills & Overtures—The amendments are in the Appendix and will be discussed and voted on at the February meeting. **(Appendix E-6)**

Lunch—deNay Kirkpatrick gave the blessing

General Presbyter's Report (Appendix E-7)

Sue Westfall

Sue Westfall discussed the time of transition we are in as she and the Stated Clerk are retiring in January, 2026. Then, we sang *Great is Thy Faithfulness*.

Commission on Preparation for Ministry (Appendix E-8)

Nicole Newton

MOTION: The CPM requests approval of the following individuals to serve as ordination exam graders in 2025: Teaching Elder - Emily Frandsen

Ruling Elder - Jeff Johnson Alternate (Ruling Elder) - Adrienne Stokes Approved

Commission on Ministry

Carl Martin

Information Items:

1. **Approved CRE Carl Martin to serve communion at Leeds Presbyterian Church on September 8, 2024.**
2. **Interviewed the Pastoral Nominating Committee of First of Alexander City and approved their Ministry Discernment Profile for use on the CLC.**
3. **Approved the Rev. Chuck Kukal to be designated Honorably Retired effective December 31, 2024.**

Action Items:

1. **Honor CRE Bev Dodson for her service as Head of the CRE program. (Appendix E-9) Approved**
2. **Examine and approve the Rev. Nicole Newton to be installed as the Associate Pastor for Discipleship at Independent Presbyterian Church.**
 - a. **Effective Salary, \$85,000; Board of Pensions Dues, \$31,050.**
 - b. **Full Terms of Call and IPC Report to COM are included in the packet, effective date is December 1, 2024. (Appendix E-10, 11, 12) Approved**
3. **Examine the Rev. Daniel Vanek, MWS of PC(USA), who is serving as Genesis Pastor of Tuscaloosa United Church of Christ, and approve membership within the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley and validate his ministry with UCC Tuscaloosa. (Appendix E-13, 14) Approved**
deNay Kirkpatrick and Sue Westfall prayed for the above candidates, respectively.

Congo Mission Partnership (Appendix E-15)
Mission Coordinator Report (Appendix E-16)

Lydia Wilfong

Finance Committee (Appendix E-17, 18)

Wendy Tucker

MOTION: Approve the 2025 budget for the Presbytery Approved

Nominating Committee

Rick Atkerson

The outgoing Moderator's nominations for the Nominating and Representation Committee

Class of 2027

Rev. Caroline Kelly, Grace, Tuscaloosa
Jim Holland, Brown Memorial, Tuscaloosa
Ron Parsons, First-Auburn
Moderator, Rev. Rick Atkerson
Approved

For Action:

The Committee nominates the following to fill new and unexpired terms as indicated:

Synod Commissioners for 2025:
Sharon Schuler*
Judith Baldwin, Westminster, Tuskegee

PSL Vice Moderator for 2025: Terry Hamilton-Poore*

Executive Council - Immediate Past PSL Moderator, Deborah Thomas, First-Auburn – Council Moderator for 2025

Class of 2025 (unexpired): (coming*)
Class of 2026 (unexpired): Wendy Tucker, First-Tuscaloosa

Class of 2027:
Tom Bryson*
Terri Jones, First United, B'ham
Donna Winn, Brown Memorial

Personnel Committee - Michael Bailey* - Moderator for 2025
Class of 2027:
Susan Clayton*
Jeff Bonner, CRE

Finance Committee - Wendy Tucker, Moderator for 2025
Class of 2027:
Kevin Long, IPC*
Alicia Foster, New Trinity

Youth Council - Adult Leaders - Class of 2027:
Lauren Howard, First-Tuscaloosa

Youth:
Class of 2025:
Lucy Benoit, Southminster
Jessica Long, IPC
Class of 2026:
Lily Hughes, Southminster

Commission on Ministry - Carl Martin, CRE, Moderator for 2025
Class of 2027:
Young Kim*
(Still need one*)
Abby Gatliff*
Ernie Haynes, CRE
Lee Cleveland, South Highland
Steve Shaw, IPC
Rush Watson, Grace

**Transition/Search Committee for General Presbyter and Stated Clerk
(Moderator to be chosen within the committee)**

Term begins immediately and expires when task is completed

Cecelia Chang*

Jane Clayton, Montevallo

James Ephraim*

Darryl Love, Westminster-Bhm

(still need one elder)

David Seamon*

Joe Spransy

Commission on Preparation for Ministry - Nicole Newton*, Moderator for 2025

Class of 2027:

Emily Frandsen*

Cort Gatliff*

Clay Price, First-Auburn

Angela Wright, Brown Memorial

Anti-Racism Committee - Tom Bryson* / Debra Love - Co-Moderators for 2025

Class of 2027:

April Lane, Grace

Harold Dennard II, Westminster - B'ham

Trustees - Lant Davis* - Moderator for 2025

Class of 2027:

Lant Davis, HR*

Allen Sydnor, IPC

Steve Deal, First-Tuscaloosa

“New” Commission (to be named by the members in 2025) –

Joe Genau*, Moderator for 2025

Class of 2025:

Jonathan Yarboro* (from Exec Council - one-year term)

Lee Cleveland, South Highland (from COM - one-year term)

Adrian Royster, 1st United (initial one-year term, eligible for two full terms following)

Class of 2026:

Leanne Pearce Reed* (initial two-year term, eligible for two full terms following)

Class of 2027:

Joe Genau* (initial three-year term, eligible for one full term following)

**Nominated by their respective Institutions, and reported to PSL for election,
per SR-7.01:**

PHFC Board of Trustees:
Class of 2027:
Amy Hill Dickerson, South Highland
Approved

Trustees

Lant Davis

For Information

As was authorized by the Presbytery assembled on August 15, 2024, the transfer of the former Trinity Presbyterian Church (Birmingham) property from Whitlock Investment Company to The Vine Church closed on September 26, 2024.

For Action

. *First Presbyterian Church, Auburn, Alabama.*

First Presbyterian Church (Auburn) (the "Church") has requested that the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley (the "Presbytery") consent to the Church's application for, and closing of, a loan (the "Loan") from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (the "Lender"). The Church's session recently approved the Loan and will present the Loan to the Church's congregation for approval. The Loan will be in the principal amount of \$250,000 with a payment term of ten years and will be secured by a mortgage on the Church's property. The Loan proceeds, along with \$30,000 designated by the Church from its capital replacement fund, will be used to address water intrusion issue, including multiple active leaks and the damage they have caused to the interior of the church. The sanctuary roof will be replaced and gutter systems on two different buildings will be repaired. The interior damage to the walls will be re-plastered and re-painted. The estimated total project cost is \$280,000. As is standard practice, the Presbytery is required to guarantee repayment of loans made by the Lender to the Presbytery's member churches.

The trustees recommend and move as follows:

RESOLVED, the First Presbyterian Church of Auburn, Alabama ("**Church**"), located at 143 E. Thatch Ave., Auburn, Alabama 36830, has applied for a loan as follows from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program, Inc. ("**Lender**"): Amount of Loan: \$250,000.00

FURTHER RESOLVED, The Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley, Incorporated, an Alabama nonprofit corporation, ("**Presbytery**") having received and reviewed the Loan application of the Church, a member in good standing of this Presbytery, approves the Loan application, and guarantees the repayment of principal and interest on the loan to the Lender as described above. The officers of the Presbytery are authorized to sign a guarantee and any and all documents of this loan as authorized agents of the Presbytery.

In support of this motion, the Trustees submit the Loan Application provided by the Church. (**Appendix E-19**) **Approved**

B. Property of former Center Point Presbyterian Church (Birmingham).

Background. After the closure of Center Point Presbyterian Church, on March 10, 2021, the property was leased to The Family Worship Center (Pastor Bruce Carpenter) for \$1,000 per month for a term of three years, with an option to purchase the property for \$200,000. Half of the monthly rent was to be credited toward the purchase of the property if the purchase option were exercised. The lease expired by its own terms in March 2024 without the purchase option having been exercised. The Trustees then negotiated as of March 15, 2024, a new lease with The Family Worship Center with rent of \$500 per month, with no option to purchase. On July 5, 2024, the Trustees, acting for the Presbytery, entered into a listing agreement with Tammy Johnson of Commercial Realty Partners, LLC, for the sale of the property. The listing price for the property was \$525,000. Meanwhile, The Family Worship Center began to make improvements to the property, mainly for the purpose of adding the ministry of a day care program for children. The Trustees had the entire property surveyed, which amounts to approximately ten acres. Tammy Johnson marketed the property on three extensive commercial real estate databases and email distribution services. Hundreds of subscribers opened the brochure page describing the property. A large "for sale" sign was erected on the property, which faces Center Point Parkway, a busy thoroughfare. Ms. Johnson also contacted the self-storage business adjacent to the property to ascertain any interest they might have in purchasing the property and expanding their self-storage business. The only offer that has been received for the property comes from Rev. Carpenter, who is offering \$300,000 cash, contingent on obtaining commercial bank financing. The trustees recommend a counter-offer for \$350,000 and, if the counter-offer is rejected, a sale of the property to Rev. Carpenter (or his assigns) for \$300,000, less closing expenses. A copy of the latest version of the real estate sales contract ("Contract") for the property is attached to this report for reference.

Action. The Trustees recommend that the Presbytery authorize the appropriate officers of the Presbytery to execute and deliver the Contract for any purchase price equal to or greater than \$300,000, less closing expenses, and, assuming all conditions of the Contract have been met, to proceed with the closing of the sale of the property. (Appendix E-20) **Approved**

Exhibit A to the Resolution
Officers for Incumbency Certificate

<u>Office</u>	<u>Office currently held by:</u>
Moderator	Deborah Thomas
Vice-Moderator	Jonathan Yarboro
Stated Clerk	Walter J. Wilkins
Recording Clerk	Linda Burrowes
Treasurer	Jean Russell

Living River (Appendix E-21)

Rachel Matthews

There will be a spring youth retreat Feb. 21-23.

Stated Clerk (Appendix E-22)

Jay Wilkins

Action Items:

1. **Approve report of the First-Anniston Admin Commission. (Appendix E-23)**
Approved
2. **Approve report of the Five Mile Admin Commission and their request to dissolve Five Mile and the AC effective December 31, 2024, if the way be clear. (Appendix E- 24) Approved**
3. **Approve the report of the Second Admin Commission (Appendix E-25)**
Approved
4. **Approve the report of Fairfield Highlands Admin Commission to be closed effective today, and approve the request of the AC to be dismissed with thanks for their service. (Appendix E-26 Approved**
5. **Approve the Committee on Representation Report. (Appendix E-27)**
Approved

Presbyterian Women (Appendix E-28, 29)

Adjournment with Prayer

Deborah Thomas

Walter J. Wilkins, Stated Clerk

Linda Burrowes, Recording Clerk