

**PRESBYTERY OF
WESTERN NORTH
CAROLINA**



ADDENDUM

**ONE-HUNDRED TWENTY-FIRST
STATED MEETING
JULY 30, 2019**

**Brevard-Davidson River
Presbyterian Church
Brevard, NC**

ADDENDUM PP-1

Report to the Presbytery of Western North Carolina from the General Presbyter Nominating Committee July 30, 2019

Since being elected at the April presbytery meeting, the General Presbyter Nominating Committee (GPNC) has met twice as a committee and has conducted a series of town hall meetings both in-person and online. At its first meeting, the GPNC met with Wilson Gunn, former Executive Presbyter of National Capital Presbytery, to get an overview of the process of searching for a General Presbyter. The GPNC also determined at that meeting that more listening sessions were needed to hear the concerns and hopes of the wider presbytery regarding this transition in leadership. Those listening sessions were conducted in June, and the GPNC met again in July to consider what we heard. At the July meeting, the GPNC also elected its leadership: Patrick Johnson, Chair; Wanda Neely, Vice-Chair; Katherine Blankenship, Secretary.

Over 25% of the congregations in the Presbytery of Western North Carolina (PWNC) were represented in the town hall meetings, not including the participation of the GPNC itself. There was a strong mix of ruling and teaching elders, those who are retired and active, and those working in validated ministry. The PWNC covers a wide geographic and cultural range, and our congregations are in a diverse array of contexts. The conversations at the meetings were rich and thoughtful, and we feel we heard from voices across the spectrum.

The common theme we heard is that this is the opportune moment for the PWNC to do identity-oriented, transitional work. We need to build trust and unity among all our congregations by engaging and actively listening to the needs and concerns of all stakeholders. This is a time to ask questions about who we are as a presbytery now, in the cultural realities of the 21st century, including our strengths, our needs, and our diversity. We also need to think creatively about how the presbytery can best engage and resource the pastors and congregations of Western North Carolina.

While the need for transitional work was the common theme, we did not hear agreement in the presbytery on the best way to accomplish that work. Some felt that we should move directly to an installed General Presbyter, some advocated for an interim General Presbyter, and others proposed a designated or contracted-term General Presbyter as a middle way. As a GPNC we have weighed the pros and cons of each of these paths and had robust debate amongst ourselves.

We feel strongly, as many in our presbytery do, that the PWNC needs to enter a time of intentional transitional discernment to consider who we are as a presbytery and how we can best live out our calling today. We believe that no matter how we move forward related to our staffing, that is the work ahead of us as a presbytery.

But how do we move forward as a GPNC? Our understanding is that under the charge given to us at the last presbytery meeting we are only authorized to search for an installed General Presbyter, and we are asking today that the presbytery expand our search options. Because presbyteries are different from congregations in the ways they function, the PC(USA) system does not require us to define in advance whether we are searching for an installed or interim position at the presbytery level. We can be flexible in searching for this position, and we are asking the presbytery for permission to do that.

ADDENDUM PP-2

We would like to begin our work by searching for a person who has the gifts to lead us as an installed General Presbyter in the transitional work we need to do, and then, if the way be clear, continue with us into the future. Once we begin searching however, we may find that we need to switch gears and consider calling a person to an interim or designated position. No matter which path we take, we are committed to calling someone who has strong skills in transitional ministry and leadership.

Another theme that we heard repeatedly in our town hall meetings was the desire to care for our staff well during this time of transition. We cannot promise how long this search will take, and our staff need to know that they have the leadership and support to do their work after Rev. White retires. Providing for a smooth transition is the role of the General Council, and we have recommended that the General Council a) establish a transition team that will meet through this period of transition to ensure a smooth handoff to the next General Presbyter; and b) define a clear leadership structure for the transition so that staff and congregations know to whom they should turn for support.

We are humbled to be called to the work of this nominating committee, and we are grateful for your candid views and continued support. Please contact any of us if you have questions, concerns, or recommendations for our committee. We will continue to stay in touch as we go forward.

Respectfully,

The General Presbyter Nominating Committee:

Patrick Johnson, Chair

Wanda Neely, Vice Chair

Katherine Blankenship, Secretary

Hal Bennett

Esta Jarrett

Whit Malone

Melvin Meares

Dan Oedy

John Pea

Pat Reid

Laura Russell

Don Scofield

Debby Vial

Motion: The GPNC recommends that Presbytery grant it permission to pursue the task of seeking the next General Presbyter for the PWNC by focusing on nominating an installed General Presbyter with skills and aptitude for the transitional work needed, with the flexibility of nominating instead either an interim General Presbyter or a designated General Presbyter if one of these alternatives promises to best accomplish the required transitional work.