

**THE PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA
COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY
MR. JAMES TAYLOR, CHAIR
April 25, 2023**

FIRST SECTION

- I. RECOMMEND TO PRESBYTERY THE VALIDATION OF MINISTRY FOR:**
- A. Allen Proctor as Director of the Haden Institute through April 25, 2024.**
 - B. Carol Steele as Vice-President for Programs at Montreat Conference Center through April 25, 2024.**
 - C. Susan Verbrugge as Hospice Chaplain for Care Partners through April 25, 2024.**
 - D. David Bradley as Pastoral Counselor, Marriage and Family Therapist through April 25, 2024.**

SECOND SECTION

The Book of Order provides (G-3.0307) that the Committee on Ministry may be given authority by the Presbytery to find in order calls issued by churches, to approve and present calls for service of ministers, to approve the examination of ministers transferring from other Presbyteries, required by G-3.0306, to dissolve the pastoral relationship in cases where the Congregation and pastor concur, to dismiss ministers to other Presbyteries, and to approve administrative commissions to ordain/install with the provision that such actions be reported at the next stated meeting of the Presbytery. This permission was granted to our Committee on Ministry, most recently on October 26, 2019; therefore, the following actions are hereby reported and are to be admitted to the record.

- I. APPROVED FOR TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP:**
- A. HAROLD BENNETT**
To: Baltimore Presbytery
As: Pastor, Grove Presbyterian Church
Effective: January 8, 2023
 - B. DANA SUTTON**
From: Presbytery of West Virginia
As: Member-at-Large
Effective: March 7, 2023
(COM Attachment 1 – Bio and Statement of Faith)
 - C. LINDSAY JACARUSO**
From: Minnesota Valley Presbytery
As: Member-at-Large
Effective: March 7, 2023
(COM Attachment 2 – Bio and Statement of Faith)
 - D. MICHAEL SHEPARD**
From: Redstone Presbytery
As: Honorably Retired
Effective: April 11, 2023
(COM Attachment 3 – Bio and Statement of Faith)

II. APPROVED TRANSITIONAL PASTOR RELATIONSHIP:

- A. Approved Transitional Pastor Agreement between Lance Perry and Waldensian Presbyterian Church and temporary membership of Lance Perry in PWNC.
May 23, 2023 - May 22, 2024.

III. APPROVED COMMISSIONED PASTOR RELATIONSHIPS:

- A. Peggy Koone and Union Mills Presbyterian Church
Extended: May 1, 2023 - April 30, 2024
- B. James Koone and Union Mills Presbyterian Church
Extended: May 1, 2023 - April 30, 2024
- C. Marla Patchel and Green Street Presbyterian Church
Extended: May 1, 2023 - April 30, 2024

IV. APPROVED THE DISSOLUTION OF PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS:

- A. Tempe Fussell and Franklin First Presbyterian Church
Effective: March 17, 2023

V. APPROVED STATED PASTOR RELATIONSHIPS:

- A. Kitty Rankin Tompkins and Shiloh Presbyterian Church
Effective: January 1, 2023 - May 31, 2023
- B. Betsy Ray and Old Fort Presbyterian Church
Extended: January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023
- C. Garland Honeycutt and Green Mountain Presbyterian Church
Extended: November 1, 2022 - October 31, 2023
- D. Christian Wingard and Dorland Memorial Presbyterian Church
Extended: January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023

VI. APPROVED MINISTRY INFORMATION FORMS:

- A. Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church Associate Pastor
- B. Hickory First Presbyterian Church Associate Pastor

VII. APPROVED MISSION STUDY AND PERMISSION TO ELECT A PNC:

- A. Franklin First Presbyterian Church Pastor
- B. Hendersonville First Presbyterian Church Pastor

VIII. APPROVED AS MODERATOR:

- A. Royce Browder, Franklin First Presbyterian Church
- B. Bobbi White, Quaker Meadows Presbyterian Church

IX. APPROVE OCCASIONAL PASTOR RELATIONSHIP:

- A. Andrew Parkey
From: Abingdon Presbytery
As: Occasional Supply Pastor, Quaker Meadows Presbyterian Church
Effective: January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023

X. APPROVED THE REQUEST FOR HONORABLE RETIREMENT

- A. Curtis Fussell
Effective: January 31, 2023
- B. Tempe Fussell
Effective: March 6, 2023

XI. APPROVED THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION FOR THE ORDINATION OF MAXWELL MICHAELS ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2023 AT NEW HOPE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, GASTONIA.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Responsibility on Commission</u>	<u>Min./Eld.</u>	<u>Church</u>
Byron Wade	Moderator/Preside	Minister	General Presbyter
Dana Seiler	Propound Constitutional Questions	Minister	Unity
Richard Boyce	Preach Sermon	Minister	PWNC
Risa Brandon	Lead in Worship	Elder	New Hope
<u>Guests</u>			
Chris Vogado	Charge the Minister	Minister	Salem Presbytery
Carrie Winebrenner	Charge the Minister	Minister	Whitewater Valley Presbytery

XII. APPROVED THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION FOR THE INSTALLATION OF ELIZABETH NEWMAN ON SUNDAY, APRIL 23, 2023 AT BRYSON CITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BRYSON CITY.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Responsibility on Commission</u>	<u>Min./Eld.</u>	<u>Church</u>
Cam Murchison	Moderator/Preside/Preach the Sermon	Minister	Stated Clerk
Sarah Thornburg	Propound Constitutional Questions	Elder	Asheville First
Collin Caldwell	Propound Constitutional Questions	Elder	Bryson City
Billy Robinson	Charge the Minister	Minister	PWNC
Jamie Dale	Charge the Congregation	Minister	PWNC
Edi Cole	Lead in Worship	Elder	Canton
Allee Williams	Lead in Worship	Elder	Warren Wilson

XIII. THAT the Committee on Ministry presents three (3) amendments to the Presbytery as part of their report for your consideration. (COM Attachment 4)

- 22-E (remove “honorably” before “retired.”)
- 22-I (12 weeks paid family leave in TOC)
- 22-Q (authorizes minimum requirements for severance in TOC)

COM ATTACHMENT 1

Faith Journey of an Accidental Pastor

Dana W. Sutton

Without going into all the details of my early life, I'll just say that I was raised by an active church-going Presbyterian mom and a lapsed Seventh-Day Baptist (yes, a real - and really small group not to be confused with Seventh Day Adventists) dad who mostly went to church with us, but probably would have preferred to stay at home most of the time.

In high school, a few events greatly shaped the course of my vocational journey:

- Participation in church youth groups, and especially in summer workcamps
- Going to a national youth ministry event (the 1980 Presbyterian Youth Triennium)
- Being asked to preach a sermon for youth Sunday
- Somewhat more embarrassing, especially when they announced over the school PA, being voted the "Outstanding Protestant Young Man of the Year" for the Mahoning Valley (Ohio).

All together, these were enough to convince both my mom and our pastor that I was destined - nay called - to ministry. With some hesitation, I enrolled at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary with the intention of becoming... a lawyer. Yes, confusing, I know. The seminary part was an attempt to honor others, while the law school part seemed more like me. (And yet it wasn't, for a host of reasons). After two years of seminary (where I met and married my wife, Jean), I spent a semester and 3 days in law school, at which point God (in the form of questions, conversations with seminary friends and one "odd" law school professor, and an odd sort of "forcefield" I had to push through to enter the law school building) redirected me back to seminary. It was at this point that I began to sense at least a possibility of serving in ministry (possibility or inevitability??).

After graduation, my wife and I moved to the Chicago area where I served for three years as an Associate Pastor (Lombard Community Pres.). A couple years in, I began wondering once again how/whether I really "fit" in ministry. A solo backpacking trip and a nighttime encounter with the Mysterious pushed me to give it another try. Wanting to spend more time together (be careful what you ask for!), we sought a call as co-pastors, which took us to the Huntington, WV area where we stayed for 30 years in various ministries (12 years as co-pastors - both, 10 years in campus ministry - me, 18 years as a marriage and family therapist - Jean, 8 years as a leadership/ministry coach - me, and 2+ years as a transitional pastor - me). Our two sons, Aaron (29) and Carter (26) live in Richmond, VA.

Sensing a need for growth via "disruption," we recently moved to Candler, NC where I continue to work in coaching, while Jean pursues writing and other opportunities. We continue to experience a certain amount of disorientation after so many years in one place, but are enjoying the Asheville area and all it has to offer (including some good friends from way back in our seminary days). I look forward to opportunities to be more engaged in the Presbytery and to get to know folks here, as well as to experience whatever wonders God might yet have in store for this "accidental pastor."

COM ATTACHMENT 1

STATEMENT OF FAITH - Dana W. Sutton

Things I strongly, deeply, and somewhat confusedly believe to be True:

- God is love. (1 Jn. 4.8) In theory and in practice, God is most clearly understood and perceived through the power of love. At times, we are aware of this love as it powers the actions of people, both those aware and those unaware of God's being and purposes. At other times, we may be less aware that this love permeates every layer of creation, including some which may be beyond our comprehension. We call the results "miracles," and they are happening all the time, everywhere. The more we attune our minds, hearts, and actions to the power and presence of love, the more we enjoy life, the universe, and everything, and thus, too, do we become more and more a part of its flow and its play/work.
- Uniquely and thus scandalously (as well as completely mysteriously - Conf. of 1967 9.09), as testified by Holy Scripture, God became present in one of us – Jesus of Nazareth, a fully human, yet fully divine, yet fully human... being. Demonstrating the power of love to subvert other claims to power, Jesus healed, taught, welcomed, communed with, and died alongside – and for the sake of – people, every one of whom is a reflection, an image of this same Jesus/God. (2nd Helvetic Conf. 5.034, et. al.) In a confounding, redemptive act, he was raised to life once again so that his presence and love might forever empower and challenge those called to follow. Each follower of Jesus is invited to discern the reflection of Christ's image, not only as it looks in a mirror (the familiar), but also in the face of the other (the unfamiliar). Carefully and prayerfully considering – and especially valuing – the *differences* in those images helps us be open and attentive to the stranger in our midst, who is in every way, Christ. (Brief Statement of Faith 11.3)
- The Bible provides an account of God's efforts to make grace and good the "default" for our world. We continually interpret and learn from its guidance, including ways *to be* and ways *not to be* faithful followers.
- The church, a failed and failing human institution, is also an active, visible sign of God's presence and grace in our world. Always both at the same time. Called to be "salt and light" (Conf. of Belhar 10.5), we are called to witness (in spite of much evidence to the contrary) to that presence and that grace, and to follow Jesus into the work of reconciliation (Conf. of 1967 9.31) between one another and between us and God, peace, and justice for all — with a special emphasis on those with less privilege, power, and influence in our world. (Conf. of Belhar 10.7). To feed us for and remind us of this work, we are offered the sacraments as a sign and seal of God's claim on us and the Spirit's presence with us. (Larger Catechism 7.272)
- Each person gets to decide which is the more compelling, powerful message: that we are created in God's image, collectively part of the "good" that God proclaimed (Heidelberg Cat. 4.006), or that we each – symbolically and literally – fail to project that image, miss the target, sin, break. (Scots Conf. 3.03) Though I believe both are true, the first has a power to inspire, to raise up, and to bring deep and abiding joy to us and others. So I choose to believe that one more strongly than the second; that love has both the first and the last word.
- Always I hope to be: learning, enjoying, playful, hopeful, curious, both welcomed and welcoming, and sharing in the communities of which I'm part. I seek to offer gifts in ways that encourage, enlighten, and invite new awarenesses of grace in the world and in daily life. I have done so my entire life within the context of the Presbyterian Church, benefitting from both its structure and its flexibility (even while occasionally chafing at one or the other). I don't claim to know whether that is part of God's "providential plans" or merely a "happenstance of grace." But I believe God has been, is, and will continue to be involved in claiming and guiding us, our lives, and our work.

COM ATTACHMENT 2

Lindsay Jacaruso
Brief Biography

I grew up a child of the church with pastors that invited me into the work and wonder of being the Church in the world. It was a safe space for me and a place where I relished the opportunity to greet new friends and cherish old friends of all ages and walks of life. I still believe there is no better way to build and stretch your heart than to invest in the community that is the church.

My pastors saw gifts for me in ministry before I had the sense to know what a call into ministry was, yet I learned quickly as the first church I walked into as a college student saw and nurtured those gifts in me as I developed and ran their youth program. From that moment onwards, I was on a journey in ministry.

I worked in downtown Memphis for a summer before starting seminary and learned of my call to love and serve the people who we do not see in many traditional church settings – people who are immigrant, outcast, poor, homeless, queer, native. This community is the part of my call that makes me a bridge builder – healing wounds the church has created and discovering opportunities to reconcile and make new ways of being a better church.

I served several churches and ministry settings in Austin, TX where I graduated from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary in 2013. I began my first ordained call as a resident minister at First Presbyterian Church in Ann Arbor, MI. Following that call I served as Associate Pastor for Mission, Young Adults, and Congregational Care at First Presbyterian Church in Burlington, NC. My most recent call had me in Mankato, MN serving as the head of staff at First Presbyterian Church where I got to enjoy using my gifts to create and innovate in church revitalization.

In October of 2022, my spouse Martin and I welcomed our son August, and we completed our move to Western North Carolina that is closer to some family and hosts a dream job for Martin at Western Carolina University in outdoor programs. This also fulfills our mutual dream of living in the mountains. I am taking my own sabbatical from full-time church ministry during this season while I learn to parent and settle into life in the mountains. I have applied to the Spiritual Direction Certification Program at Columbia Theological Seminary that I hope (upon completion) to put to good use in service of ministers and lay people alike in WNC. Additionally, I look forward to being a part of the presbytery, assisting with pulpit supply as my schedule allows, and reconnecting with some old colleagues and friends in the area.

COM ATTACHMENT 2

LJacaruso – Statement of Faith

I believe in a God who plays.

From the beginning of creation,
when the Spirit marveled over the possibilities.

Building trees like sandcastles and making oceans like splashing puddles -
God played, imagined, breathed creation into being from the creative being God is.
God continues to play creatively in the church and in the world, opening opportunities
for us to respond faithfully to the loving imagination that propels the church forward as a
beacon of a hope and proclaimers of God's peaceful and glorious reign.

I believe in a Jesus who moves.

Wandering from city to city with faithfully foolish disciples,
Turning tables, disturbing social orders, drawing lines in the sand.
Inviting the deaf and lame, the outcast and sinner,
to get up, take up mats, discard linens of death,
walk, wash, and proclaim the wonders of God.

Jesus cried out with the broken world,
bearing the weight of all sin as he was whipped, stripped and crowned with thorns.
With every created being etched on his heart, Jesus died.

Defeating all hell and sin and death, Jesus rose victorious and claimed a place for all
God's beloved in the wonder of what lies ahead.

Jesus still moves - wanders in our midst and can be seen in the faces of the homeless
and outcast,

in the body of the church at work in worship and mission. Jesus appears everywhere
God's people are called to fulfill the greatest commandment of love for one another.

I believe in the Holy Spirit who dances.

Meeting Job in a whirlwind, and parting seas for safe passage,
Letting God's beloved go through the furnace unharmed,
releasing a final breath in death on the cross,
and inspiring holy chaos in language and tongues of fire.

The Spirit dances on our hearts until we hear our calls to serve,
frolics through our worship that we might be in awestruck wonder of God, whispers
through the searing pain of death promising a resurrection.

God plays and moves and dances.

God laughs and wonders and invites us to do the same. For it is in those moments
where we are reminded,
of the beloved of God that we are.

So we come to worship as the Church - bent and broken and beautiful.

We find grace and belonging again and again as Baptism gives us sign and seal.

We humbly approach the table knowing Jesus calls us to Feast even when we are
wretched cowards and sinners and hypocrites.

We open the Holy Book - pouring over the story that saves us every day.

And in these things, the haphazard gathering we call the Church begins to learn to play,
to move, to dance, and to be - the hands and feet of Jesus in the world.

COM ATTACHMENT 3

Brief Biography (Faith Journey)

Michael Shepard

I graduated from college in 1973 with a General Elementary Teaching degree. At the time there were very few jobs available. So I began working at first at a nursing home as an Orderly. That job taught me compassion and care for the elderly. I learned so much about the workings of nursing care and about human need. My dad pushed me to do more and kept telling me I was wasting my degree. Yet no teaching jobs were available. I then took a job at Ciba Pharmaceutical Shipping department to make a little more money. The job was routine and boring, but it helped my wallet. During that time, I volunteered to be the Junior High Advisor at my local church. There my girlfriend (Marcia) and I worked with 2 different seminary students (who attended Princeton Theological Seminary). Both men encouraged me to go to seminary. I did not want to go back to school. I just couldn't bear the thought of studying and reading. One day while I was in prayer, I literally and figuratively, heard the voice of God speak to me. This came to me in April 1974. First, I got the message to marry Marcia. I responded, "I don't have a job, I couldn't support her." Again, it came "marry Marcia". When I accepted that statement I asked, "Lord what do you want me to do?" The response was "Go to Seminary". I said I didn't want to go back to school. I heard it again "Go to seminary" and after I said OK but you better be with me cause I can't do it myself. So I started the process, asked Marcia to marry me and we wed on May 17, 1975. I started Princeton Seminary the summer of 1975. I went to Princeton for 3 years, taking courses throughout the year including summers. All the while I kept seeking God's presence in my life to help me through the 3 years of school. My sense of Call came while working with the Junior High Youth of my church. It came through the encouragement of the many men and women I worked with, from my pastor, the session, the seminary students and the congregation.

I had worked a few years before I went to seminary, so I was able to put some money away to pay for the seminary education. I also got support from my local church through the scholarship money they provided to help me, and my wife pay for Seminary education. I also felt confirmed that this was God Calling me because I applied to only Princeton Seminary in the spring of 1974 to start in 1975. My acceptance came through a month before we were married in April 1975. We got our address for married Student housing the week we got back from our honeymoon. That was faith happening in our lives.

Seminary was a lot of work, and I did well but my faith grew and grew. I took Greek and Hebrew and CPE training in the summer months. When it came to my senior year, I was so scared I would not find a job. My wife was pregnant, and I needed to find a job. I started to interview, and my first interview was with Gettysburg Presbyterian Church and it became my first call into the ministry of Word and Sacrament. I was hired to work with Christian Education and Youth. I was very idealistic with high hopes. I learned very quickly how pastoral ministry worked. The Senior pastor listened to me and helped guide me into how things work. At first, I felt disillusioned, but my faith was very strong, and I kept plugging away at it. God then called me to a pastorate of a small church northeast of Pittsburgh. As a sole pastor, I quickly learned the things you could do and could not do. I worked to enlarge the congregations view of Christ mission outside of themselves. My faith remained strong despite the struggles I faced with members of the session and the congregation. I eventually realized that I worked better with youth and Christian Education. So after 4 ½ years I accepted another call to a large church in Uniontown PA working with children, youth and Christian Education. By this time my wife and I had 3 children, and we were not making enough money, Marcia went to work as a full-time nurse which was a big help. I then left the church to become an interim pastor (before formal training ever was established).

I worked in several churches throughout Redstone Presbytery. I served on CE committee, Youth Committee, and eventually the COM Committee before I moved to North Carolina. I served as a Stated Supply for 27 years at a small church First Presbyterian Church of Fayette City and 13 years at Little Redstone Presbyterian Church. These churches allowed me to perfect the drama of worship and sacraments. This was so appreciated. I developed many Tenebrae and Taizé services until I retired. I then moderated several sessions in the presbytery while living in PA.

My faith journey is one that was an everyday experience. To this day I talk to God in so many ways. I know his presence with me has brought me to where I am today. I wasn't always happy the way life dealt me certain situations, but God was always with me and I am blessed for everything I went through. It makes me the faithful person I am today.

COM ATTACHMENT 3

Statement of Faith

Michael Shepard

1 I believe in God: as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is one in a holy mystery we call the Trinity. God
2 is the creator and sustainer of the universe and without God's sustaining power nothing can exist. Out of
3 love, God created humans in God's own image to have fellowship with the Trinity. I believe God gave
4 humans freedom so we may choose between good and evil. We also have freedom to choose to delight in
5 God and give God the praise that is due. However, we humans turn away from God, focusing on selfish
6 desires. This alienation from God is called sin.

7
8 I believe God came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ to effect reconciliation between us and God.
9 Jesus, Son of God, born of Mary by the Holy Spirit, accepted and experienced the human condition and
10 gave up His life to save us from sin and reconcile us to God.

11
12 I believe Jesus challenged people to love God. Jesus taught people to respond to God's love for them
13 by repenting and trusting in God. In His love for us, Jesus freely gave up his life on the cross. I believe
14 Jesus' death makes it possible for every person to be free from the bondage of sin. By raising Jesus from
15 death to life, God's great love is expressed and victory over sin and death was won and given to humanity
16 as a gift of hope. Christ redeems us and brings us back into fellowship with God through this free gift of
17 grace. Christ's act of redemption and reconciliation summons us to respond to God with thanksgiving and
18 praise.

19
20 As Christ walked upon the earth, teaching and serving others, we too are called to care for others and
21 proclaim God's love, hope, and salvation. To help us live this life, God sent the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is
22 our companion, comforter, and guide. The Spirit brings to those who trust in Jesus Christ, the hope of
23 final union with God. We learn this through the Holy Scriptures, which are God's word to us.

24
25 The Holy Spirit binds together the body of Christ, the Church. The Church gathers for fellowship and
26 to worship God through the Word and Sacraments. As members of the body, we are empowered by the
27 this fellowship with one another and with God. The worship experience teaches us, challenges us,
28 commissions us and prepares us for works of service. The Church goes out into the world to spread
29 God's word to all people, to be a beacon of light and hope in a world that is hurting, and to share in God's
30 reconciling work. This work is that which seeks justice for all people and peace and unity within the
31 church and throughout the world.

32
33 The Sacraments are given to the church by the Lord and by the Holy Spirit become a means of grace to
34 to us. They express in visible form spiritual truths. The Sacrament of Baptism signifies admittance into
35 the family of God. By baptism, we are shown to be God's children. In the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
36 the Church celebrates the redemptive life and death of Jesus Christ. In this act of communion with Christ,
37 we are fed, nurtured, and sustained in fellowship with the God, through Christ's Spirit. These are also
38 signs of Christ's continual presence with us and of his promised return.

39
40 I believe the Bible is God's word to us and the authoritative rule of faith and life. Through the Holy
41 Spirit, the Bible instructs, inspires, and transforms us so we may live lives more pleasing to God.

42
43 My acceptance of Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior has made a great impact on my life. It is now
44 possible for me to live a new life. Jesus Christ has brought me this far, and my faith in Jesus' saving work
45 will continue to go with me, now and always.

22-E — G-2.0503

MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

G-2.0503 CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP (POL-07)

The 225th General Assembly (2022) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-2.0503 in the Form of Government be amended as follows?

(Deleted text is in ~~strike through~~; added text is in *italics*.)

“G-2.0503 Categories of Membership

A minister of the Word and Sacrament is a member of a presbytery and shall be engaged in a ministry validated by that presbytery, a member-at-large as determined by the presbytery, or ~~honorably~~ retired. ...

... c. ~~Honorably~~ Retired

Upon request of a member of presbytery, the presbytery may designate the member ~~honorably~~ retired ~~because of age or physical or mental disability.~~”

Background and Rationale

The only designation of retirement for ministers of the Word and Sacrament allowed in the current *Book of Order* is “Honorably Retired.” That designation may be perfectly fitting for many Presbyterian ministers as they retire from active pastoral roles, but presbyteries sometimes face situations in which a minister’s service has been marked by difficulties and challenges that do not rise to the level of formal disciplinary charges and censure, but which are hardly worthy of the label “Honorable.”

An example of such a situation might be when a pastor has acted inappropriately but no disciplinary charges are brought because of the belief that the damage to a particular church or harmed person would be more devastating than just letting a pastor leave. Victims are then revictimized when that pastor is granted the status of “Honorably Retired.” Another factor might be that church members or others mistrust or do not understand the processes to bring charges. A third example is when a pastor commits boundary violations after honorably serving and leaving a congregation to move to other endeavors. There may also be situations that occurred during a pastor’s membership in a previous presbytery that could be unreported during a transfer process and only later come to light following retirement in a different presbytery.

So how do presbyteries today respond when ministers with service marked by difficulties or challenges on their records seek retirement? Some may maintain those ministers as members at-large or in other in-between statuses rather than offering retirement, to avoid characterizing the minister’s service as “Honorable.” Other presbyteries may go ahead and honorably retire ministers of all types, regardless of the quality and faithfulness of their service. In doing so, however, the term “Honorably” loses its meaning for anyone. Such a retirement may confuse or, as noted above, revictimize people who have been harmed by a troubled pastorate and who may feel that the presbytery is praising the pastor’s service despite the gravity of its problems.

COM ATTACHMENT 4

The proposed amendment would maintain the “Retired” category but remove the mandatory designation of “Honorably” that now applies to all retirements. The new designation of “Retired” would be effective for retirements approved by presbyteries on or after the effective date of the amendment under G-6.04e of the *Book of Order*.

This proposed amendment would have no impact whatsoever on a minister of the Word and Sacrament’s access to Board of Pension retirement benefits. That Board of Pensions process is completely separate from a presbytery granting “Retired” status to a minister on its rolls.

Advice—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC)

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 225th General Assembly (2020) that POL-07 presents issues. The item seeks to amend G-2.0503 and G-2.0503c by striking “honorably” before “retired” in the two places where it occurs, and by adding “or other factors satisfactory to the presbytery” to G-2.0503c.

The ACC finds that deleting “honorably” does not alter the substance of those provisions or affect other constitutional provisions.

The ACC advises the assembly, however, that a similar overture was considered by the 210th GA (1998). The overture was referred to the Office of the General Assembly, which presented an amended overture to the 211th GA (1999). That overture would have removed “honorably” but also included a new provision that would have allowed a presbytery to “designate a retired minister as an honorably retired minister if the presbytery is moved by affection and gratitude to do so.” The ACC did not raise any constitutional issues to the proposed amendment, which was subsequently approved by the 211th GA (1999), but then failed to receive the affirmative vote of a majority of the presbyteries.

The amendment as proposed, in addition to striking “honorably” adds “or other factors satisfactory to the presbytery.” The ACC is unaware of any factors other than those already listed in G-2.0503c that would appropriately lead to the retirement of a minister, and the rationale includes no discussion of the additional language. The ACC is concerned that there could be unintended consequences of this language and advises that if the assembly believes that the intent of this overture is appropriate, the additional words “or other factors satisfactory to the presbytery” be stricken.

The Assembly Committee on Polity amended the overture language following advice from the ACC and then approved Item POL-07, 28/2. The 225th General Assembly (2022) approved Item POL-07, 270/128.

For the full report on POL-07, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/3000082/business>.

22-I — G-2.0804

CALL AND INSTALLATION

G-2.0804 TERMS OF CALL (HSB-06)

The 225th General Assembly (2022) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-2.0804 in the Form of Government be amended as follows?

(Added text is in *italics*.)

“G-2.0804 Terms of Call

The terms of call shall always meet or exceed any minimum requirement of the presbytery in effect when the call is made. The session shall review annually the minister’s terms of call and shall propose for congregational action (G-1.0501) such changes as the session deems appropriate, provided that they meet the presbytery’s minimum requirements. The call shall include *provision for a minimum of twelve weeks paid family medical leave and participation in the benefits plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) including both pension and medical coverage, or any successor plan approved by the General Assembly.*”

Background and Rationale

This proposed amendment originated as a recommendation from the Family Leave Policy Task Force as Recommendation 1. The Family Leave Policy Task Force provided the following edited rationale in part:

Recommendation 2 approved by the General Assembly included a General Assembly policy definition of Family Leave as:

- Leave to accommodate the birth, foster placement, or adoption of a child.
- Leave to provide care to an ill or disabled family member.
- Leave to heal following a loss or tragic event.

In recent years the General Assembly has taken actions to encourage various councils of the church to honor the full humanity of its members and employees. The 221st General Assembly (2014) encouraged presbyteries and churches to create parental leave policies with the minimum of six weeks and 100% pay without using other forms of paid leave. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) also voted to encourage the six agencies of the General Assembly (Board of Pensions, Foundation, Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation) to improve their paid parental leave policies in accordance with the advice of the 221st General Assembly (2014). The 223rd General Assembly created a task force with a charge of determining the most effective method for ensuring a robust family leave policy throughout the PC(USA). Through its research and deliberations, the Family Leave Policy Task Force (FLPTF) has determined the most effective method of accomplishing this goal for called and installed ministers is through a constitutional mandate. The task force recommends that family leave be interpreted as a dimension of wholeness, one that responds to the need for time away from work. The task force believes there are theological, developmental, and societal justifications for committing to a denomination-wide family leave policy, and while this specific

COM ATTACHMENT 4

recommendation provides for called and installed pastors, the task force would urge adoption of this same provision of care for all PC(USA) workers.

Advice—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC)

This item proposed to introduce specific minimum terms of call within the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This step creates constitutional problems, and we recommend disapproval of Item HSB-06. The language of Item HSB-06 introduces administrative-operational detail into the *Book of Order*. Councils have a responsibility and should be trusted to adopt policies appropriate to their circumstances that support and nurture their members, families and staff (see G3.0301c, for example). The choice of twelve weeks reflects the societal sensibilities of the present day toward fair employment practices. Likely changes in those sensibilities mean that G-2.0804, if amended in this fashion now, may well require further and repeated amendment in the years ahead. Such amendments are more appropriate in an operations manual than a constitutional document.

Advice and Counsel—From the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC)

The Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns recommends the approval of HSB-06. The PC(USA), as an employer from the national level down to the local congregation, has the opportunity to model just employment practices through family leave policies that encourage balance in life between work and family and are consistent with PC(USA) theology and policies on work and workers.

Advice and Counsel—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy advises that the 225th General Assembly (2022) approve item HSB-06. As a denomination, we have affirmed the importance of supporting families. However, in practice, we have created a situation where the majority of our pastors have been left with no parental leave. Without a paid family leave policy, the PC(USA) forces parents to make a choice between proper healthcare for themselves and their children, and adequate income to provide for their families. It forces family members with sick parents or children to choose work over care, which is antithetical to our call to be compassionate to the ill and infirm. By approving this amendment, the PC(USA) can shape our polity in a way that shows the value we place on human life and relationship. Need to care for individuals who are victim of sexual misconduct and the need to hold accountable those who commit sexual misconduct against others. However, we still fall short in identifying and addressing situations where sexual misconduct occurs. This item seeks to strengthen the Church’s response to sexual misconduct and put procedures in place at all levels to prevent sexual misconduct from happening. ACSWP commends the work of the Survivors of Sexual Misconduct Task Force and wholeheartedly lifts up their work presented in this overture.

Advice and Counsel—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC)

The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee advises that the 225th General Assembly (2022) approve this item. The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC) supports the need to have appropriate time of leave for ministers.

Comment—From the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR)

The General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR) acknowledges that the procedures of employment matter. Unfortunately, in the area of parental and family leave, the denominational instruction is not as clear. GACOR has continuously supported efforts to create an equitable family leave policy. Often councils and individual congregations do not have parental/family

COM ATTACHMENT 4

leave policies in place and must do so if and when the case arises (putting the individual requesting the leave in a precarious position). This can result in decision-making that focuses on the financial cost of the leave rather than the care of the leader and family. The proposed amendment would provide the framework for individuals needing parental or family leave. Committees on representation at the presbytery and synod levels, or the committees tasked with such work, should serve as a resource to their councils concerning employment practices as stated in G-3.0103.

The Assembly Committee on Health Safety and Benefits amended and approved Item HSB 06, 34/3. The 225th General Assembly (2022) amended and approved Item HSB 06, 346/33.

For the full report on HSB-06, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/3000084/business>.

22-Q — G-3.0303c

THE PRESBYTERY

G-3.0303c RELATIONS WITH SESSIONS (MC-03)

The 225th General Assembly (2022) directed the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall G-3.0303c in the Form of Government be amended as follows?

(Added text is in *italics*.)

“G-3.0303 Relations with Sessions ...

“... c. establish minimum compensation standards, *including provisions for dissolution terms, for pastoral calls and for those serving in temporary pastoral service, Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators within the presbytery;*”

Background and Rationale

[Editor’s note: This rationale was prepared for the original overture, which was significantly amended by the assembly and may or may not apply to the proposed amendment above.]

In 1993, the General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission ruled in the case Saurbaugh v. the Presbytery of Great Rivers that “the *Book of Order* does not give the presbyteries power to require congregations to pay compensation upon dissolution of pastoral relationships” (*Minutes*, 1994, Part I, p. 155, Remedial Case 206-13,11.094 attached). In subsequent years, the church has maintained that while a presbytery can have guidelines and policies concerning severance for ministers at the dissolution of a pastorate, the presbytery has no authority to enforce those policies. This overture seeks to remedy that omission in the *Book of Order* by making explicit the authority of presbyteries to create and enforce severance policies by linking that authority to the power to set minimum wages and approve calls.

The overture does not attempt to set a national severance policy but rather to clarify the presbytery’s relationship to both the session and the minister during times of transition.

Advice—From the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC)

[Editor’s note: This advice was prepared for the original overture, which was significantly amended by the assembly.]

The ACC advises the 225th General Assembly (2022) to disapprove [original] MC-03. ...

The ACC finds that nothing in the proposed amendment would change the requirement that only agreed-upon [by the congregation approving terms or change to terms of call] terms of dissolution are enforceable

COM ATTACHMENT 4

Advice and Counsel—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP)

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) advises that the 225th General Assembly (2022) approve this item.

When a pastor and a church need to end their mutual relationship, there needs to be equity in severance. Sometimes a pastor leaves without a just severance, which creates unfair stress in a time of transition. Some pastors might receive a fair severance package, others might receive none. This overture calls for presbyteries to establish minimums to prevent both undue hardship and retaliation in the moments that lead to the termination of the relationship between pastor and church.

According to the 2009 “God’s Work in Women’s Hands: Just Compensation and Just Compensation,” the PC(USA) defines pay equity as seeking fairness in compensation. While the policy addresses gender discrimination in compensation, this call for equity should apply to severance packages regardless of gender. By requiring presbyteries to set minimum severance policies, the denomination can move toward a more equitable compensation in the church.

The Assembly Committee on Mid Councils amended the overture language and then approved Item MC-03, 32/0. The 225th General Assembly (2022) approved Item MC-03, 386/18.

For the full report on MC-03, go to <https://www.pc-biz.org/#/committee/3000080/business>.