

**THE PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA  
COMMISSION ON MINISTRY**

*(formerly Committee on Ministry)*

**REV. MICHAEL POULOS, CHAIR**

**July 26, 2025**

**FIRST SECTION**

- I. RECOMMEND to Presbytery a first reading of the new Dissolution and Terms Policy for Teaching Elders with anticipated debate and action at the October 2025 presbytery meeting. (COM Attachment 1)**
- II. RECOMMEND to Presbytery a first reading of the new Anti-Harassment Policy with anticipated debate and action at the October 2025 presbytery meeting. (COM attachment 2)**

**SECOND SECTION**

*The Book of Order provides (G-3.0307) that the Commission 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 Commission on Ministry; therefore, the following actions are hereby reported and are to be admitted to the record.*

**I. APPROVED FOR TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP:**

**A. Allison Wehrung**

From: Presbytery of Saint Andrew

As: Active, Director of Programs at Montreat Conference Center

Effective: May 6, 2025

(See COM Attachment 3 for Bio and Statement of Faith)

**B. Mike McCracken**

From: Trinity Presbytery

As: Active, Pastor at Banner Elk Presbyterian

Effective: July 7, 2025

(See COM Attachment 4 for Bio and Statement of Faith)

**C. Rob Evans**

From: Salem Presbytery

As: Retired

Effective: June 3, 2025

(See COM Attachment 5 for Bio and Statement of Faith)

**II. APPROVED TEMPORARY PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS - TRANSITIONAL PASTOR:**

- A. Paul Smith and Arbor Dale Presbyterian Church  
Effective: May 7, 2025 through May 7, 2026
- B. Jody Welker and First Presbyterian Church (Newton)  
Contract Extension From: July 20, 2025 until August 31, 2025
- C. Julie Hester and First Presbyterian Church (Lenoir)  
Effective: June 15, 2025 – June 14, 2026

**III. APPROVED COMMISSIONED PASTOR AGREEMENTS:**

- A. Peggy Koone and Union Mills Presbyterian  
From: May 1, 2025 through April 20, 2026
- B. Jimmy Koone and Union Mills Presbyterian  
From: May 1, 2025 through April 20, 2026
- C. Marla Patchel and Green Street Presbyterian  
From: May 1, 2025 through April 30, 2026
- D. Leslie Peterson and Walnut Presbyterian  
From: May 1, 2025 through May 1, 2026
- E. Will Upchurch and Lowell Presbyterian  
From: June 1, 2025 to May 31, 2026
- F. Debbie Lesenger and Cherryville First Presbyterian  
From: June 1, 2025 through June 1, 2026
- G. John Pea and Robinson Memorial Presbyterian  
From: August 1, 2025 through July 31, 2026
- H. Margaret Burgess and Dallas Presbyterian  
From: May 18, 2025 through May 18, 2026

**IV. APPROVED CHANGE OF MEMBERSHIP STATUS**

- A. Mark Stanley from Active to Retired  
Effective: September 30, 2024 (retroactive)

**V. APPROVED VALIDATION OR REVALIDATION OF MINISTRIES THRU JULY 2026**

- A. David Smith as Post-Doctoral Researcher and University Lecturer at the Department of Protestant Theology of Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany and as Parish Associate with responsibility for international services at the Schlosskirche of the University of Bonn, Germany. Furthermore, David Smith was approved to administer communion up to four times per semester in the Schlosskirche in Bonn, and up to twice per semester in the context of his role at Frankfurt. This would include serving communion in the Haus der Stille and during faculty excursions, which occur once per semester.
- B. Tommy Brown as Executive Director of William Black Lodge in Montreat.
- C. John Campbell as a pastoral counselor with Eastatoo Trail Counseling & Consultation Center, LLC, Brevard.
- D. Dennis Hysom as Executive Director for Federal Presbyterian Chaplaincies.
- E. Allen Proctor as President of the Haden Institute.

**VI. APPROVED PASTORAL RELATIONSHIP AND TERMS OF CALL****A. Mike McCracken and Banner Elk Presbyterian Church**

<b>Effective Salary</b>		\$100,00.00
Base	\$58,000.00	
Housing Allowance	\$42,000.00	
<b>Social Security Equivalent</b>		\$ 7,650.00
<b>Professional Accounts</b>		
Professional Expenses		\$ 6,000.00
Professional Development		\$3,000.00
Other		\$4,500.00
<b>Board of Pensions</b>		\$26,000.00

**VII. CHANGE IN VOTING SCHEDULE**

The second reading and action on the revisions to the Policy for Transitional to Installed Pastor, presented to Presbytery for a first reading in April 2025, will happen at the October 2025 meeting.

**VIII. APPROVED A NEW POLICY AND GUIDANCE REGARDING FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE**

This policy is included in the packet for the use by local sessions as they implement the new Book of Order requirement. (See COM Attachment 6)

**IX. RECEIVED AND APPROVED THE ATTACHED REPORT OF TERMS OF CALL.**  
(See COM Attachment 7).

# COM ATTACHMENT 1

## **Dissolution of Terms Policy for Teaching Elders Presbytery of Western Carolina Approved by the presbytery:**

Per Book of Order section G-2.08, any pastoral call is a three-way agreement between the congregation and the Pastor with the concurrence of the Presbytery, and, as such, a call may not be dissolved without the concurrence of the Presbytery.

Per Book of Order section G-2.0804, under certain circumstances, following the dissolution of call, the Pastor may be entitled to continued pay and benefits to support them as they transition into a new form of service.

The following situations **are not eligible** for continued pay and benefits.

- The Pastor chooses to accept another pastoral position or form of full-time employment.
- The Pastor chooses to retire (G-2.0503c)
- The Pastor is no longer eligible to serve as Pastor (G-2.0507, G-2.0407, G-2.0508)
- The Pastor chooses to resign for “personal reasons” without providing additional information.

In these situations, a Pastor’s final date of service is their last date of employment, and there should be no further compensation or reimbursement of expenses after that day.<sup>1</sup>

The following situations **are eligible** for continued pay and benefits.

- Negotiated Dissolution – The pastor or the session may request that the Commission on Ministry assist in negotiating a mutually agreed upon end of the Pastoral relationship under the following circumstances.
  - o The position can no longer be financially sustained at the present level of service, or the church is closing.
  - o Conflict and disagreement between the pastor and members of the church make it prudent for the pastoral relationship to end.
  - o Any other situation that brings the viability and sustainability of the Pastoral relationship into question.
- Medical Disability or Incapacitation – The PWNC Policy and Guidance Regarding Family and Medical Leave shall take precedence. If a Pastor becomes physically or mentally impaired to the point she/he is unable to function, the Pastoral relationship may need to be dissolved. In these situations, the Pastor and Session should work closely with representatives of the Commission on Ministry as well as the Board of Pensions to ensure that all applicable guidelines are adhered to and benefit opportunities considered.
- Dissolution for Cause – A Pastoral relationship may be dissolved by the Presbytery as a result of either judicial action or because the church’s mission demands it (G-2.0904).

<sup>1</sup> A Pastor is eligible to be reimbursed for expenses after their final date of employment, assuming those expenses were incurred and submitted on or before their final date of active service.

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In these situations, the Pastor shall be entitled to the following:

- A minimum of three months of full pay, defined as effective salary, benefits, and SECA offset (hereafter defined as severance) following their final date of active service.
- Any reimbursable accounts may only be utilized before the final date of service, and continued use of these funds is not included in the terms of dissolution.
- The Pastor and Session may agree to a longer period of continued pay and benefits, but this is subject to subsequent approval by the congregation at a duly called congregational meeting.
- If the Pastor receives full-time or comparable employment, including any form of Pastoral service at a similar number of hours, prior to the end of the severance period, the severance terms and final dates of coverage shall be prorated accordingly.

Process for Dissolution of Terms:

1. The Session, Pastor, or Administrative Commission notifies the Commission on Ministry in writing of their desire to have the call dissolved and provide a brief overview of the primary reasons for seeking dissolution.
2. If the Pastor does not wish to request additional severance terms beyond those described above, the Pastor shall notify the Session in writing of this request, ask that the Session concur with the request that the call be dissolved, and call a congregational meeting for the purpose of dissolving the call.
3. If the Pastor wishes to request more than the minimum terms described above or the Session believes that the situation at hand is not eligible for severance:
  - I. The Commission on Ministry shall appoint individuals, including members of the Presbytery staff, active members of COM, and/or other members of Presbytery to meet with all relevant parties.
  - II. The COM team shall supply a copy of this document as well as any other related documents to all parties **before** their first meeting.
  - III. The Session or Administrative Commission, Pastor, and COM negotiate and agree to the terms of dissolution.
4. A signed dissolution agreement, including the severance terms and other stipulations and parameters, shall be prepared and agreed to, in principle, by all relevant parties.
5. The agreed-upon terms shall be included in the call for the congregational meeting, and the complete agreement shall be made available to all attending the meeting in person.
6. For the congregational meeting to dissolve the call:
  - I. Someone other than the Pastor shall moderate the congregational meeting.
  - II. The terms of dissolution shall be shared, and if the Pastor is only receiving the minimum terms of dissolution, the congregation should be informed that those terms are a matter of policy. In no circumstance may the terms be amended or re-negotiated during the meeting.
  - III. The meeting shall include a quorum of the congregation's membership, time for questions, and speaking for and against the motion.

# COM ATTACHMENT 1

- IV. The vote shall be taken by written ballot, with tellers being identified before hand and the appointed Moderator or other representative of COM serving as observer for the counting.
- V. The motion requires a simple majority to pass.
- 7. If the motion passes, the parties shall sign the agreement (which shall be retained by COM), with copies furnished to other parties.
- 8. If the motion does not pass, the Commission on Ministry shall intervene per G-2.0903-4.

# COM ATTACHMENT 2

## **WESTERN NC PRESBYTERY POLICY ON ANTI-HARASSMENT**

Approved by COM, May 2025

### **BIBLICAL BACKGROUND**

God calls God's people to be a blessing to all humanity; to be reconciled and reconcilers. Believing that we have been created in God's Image, we commit to the reconciling work necessary until all peoples find themselves integrated into the whole of society and treated with dignity and righteous justice. The texts below are two that undergird this policy:

Micah 6

He has told you, O mortal, what is good,  
and what does the Lord require of you  
but to do justice and to love kindness  
and to walk humbly with your God?

Galatians 3:26-28 – So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

### **OUR COMMITMENT TO ANTI-HARASSMENT IN THE CHURCH**

The Presbytery of Western North Carolina of the Presbyterian Church (USA) seeks to form disciples whose lives and behaviors conform to the teachings of Jesus Christ. Jesus sets a high bar for personal conduct and may be summarized in Jesus' command "to love God and to love your neighbor as yourself."

The Presbytery of Western North Carolina is committed to maintaining an environment free from harassment or discrimination against any individual regardless of race, sex, age, mental or physical health status, national origin or ancestry, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or genetic information.

The Presbytery of Western North Carolina expects its employees, Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Certified Christian Educators, Commissioned Ruling Elders, Inquirers and Candidates under care of the presbytery to conduct themselves in a Christ-like manner that supports and maintains a workplace free of harassment and discrimination for our employees, members, and those with whom we minister.

Employees, Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Certified Christian Educators, Commissioned Ruling Elders, Inquirers, and Candidates under care of the presbytery are required by the Book of Order (G-2) to receive boundary training authorized by the presbytery once every 36 months. The boundary training shall include the topics of sexual misconduct, child sexual abuse prevention, anti-harassment and anti-discrimination.

# COM ATTACHMENT 2

## DEFINITION AND EXAMPLES OF ANTI-HARASSMENT

Harassment is unwelcome conduct that is based on race, ethnicity, religion, sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity, or pregnancy), national origin, age, disability, or genetic information (including family medical history). Harassment becomes unlawful where 1) enduring the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment, or 2) the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive. Anti-discrimination laws also prohibit harassment against individuals in retaliation for filing a discrimination charge, testifying, or participating in any way in an investigation, proceeding, or lawsuit under these laws, or opposing employment practices that they reasonably believe discriminate against individuals.

Offensive conduct may include, but is not limited to, offensive jokes, slurs, epithets or name-calling, physical assaults or threats, intimidation, ridicule or mockery, insults or put-downs, offensive objects or pictures, and interference with work performance. Harassment can occur in a variety of circumstances, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area, an agent of the employer, a co-worker, or a non-employee.
- The victim does not have to be the person harassed, but can be anyone affected by the offensive conduct.
- Harassment may occur with or without economic harm

Per the PWNC's current Sexual Misconduct Policy, sexual harassment is defined by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to or rejection of this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

## PROCEDURE AND COMPLAINT

An employee may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Similarly, a minister member, inquirer, candidate, certified Christian Educator, Commissioned Ruling Elder or member of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) who engages in this type of behavior may be subject to disciplinary action as is detailed in the Rules of Discipline section of the Book of Order. The Presbytery of Western North Carolina also reserves the right to take other disciplinary or remedial actions as imposed by the Personnel Committee, Commission on Ministry (COM), the Commission on Preparation for Ministry, or the Presbytery itself. The harassment of an employee or other person participating in any ministry of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina or its constituent congregations based on race, color or national origin or other protected classes as named above is also prohibited.

Complaint Procedure: Any presbytery professional or presbytery volunteer who believes an incident of harassment has occurred shall make a complaint in writing to the Stated Clerk in a timely manner.



# COM ATTACHMENT 2

Retaliation: Anyone filing a harassment complaint or assisting in the investigation of a complaint shall not be adversely affected in terms and conditions of employment nor discriminated against in any manner because of the complaint.

## **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

When the activities or conduct of any member, staff, or other church leader is considered to be contrary to the policies and expectations of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina or is considered to be disruptive to the operations of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina, its programs, or ministries, the procedure for potential corrective action outlined above and/or in the Rules of Discipline shall be followed.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

*I acknowledge that I have read the above Anti-Harassment Policy and will present any questions I have to the General Presbyter of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina. I understand that I am responsible for adhering to the Anti-Harassment policy.*

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*Printed Name*

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*Signature and Date*

*To be submitted to the Stated Clerk of the Western North Carolina Presbytery*

Rev. Allison Wehrung

## Biography & Faith Journey

Hailing from a long line of Ohioans, I grew up in Davidson, North Carolina. My formative years at Davidson College Presbyterian Church — vacation Bible schools, youth group, handbell choirs and more — laid a foundation that I continue to be encouraged by today. Regular church attendance might've taken a back seat in college, but a couple of summers in I found myself working at Camp Grier in Old Fort. Although I didn't recognize it at the time, practicing my faith in a context beyond Sunday mornings (and learning to lead others as they did the same) would have a profound impact on my own faith and my call to ministry. Those summers were also the beginning of a love for outdoor ministry that would lead me to four other camps and conference centers on my way to Montreat.

After college, I spent two years as a Young Adult Volunteer, first in Tennessee doing campus ministry with UKirk Nashville, and then working in a hospital chaplains department in New Orleans. Again, I found myself witnessing faith in settings beyond the one I grew up in, and those experiences broadened my sense of what ministry could be. Although I didn't feel called to traditional parish ministry, I recognized a desire to nurture welcoming and creative communities of faith — spaces where people, especially young adults, can authentically ask questions about who they are, what their place is in the world, and what God has to do with it.

Looking back on my spiritual life so far, I can see so clearly why our faith is enriched when we get to do it in a supportive community. Along the way I've been encouraged by youth directors who kept the office candy jar full, friends who were far less surprised than I was when I admitted my call to seminary, and professors and colleagues who have made space for me to embrace the creative communities and practices that excite me the most. It's my hope to be able to offer that same support to others.

Following a year-long church internship after seminary, I landed in Oxford, MS where I spent eight years serving as the Campus Minister at UKirk Ole Miss, along with offering various pastoral and programmatic support at Camp Hopewell and staffing several presbytery committees. It was a gift that the wide scope of that work allowed be to be part of so many facets of the Church — worshiping with small rural congregations, offering space for young adults questioning institutions, the chaotic joy of a camp dance, and plenty of things in between. The Holy Spirit was moving through all of it, and I look forward to seeing how the Spirit will continue to move here in Western North Carolina.

## Statement of Faith

I believe in God, whose boundless presence is made known in part by the immeasurable diversity of creation. (11.3) God is still creating, like a potter shaping and re- shaping, not shying away from a mess. I believe God created us out of love so that we may love, and that God grieves over the pervasive violences that are signs of our failure to live into that love.

I believe that God's love for humans is so deep that God came to earth as a walking, breathing, sleeping, eating savior named Jesus, and that Jesus leads the way in how we as Christians should strive to live in the world. Jesus ate with outcasts and healed with mud and spit, and we are called by these actions to a bold hospitality that welcomes all as children of God. Inspired by Christ, this welcoming is a response to the grace that we freely receive from God. (6.055) We are called to stand in the mess, trusting that we are not there alone. Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, calling his followers to a life of service. Although Jesus own calling cost him his life, in his resurrection we are reminded that violence and division do not have the last word.

The Holy Spirit moves through our lives in unexpected and creative ways, illuminating the depth of our connections to God and to each other. The Spirit renews and sustains us as we seek to bring God's kingdom to life here and now. (11.4)

I believe that Christians are called into community. Like any family, growing pains are inevitable, but the core of this community is the love that God has shared with us since the beginning. That love, and a person's place in the community of faith, should not be limited by any part of a person's identity. Christian communities are guided by Scripture, exploring together the ways it guides us in working for a more just and reconciled world. (10.5) I believe in the priesthood of all believers, and in celebrating the varied gifts of the community as we seek to serve God together. (6.054)

Part of the way Christians can live out our call to community is through celebrating the sacraments of baptism and Communion. These holy moments recognize that we are claimed and forgiven by God, and that our relationships with God and each other are sealed by the Spirit. (5.169) In baptism we are reminded of the covenant God has made with God's people, and by celebrating Communion we remember the depth of God's love for us. While this love is still bigger than we could ever comprehend, the sacraments serve as visible signs of it.

Just as Jesus washed his disciples 'feet and calls each of us into service, Christian communities are called to service together. We are led by Jesus 'example to live into hope and work for a world we all people can thrive.

# COM ATTACHMENT 4

## **Faith Journey of Rev. Frank M. McCracken (Mike)**

On Palm Sunday of 1971 I was born into a family of Presbyterians and Tar Heels. The Session of White Memorial Presbyterian Church (Raleigh, NC) met that evening and my father, an active Ruling Elder, was excused from the meeting as he was at the hospital awaiting my birth. Our family believes the minutes of that meeting were the first time my name was ever written down.

Throughout my childhood the church often felt like an extension of my home. The faith examples set by my mother and father were constant and comforting to me. During middle or high school there was always a retreat or mission trip or an expedition to Montreat to attend. These years were formative spiritually for me and cultivated my relationship with God and my love for the church.

Following high school I attended Birmingham-Southern College, leading me away from the security of home to a completely new community. Following college, I accepted a job with the Boy Scouts of America in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Success in fundraising for the BSA led to opportunities in nonprofit and financial management positions over the course of the next 16 years. In 2009 I began sensing a call to ministry and began the Inquirer process under the care of the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley in Alabama. Our family moved to Decatur, Georgia, in 2010 where I began work at Columbia Theological Seminary and completed my Master of Divinity in 2013. In 2019 I completed my Doctor of Ministry degree from McCormick Theological Seminary through the A.C.T.S. DMin in Preaching Program.

I am married to Jennifer, who is accomplished, beautiful, and judging by the last 26 years, very patient. We are parents to Lane Frances (19), who is a sophomore at Wofford College, Hayes (16), who is an amazing photographer and Ren (11), who loves acting and seems to be working on some form of mostly benevolent global domination. As a parent, I have become much more aware and understanding of the love and disposition of God. I now know where love and patience must intersect - and how joy can always be just around the corner.

I was ordained following seminary at Wynne Presbyterian Church in Wynne, AR. After five years, I was called to the First Presbyterian Church of Laurens, SC, where I have been since 2018. Both calls have been fruitful and wonder-filled experiences as I continue to learn to share in the joys and tears that come with shepherding a congregation. As a second career pastor, I try to bring my work and life experience to my ministry and have found my years spent in the pew - as a Ruling Elder, committee member and beneficiary of the care and love of a congregation - to be of great assistance to my work. I often tell people that "I can still see the pew where I used to sit from the pulpit," and this perspective informs how I preach every Sunday.

As one who has come to ministry later in life, I continue to marvel at what it means to be called to this particular work as a Minister of Word and Sacrament. Some days are hard and some days are pure joy, but I am constantly humbled that God has called me to this work and amazed at the sacred places - such as pulpits, hospital rooms and gravesides - where I am able to serve. I am thankful each day for God's providence and care that have called and sustained me along the way.

# COM ATTACHMENT 4

## Rev. Dr. Frank M. McCracken (Mike) Faith Statement

I believe in the one triune God<sup>1</sup>, who made and is sovereign over all things in creation and has called them good<sup>2</sup>. I believe that in every breath and action of life and in dying we belong to God and therefore do not live solely unto ourselves.<sup>3</sup>

I believe in Jesus Christ, the Word incarnate, who lived a fully human life and died at the hands of all humanity.<sup>4</sup> He was resurrected from the dead and is the sole mediator for my salvation and the salvation of humanity.<sup>5</sup> His grace redeems us from sin and sets us at liberty to live a life in grateful response to this gift of love and sacrifice.<sup>6</sup>

I believe in the Holy Spirit who sustains me and works through all creation to reveal the Kingdom of God. The Spirit is present in the fullness of every positive impulse<sup>7</sup>, giving strength and energy to all who will receive it and uniting believers in every time and place.

I believe that in my baptism I was claimed by God<sup>8</sup> and am reminded of this claim on my life<sup>9</sup> each time we celebrate the baptism of another with the community of believers. In communion our hearts are lifted up into fellowship with God and we are reminded of Christ's fellowship with and sacrifice for all humanity<sup>10</sup>.

In everything we do, we are called to follow the model and ministry of Jesus Christ so that we may ensure that our beliefs are not simply words on a paper or syllables uttered in unison. We are called to live in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, the inspired word of God, and to be led to deeper and new understandings of its meaning through prayer, thoughtful study, and corporate worship and in all these actions by the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>11</sup> As a community of faith, we acknowledge Christ as the only Head of the Church,<sup>12</sup> and seek to be constantly formed and reformed for the purposes of God's work in the world.

We are further called to claim the abundant life promised by Jesus Christ<sup>13</sup>, cherishing our fellowship with saints in all places and times and looking forward to the day when we may all sing doxology in a single, unified voice.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> BOC 11.1 Lines 1-5

<sup>2</sup> BOC 7.125

<sup>3</sup> BOC 4.001

<sup>4</sup> BOC 11.2 Lines 19-22

<sup>5</sup> BOC 7.148-152

<sup>6</sup> BOC 4.001

<sup>7</sup> BOC 3.13

<sup>8</sup> BOC 5.186

<sup>9</sup> BOC 8.14-15

<sup>10</sup> BOC 5.205

<sup>11</sup> BOC 9.27-30

<sup>12</sup> BOC 5.131

<sup>13</sup> BOC 7.001

<sup>14</sup> BOC 11.5-6 Lines 77-80

# COM ATTACHMENT 5

## Call to Ministry & Bio The Rev. Dr. Robert C. Evans, III

**Call:** I was born into a Christian family and never knew a time when I was not in church. Raised Lutheran, I was highly influenced by faithful Lutheran pastors who nurtured me along the way. As a young boy, I remember my mother asking me: What do you think you will do when you grow up?" My answer: "Mom, I think I'll be a pastor." My mother smiled, and I think she "knew" all along this is what I would do. It took a few years, but ultimately that summons I had "heard" as a boy culminated in a call to serve God's people as a pastor.

After college and working as a high school teacher and coach, I began worshiping at First Presbyterian Church in Raleigh, NC where under the leadership of Dr. Albert Edwards, my faith deepened, and I began to feel the tug of the Holy Spirit calling me to pastoral ministry. At age 26, I left teaching and coaching and a brief stint in a family business, and with my wife of only one year, we left for seminary. (After 52 years of marriage, to this day she maintains, "I didn't marry a preacher; I acquired one!").

The rest is history - I was blessed to serve various churches in North Carolina and Virginia over a 35+ year career. I'm thankful to God for the experiences I have had and for the privilege of serving as a pastor and a "shepherd of the sheep." I would not say ministry was ever easy, in fact it has always been and still is, filled with many challenges. Yet, for me, I would do it again, and hopefully, more faithfully. But above all, I feel richly blessed! Thanks be to God!

As for my current call, I'm enjoying being a part of First Presbyterian Church, Hickory - attending, supporting and volunteering. I believe I should hold membership in the bounds of the Presbytery where I live. In time, perhaps I can serve as an occasional supply preacher or in other small ways. I look forward to being a member of the Presbytery of Western NC.

### **Education:**

NC State University, BS in Math Education, 1970  
Union Theological Seminary in Virginia (now UPS), D.Min. 1977  
Certificate in Christian Spirituality, Columbia Theological Seminary, 2002  
Interim Certification, PCUSA, Levels 1 & 2, 2004-2006

**Ordination, Minister of Word and Sacrament:** Fayetteville Presbytery, PCUS, 1977

**Honorably Retired:** Salem Presbytery, 2012

### **Churches Served:**

Sunnyside Presbyterian Church, Fayetteville, NC - Pastor (1977-82)  
North Wilkesboro Presbyterian Church, N. Wilkesboro, NC – Sr. Pastor (1982-1993)  
Oak Ridge Presbyterian Church, Oak Ridge, NC – Organizing Pastor/Pastor (1993-2004)  
Hilton Presbyterian Church, Newport News, VA – Interim Pastor (2004-2006)  
First Presbyterian Church, Virginia Beach, VA – Interim Pastor, Head of Staff (2006-2007)  
Shallowford Presbyterian Church, Lewisville, NC – Pastor (2007-2012)  
\*First Presbyterian Church, Mt. Airy, NC – Interim Pastor, Head of Staff (2013-2015)  
(\*In retirement)

# COM ATTACHMENT 5

## Statement of Faith The Rev. Dr. Robert C. Evans, III

I am a Christian, a believer in the one true God who is revealed in the wonder and mystery of the Holy Trinity - as Father (Creator), Son (Redeemer) and Holy Spirit (Indweller). I fully affirm the Apostles & Nicene Creeds which I memorized as a child growing up in the Lutheran Church. As a long-time Presbyterian, I also have a deep appreciation for our Book of Confessions and how they inform our faith. However, for me, at this stage of my life and faith, I believe that seeking to follow the Way of Jesus, is as much (or more) important as believing the “right” things about Jesus. I seek to follow Jesus who beckons me, disturbs me, comforts me, and who has yet many things to teach me. Sometimes I follow joyfully, sometimes I follow half-heartedly, and yes, sometimes I just want to “stay put.” But it is only in the following that I can know Jesus more fully; it is only in the following that leads me to fullness of life, so at his gracious invitation, even as an old man, I seek to obey his call to “come and follow me.” \*1 \*2

I am also a Christian in the making; I am never fully Christian but am always becoming Christian. As the Apostle John wrote, “it does not yet appear what we shall be.” So, for me, being in Christ means to live as one who is broken and incomplete. Yes, I am a sinner, but because of God’s unfailing love for me in Christ, I rejoice that by grace through faith, I am a redeemed sinner and can live in the glorious freedom as a child of God. Living into this freedom is a source of great comfort and joy which is solely the work of grace alone. \*3

I am a Christian in the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition, a tradition rooted and grounded in Scripture and guided by our Confessions. We Presbyterians certainly do not have all of the truth, . . . “thank God!” . . . But we do have some of it, . . . “thank God!” Particularly important to me is our emphasis on the absolute sovereignty of God who reigns and rules and even laughs at humankind’s constant attempts to place ourselves on God’s throne. In our time, I believe Presbyterians especially are called to name the idols that threaten to undo us and bear witness to the truth that “God is God and we are not!” \*4, \*5, \*6

As a retired pastor, I believe the church of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is in a new and emerging paradigm, radically different from the church I grew up in; and quite different too from the church I knew in much of my ministry. However, I believe this is the work of the Holy Spirit, and from it will emerge a church with an even stronger witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, whose kingdom knows no end! \*7

1. \*Book of Confessions – 1.1-3, 2.1-3
2. \*A Brief Statement of Faith – 10.2
3. \*Westminster Shorter Catechism – 7.035
4. \*The Theological Declaration of Barmen – 8.04, 8.15, 8.18
5. \*A Brief Statement of Faith – 10.1, 10.4 (65-71)
6. \*Book of Order – F-2.05
7. \*Book of Order – F-2.02

## THE PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA (PWNC)

Approved by COM on July 1, 2025

### POLICY AND GUIDANCE REGARDING FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE

The purposes of this document are threefold: (1) to establish a Family Medical Leave Policy for employees of PWNC; (2) to require that terms of call for all installed pastors include paid family leave; and (3) to provide guidance to its constituent congregations for drafting similar policies for their employees.

1. **Background.** As the Church, we should seek to provide adequate, even generous, leave for our employees for the birth, adoption, or guardianship of a child so that the employees can return to the work of the Church with appreciation for the time off, having had sufficient bonding time with their newest family member as well as the required time of healing after a birth. Employing organizations of the Church have the responsibility to pay their staff fairly and to provide for their welfare as they work among us; to stand by them in trouble and share their joy. W-4.0404i. The PCUSA has recognized those obligations and has mandated that terms of call for installed ministers include a minimum of twelve weeks of paid family medical leave. G-2.0804.

#### 2. Family Medical Leave Policy for Employees of PWNC.

**a. Family Leave Defined.** PWNC shall provide up to 12 weeks of paid Family Medical Leave annually to all eligible employees for the following qualifying conditions:

- i. An employee's medical conditions related to pregnancy and/or childbirth;
- ii. An employee's need to provide assistance to a spouse when the spouse's medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth require assistance;  
and
- iii. The birth or adoption of a child. will provide sufficient leave for the needs of foster care placements on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the personnel committee and General Presbyter.
- iv. An eligible employee's serious health condition;
- v. An eligible employee's need to provide assistance to a close family member with a serious health condition. Close family member is defined as spouse, child or parent.

**b. Eligible Employees.** All employees of PWNC, whether part time or full time, shall be eligible for Family Medical Leave from the date of hire.

#### **c. Limitations on Family Medical Leave.**

i. If both parents are employed by the Presbytery, they jointly shall be eligible for a total of eighteen weeks of annual Family Medical Leave for the birth, adoption or placement of a child to be split between them at the discretion of the employees, but neither parent shall be entitled to take more than twelve weeks. Each parent shall be entitled to a maximum of twelve weeks of Family Medical leave for reasons listed in Paragraph 2.a.iv. and 2.a.v.

ii. Family Medical Leave must be taken within six months of the birth, adoption or placement of a child joining the family.

**d. Substitution of Paid Leave, Paid Vacation, Paid Time Off.** Employees taking Family Medical Leave shall not be required to use any annual paid leave of any sort during the Family Medical Leave period.

#### **e. Procedure.**

i. Eligible employees should notify their supervisor of the need for leave as early as possible, but at least thirty (30) days ahead of the projected commencement of leave to arrange for proper coverage of work responsibilities. A delay in



# COM ATTACHMENT 6

requesting leave due to unexpected circumstances shall not be the basis for denying leave, although a delayed notice might require some delay in the commencement of Family Medical Leave. All parties will cooperate to resolve any issues under these circumstances.

ii. Employees on Family Medical Leave should keep their supervisor informed of their projected return date.

iii. PWNC will provide a copy of this policy to each employee at the time of implementation and subsequently to each newly hired employee.

**f. Temporary Disability Insurance.** The employee will be responsible for filing any claims for temporary disability insurance to which he/she might be entitled. The Presbytery will cooperate in providing any documentation requested.

**g. Health Insurance Premiums.** During any period of Family Medical Leave, the employee shall remain responsible for making any insurance premium payments he/she would ordinarily be required to make if not on leave. Insurance premium payroll deductions normally made shall remain in place during Family Medical Leave. Any failure of the employee to pay his/her required premium could result in loss of coverage in accordance with policy terms.

**3. Family Medical Leave Policy for All Installed Pastors.** In accordance with the provisions of G-2.0804 of the Book of Order, the terms of call for all installed pastors serving within PWNC must include an entitlement to at least twelve weeks of paid family medical leave. The Commission on Ministry is responsible for ensuring that terms of call include this benefit.

## **GUIDANCE FOR SESSIONS CREATING FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE POLICIES FOR CONGREGATIONS**

Recognizing that individual churches within the presbytery face significantly different financial challenges and recognizing the need to support the families who serve our churches, PWNC provides the following guidance to its constituent sessions.

- a. **Book of Order Mandate.** The provisions of G-2.0804 regarding family medical leave apply only to installed pastoral positions. Sessions should consider what benefits they can provide to all non-installed employees.
- b. **Federal and State Requirements.** The federal Family Medical Leave Act applies only to employers with at least fifty employees. Churches with that many employees should consult with an attorney about their obligations. North Carolina does not require set maternity leave; however, six weeks of protected leave is a normal standard. Sessions should consider how they can comply with that law by providing some leave for their employees.
- c. **Timing.** A session should consider adopting a family leave policy that fits its financial circumstances and provides for its employees before being faced with a request for family medical leave by an employee.
- d. **One Size Seldomly Fits All.** Recognizing that the congregations in our presbytery vary widely in size and financial resources, the presbytery will not mandate the extent of benefits which individual congregations must provide. The presbytery encourages congregations to provide as generous care for their employees as is feasible under their particular circumstances. If a congregation in conversation with a pastor cannot arrange for necessary family medical coverage, it must submit a statement to the Commission on Ministry (COM), including financial evidence demonstrating how providing coverage impairs the congregation's ministry and mission.
- e. **Minimum Standards for a Policy.** Once a session decides to provide some type of family medical leave, it should address the following issues in its policy:

I. Amount of family medical leave – How much can an employee take?

II. Employee eligibility – Are employees eligible from the date of hire, or must they have worked a minimum amount of time?

III. Eligible conditions – Define which conditions allow an employee to take leave. Is it limited to maternity/paternity leave or does it include other health conditions?

IV. Define family members – If leave is available to care for a family member, define the relationships that are covered.

V. Paid or Unpaid Leave – Is the leave paid or unpaid? Will the employee have to use paid time off?

# COM ATTACHMENT 7

## TERMS OF CALL 2025

Church/Org		Mbrshp	Base	Def Comp	Utilities	Housing	Manse	SS	Prof. Exp	Prof Dev	Other	Total	2024 Total
Bacon, Patricia	Calvary	63	26,520		1,200	6,600		2,665	3,146	1,097		41,228	41,228
Bennett, Joe	Burnsville, First	39	50,000					3,825	4,830			58,655	0
Bonnema, David	Unity	639	65,000	2,000		43,000		8,408	2,000	2,000	1,000	123,408	113,726
Campbell, Kathy	Crossnore	95	49,328			31,621		6,193	3,580	1,250		91,972	86,296
Christenbury, Dwight	Trinity	296	58,653			12,500		5,443				76,596	72,264
Commerford, Daniel	Gastonia, First	841	48,048			55,176		7,896	3,525	2,000	1,275	117,920	115,741
Connelly, Kelley	Highlands, First	145	39,140	2,176		27,810		5,288	3,580	1,250		79,244	77,064
Davis, Heather Wood	Hickory, First	685	36,007			25,074		5,030		1,400		67,511	64,663
Davis, Holly	Waynesville, First	149	34,696			39,000		5,943	3,993	1,394		85,026	70,756
DeWater, Janet	Mount Holly, First	101	29,238	1,200		27,000		4,302	3,580	1,250		66,570	66,571
Epps, Leah	Greenway	63	20,400			19,668		3,060	1,392	3,972		48,492	46,420
Florence, David C.	Black Mountain	647	31,000			36,252		5,145	2,500	1,500		76,397	74,134
Floyd, Richard	Hickory, First	685	78,453			42,244		9,940		1,650	1,000	133,287	127,662
Germer, David	Asheville, First	600	41,154			32,000		5,596	1,900	3,000	2,300	85,950	79,491
Grogg, Keith	Montreat	145	52,500			40,000		3,600	5,400			101,500	101,000
Gurney, Rebecca	Reems Creek-Beech	85	6			59,994		4,590	4,000	1,250		69,840	62,843
Hagmann, John	Morganton, First	306	43,601			46,000		6,854	4,000			100,455	97,646
Haislip, Lyndsay	Morganton, First	306	46,015			8,060		4,137	3,000			61,212	59,516
Harkema, Luke	Grace Covenant	731	40,340			26,000		5,075	3,000	2,000		76,415	71,743
Holeman, James	Union	97	37,065			15,000		3,983	4,680	1,250		61,978	61,978
Isola, Jill	Northminster	132	34,000	1		20,000		4,420	400	4,500		63,321	68,174
Jarrett, Esta	Canton	51	29,613		2,050	8,134		3,044	3,580	1,475		47,896	47,896
Johnson, Patrick	Asheville, First	600	100,234			45,000		11,110	4,000	5,150	2,300	167,794	157,696
Jordan, Shannon	Asheville, First	600	44,154			29,000		5,596	3,900	3,000	2,300	87,950	79,491
Mangione, Drew	Shelby	415	49,535			35,700		6,520	3,600	2,900		98,255	95,580
Matthews, Matt	Waldensian	320	27,500			20,000		3,634	2,500			53,634	58,634
Matthews, Rachel	Waldensian	320	27,500			20,000		3,634	2,500			53,634	58,634
McCracken, Mike	Banner Elk	183	58,000			42,000		7,650	6,000	3,000	4,500	121,150	0
McKee, Michael	Newland	116	42,000			46,000		6,732	3,500	1,500	2,000	101,732	96,565
McMillan, Megan	Mills River	100	33,034	2,281		28,000		4,844	4,480	1,250		73,889	71,419
Mueller, Toby	New Hope, Gastonia	112	39,300			23,200			3,580	1,250		67,330	72,471
Newman, Beth	Bryson City	109	11,000			20,000		2,372	1,750			35,122	35,122
Oedy, Dan	Southminster	396	67,643			40,000		8,236	3,580	1,250	1,800	122,508	117,995
Poulos, Michael	Spruce Pine	83	36,723	1,000		18,000		4,186	1,800		1,000	62,709	62,709
Purtill, Allan	Tryon	256	57,956	3,000	5,500	19,937		6,609	2,500	2,000	2,500	100,002	100,002
Ragan, Daria	Belmont, First	1009	24,767			45,000		5,337	309	1,916		77,329	77,669
Robinson, Mary K.	Black Mountain	647	60,838			38,000		7,561	5,000	1,500		112,899	110,813
Scofield, Donald	Rutherfordton	347	74,967			35,000		8,412	3,000	1,200	5,200	127,779	124,544
Seiler, Dana V.	Unity	639	30,500	2,000		43,000		6,047	2,000	2,000	1,000	86,547	80,355
Shoop, Marcia M.	Grace Covenant	731	110,766			36,000		11,228	3,600	4,200		165,793	155,457

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	Church/Org	Mbrshp	Base	Def Comp	Utilities	Housing	Manse	SS	Prof. Exp	Prof Dev	Other	Total	2024 Total
Simpson, Brad	Gastonia, First	841	37,080			28,200		4,994	3,525	2,000	1,275	77,074	75,696
Smith, Allen	Kenilworth	62	21,754			20,005		3,329	3,300	1,000	2,865	52,253	53,087
Smith, Lance	Forest City, First	23	42,000			8,000		3,825	4,830	1,250	3,580	63,485	63,485
Stowe, Betsy	Franklin, First	84	39,650			11,895		3,943	3,580	1,250		60,318	58,709
Thompson, Keith	Brevard-Davidson River	306	54,390			34,092		6,769	5,000			100,251	99,080
Upchurch, Will	Long Creek	63	15,135	1,300		4,390		1,593	1,790	625		24,833	23,990
Wade, Byron	PWNC		38,222	12,125		38,222		6,775	6,000	3,500		104,843	100,913
Warner, Samuel	Belmont, First	1009	74,047			45,000		9,107	7,000	1,800		136,954	137,944
Warren, Rob	Marion, First	150	34,424	2,000	5,000		12,427	4,120		6,000		63,971	62,118
Wells, Kimberleigh	New Hope, Asheville	112	40,538			30,000		6,018				76,556	75,112
Wilmarth, Emily	Highlands, First	145	82,400	3,682		30,900		8,949	3,580	1,627		131,138	127,066