

## Stated Meeting of Mission Presbytery

---

First Presbyterian Church, Mission Texas  
October 26-27, 2018

### **Presbytery Meeting Convened**

The meeting was convened at 9:08 a.m. in the sanctuary of First Presbyterian Church, Mission Texas with prayer by Moderator Judy Ferguson. A quorum was present.

### **Welcome**

Judy called on Rev. Eric Dittman, Mission, to bring greetings from the host church.

### **Introduction of the Designated Offering: Su Casa de Esperanza**

Belinda Spencer, Executive Director of Su Casa shared information on the work that they do. Su Casa was started by the Presbyterian Church 37 years ago and continues to work with the denomination. Su Casa offers early childhood programs, prenatal and postnatal care.

### **Opening Motions**

The Stated Clerk **MOVED** to approve the Docket as amended to include the following changes:

- To remove the Pastoral Care Committee from the docket and to add Youth Connection to the docket following the Education and Congregational Nurture Report. **Motion approved.**

The Stated Clerk **MOVED** to approve the Mission Presbytery Pre-Presbytery Packet, and that the Presbytery receive all reports as posted on the Mission Presbytery Pre-Presbytery Packet webpage, with the exception of the recommendations or motions annotated as requiring vote on the floor of Presbytery. **Motion approved.**

### **Seating of Corresponding Members**

The Stated Clerk **MOVED** the following be seated as corresponding members of this meeting of Presbytery with voice but without vote:

- RE Vilmarie Cintron-Olivieri, GA Co-Moderator
- RE Valerie Young, Synod of the Sun
- Rev. Leslie Scanlon, Presbyterian Outlook
- Bernie Adeney-Risakotta, Mission Co-Worker, Indonesia
- Farsijana Adeney-Risakotta, Mission Co-Worker, Indonesia
- Rev. Bonnie Canizaro, Pueblo Presbytery
- Rev. Al Kissling, Western North Carolina Presbytery

**Motion approved.**

### **Presenters with Voice and No Vote**

The Stated Clerk **MOVED** the following be given voice without vote to:

- Erica Knisely – candidate for ordination
- Karla Lara Maldonado – candidate for ordination
- Eric Peterson – candidate for ordination
- Charlotte Trafton – candidate for ordination
- Rev. Bill Reagan – Loaves & Fishes

**Motion approved.**

### **Mission In Mission**

The presbytery broke for the Mission in Mission projects and workshops.

### **Worship**

The Presbytery gathered again at 3:30 p.m. for worship. Rev. Charlie Palmer preached the sermon on 1 Timothy celebrating the ways we have run the faith and encouraging us to continue to keep the faith as we work together and share. Rev. Joel Martinez and Rev. Eric Dittman officiated at the Lord's Table.

### John Knox Ranch Report

Beth Watson Mueller presented the report (Report A) and shared information on the improvements that have been made to the ranch.

### Order of the Day – Commission on Ministry Report

Rev. Bill Poe presented on behalf of the committee (report B) and made the following motion: **The Commission on Ministry endorses the request of Hope Presbyterian Church, Austin, and moves that presbytery approve the call to the Rev. Joel Moody to serve as their Associate Pastor, effective January 1, 2019, pursuant to G-2.0504c, which requires a  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority vote of the presbytery.** The vote was taken by paper ballot. 128=yes; 0=no. **Motion carried.**

Bill called on Rev. Monica Smith, chair of COM's examination team. Monica introduced the following candidates to be examined for ordination:

- Erica Knisely – APTS
- Charlotte Trafton – Westminster, Austin
- Karla Lara Maldonado – FPC, Weslaco
- Eric Peterson – Pan Am School
- Meagan Ludwig – FPC, Beeville

Monica introduced Erica Knisely who has been called as a director of programs in Education Beyond the Walls at APTS. Monica asked, "how does the Holy Spirit act within individual believers and groups of faith to bond the body of Christ". David McCann, First Weslaco, asked her to explain her theology of the sacraments. Bill Poe **moved** that the examination be sustained and she be ordained as minister and enrolled as a member of Mission Presbytery. **Approved.**

Monica introduced Charlotte Trafton, called to serve at Westminster Austin. Monica asked, "what is the significance of baptism in the Reformed Tradition and how would you explain that to children". David McCann, First Weslaco, asked her to

explain what the fullness of God's love means to her. Joel Moody, Hope Austin, asked her to share more about how she see God's calling to her truest self. Bill Poe **moved** that the examination be sustained and she be ordained as minister and enrolled as a member of Mission Presbytery. **Approved.**

Monica introduced Kara Lara Maldonado called to serve as Associate for Hispanic Ministry at First, Weslaco. Monica asked, "what are two images of God that are meaningful to you and how to they influence you ministry". Josh Robinson, Hope Austin, asked her to share some of her theological understanding of sin. David McCann, First Weslaco, asked her to share how her description of the Trinity reveals to her the community and love of God. Bill Poe **moved** that the examination be sustained and she be ordained as minister and enrolled as a member of Mission Presbytery. **Approved.**

Monica introduced Eric Peterson, Director of Spiritual at Pan American School. Monica asked, "what are two of the most important principles of Presbyterian polity and how are they lived out in the church". David McCann, First Weslaco, asked him to share his beliefs on the death and resurrection of Jesus. Bill Poe **moved** that the examination be sustained and he be ordained as minister and enrolled as a member of Mission Presbytery. **Approved.**

Monica introduced Meagan Ludwig, designated pastor at First Beeville. Monica asked, "How does God act in response to our sinfulness and how is that action lived out in the church's ministry". Krystal Leedy, UPC Austin, asked how her experience at a large church would help her in serving a small church. David McCann, First Weslaco, asked her to share how the language of Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer expressed to her God's love in community. Malcolm McQueen, Horseshoe Bay, asked her to share what it is we are being redeemed from. Bill Poe **moved** that the examinations be sustained and that she be ordained as minister and enrolled into Mission Presbytery. **Motion approved.**



Rev. Smith presented the following members who have transferred into the presbytery and asked them to share something that excites them about where they are serving or are happily retired.

- Mary D. D'Alessio (HR)
- Marsha Brown, Member at Large
- Elise Neal, Northminster
- Chad Lawson, Canyon Lake
- Stephen Murray (HR)
- Martha Langford, La Grange
- Mari Lyn Jones, Member at Large

Monica gave a prayer for those coming into the presbytery and for the dinner to come.

Judy Ferguson introduced Melody Gonzales, MP office assistant and brought her birthday greetings.

The meeting recessed for dinner at 5:53pm and will reconvene at 8:30 Saturday morning.

### **Morning Prayer**

The meeting reconvened at 8:30 a.m. with morning prayer by Rev. David McCann.

Judy thanked Eric Dittman, Joel Martinez, David McCann and all those who led in worship during this meeting.

### **Presbyter's Report**

Rev. Sallie Watson, General Presbyter, presented her report. She spoke on what a tremendous meeting this has been. She thanked the Valley region for their work. She thanked those who helped with the various mission projects. She thanked the presbytery staff and introduced Henry Owen, who will begin as the Executive

Director of John Knox Ranch on December 1. She introduced Ed Sackett, Disaster Recovery Coordinator for Mission Presbytery and announced that PDA will be funding Ed's position for at least two more years.

Ed Sackett updated the body on the flooding in the Hill Country. He shared that Junction in particular was hit hard and bridges were destroyed. The work in the Coastal area will continue for 3-5 years. First, Rockport is now a hosting site with PDA. Refugio is in dire of need of volunteers. He thanked Dick Powell and Mo Ranch for providing space to create a storage facility for disaster relief equipment. A disaster relief group has been assembled and will begin to work on policies and plans for the presbytery and for the churches.

Sallie shared the following about the concerns because of pipe bombs, elections and fraudulent mail. "There is not better time than right now for us to be the church of Jesus Christ. We don't need tools, but we have marching orders – loving one another, and not being overcome by evil and confronting evil with good. There is nothing more important than the ministry accomplished yesterday, where we worked with those we know and those we've never met. Let's keep the mission going on in the name of the One who sent us. "

She introduced Leslie Scanlon, reporter for Presbyterian Outlook. Valerie Young of the Synod of the Sun, and Vilmarie Cintron-Oliveri. GA Co-Moderator.

### **General Assembly Co-Moderator**

RE Vilmarie Cintron-Olivieri, Co-moderator of the 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly greeted the presbytery, and also brought greetings from Cindy Kohlmann, the other co-moderator. She thanked the presbytery for the opportunity to witness the Mission in Mission projects. She shared that they visited several of the sites and the opportunity to experience how faith is put into action. She commended the presbytery for the way they partner with agencies, and other faith leaders to serve.

### **Report on the 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly**

Rev. Dan Milford and RE Liz Anzaldua presented part one of the report. The second part will be presented at the March 2019 meeting. Dan shared about our original motion regarding serious mental health and not only was the grant amount approved, but that the area that will house the grant found additional funding, so that a staff person can be hired to help shepherd it through. The total amount was just shy of \$500,000. 21 presbyteries and a few synods also concurred with Mission Presbytery on that motion. Liz shared that it was her privilege to be able to sit next to Alexis our YAD. She shared that she was assigned to the Church Polity and Ordained Ministry committee. That committee was interesting with very long days. One of her high points was being together with so many Presbyterians in worship and that the whole meeting that was so inspiring. Another highlight was watching the co-moderators in action with their energy and youthfulness.

### **General Council Report (Report C)**

RE Anna Bohart, Chair of General Council presented the report. She reported that the General Council met Thursday evening. The main topic for the meeting was the report of the Financial Review Task Force. The report is not quite finished, but there are only a few minor changes that will need to be made. She invited Judy Harris to give a report from the task force. Judy shared that they have a composite report on the 2015, 2016, and 2017 books. There was no evidence of fraud in the books. They looked at how the books can be simplified. One recommendation was that the presbytery has the equivalent of a full-time bookkeeper. Another recommendation was to work on a way to work on the books in a timely manner. A third recommendation is that the "debt" from JKR will be written off. 2015 and 2016 are fine. 2017 just has a few transactions still to be done. The task force will continue through December to finish 2017.

She brought the following motion from General Council:

**To approve the following slate for General Council:**

- **Amy Meyer or Kris Bair, CORP co-chairs**

- **Carol Clarke, COM chair**
- **Laura Walters or Kathy Escandell, CPM co-chairs**
- **Tom O'Meara, MOJC chair**
- **Sandy Pinaire, ECN chair**
- **Nancy Reeves, CDE chair**
- **Rita Livingston, SFOC chair**
- **Claudia Smith, HR chair**
- **Carol Rahn, PCC chair**
- **Scott Russell or Bart Roush, MP Trustees co-chairs**
- **Katy Walters or Ellen Williams, YCC co-chairs**
- **Liz Anzaldua, Corpus Christi Regional Rep**
- **Dan Milford, San Antonio Regional Rep**

**Motion approved.**

#### **Stewardship and Fiscal Oversight (Report D)**

RE Rita Livingston, Chair, presented the report. She invited Rev. Allan Mosiman, Stewardship team leader, to present the second round of the BTF grants. The following grants were awarded:

- Empowering Women Network with the Synod of the Sun - \$4,000
- First Kerrville with Solar under the Sun for work in Honduras - \$2,000
- Interfaith Welcome Coalition with UPC and Madison Square, SA - \$5,000
- Adoptive Family Retreat by Mo and PCHAS - \$1,000
- Corpus Christi Region for their combined Hurricane Harvey anniversary concert/event - \$350

Allan reminded the body to remember Mission Presbytery as their congregations build their budgets for 2019.

#### **Order of the Day – Break**

Break was taken at 9:38 and the meeting reconvened at 9:50.

### **Stewardship and Fiscal Oversight continued**

Rita shared about the report presented in the packet. She invited the body to review the reports and let her know any questions they may have. She presented the 2019 budget that was approved by the General Council. She shared information regarding the budget including a line item for an audit of the 2018 books. She introduced RE Fred Gamble of the Fiscal Oversight Committee to share a little more information regarding the debt of JKR and how it would be written off. Fred shared that what we had was a receivable on our books that was our funds. What is being done is correcting years of an accounting mistake.

### **Loaves and Fishes**

Rev. Bill Reagan, Executive Director of Loaves and Fishes, thanked the body for the time to speak. He shared about the work that Loaves and Fishes does to fulfill the ministry of Christ as found in Matt. 25. Loaves and Fishes was founded by the Presbytery church 25 years ago.

### **Order of the Day – Committee on the Preparation for Ministry (Report F)**

Rev. Kathy Escandell, co-chair presented the report (Report F). She presented inquirer Ezequiel Herrera to be examined for candidacy with respect to his Christian faith, forms of Christian service undertaken and motives for seeking the ministry. David McCann, First Weslaco, asked him to share some of the theologians that have influenced him.

Kathy **moved** on behalf of the committee that Ezequiel Herrera be received as a candidate for the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. **Motion approved.**

Judy Ferguson asked the candidate the constitutional questions. Rev. Matt Gaventa, UPC Austin, gave the charge and prayer.

Sallie Watson shared that Moises Flores will become a citizen of the US in a few weeks.

She announced that there has been a mass shooting at a synagogue in Philadelphia and led the body in prayer.

### **Committee on Representation & Participation**

Rev. Amy Meyer, co-chair, presented the report on behalf of the committee (Report E). She moved that the slate of names nominated in Report E be approved with the following additions:

- RE Roger Schroeder, Fiscal Oversight (2021)
- RE Bob Simpson, JKR Steering Committee (2019)

Judy asked if there were any nominations from the floor. There being none, the nominations were closed. The slate was approved by acclamation.

### **Church Development and Evangelism Committee**

Rev. Leon Bloder presented on behalf of the committee (Report G). The committee invites the presbytery to join them in the journey of transformation, evangelism, and new church development. He shared information about the grant that has been given to First, Weslaco for the Hispanic Ministry program under Karla Lara Maldonado. They have also begun to develop a strategy for new residency and new worshipping communities working with the churches in the Valley. He gave an update on the Philippians Project. He shared about the Vital Congregations program that will begin next year and four congregations have already signed on. There are still three \$750 evangelism grants available.

### **Mission Presbyter Trustees**

RE Scott Russell, chair, presented the report (Report H). He called on Rev. Malcolm McQueen to present a report from the Administrative Commission working with First, San Saba. He thanked Carl Spinner who chaired the previous resolution team. The AC has reached a resolution with First, San Saba and **moves** that the presbytery

approves the disaffiliation settlement agreement with First, San Saba. **Motion carried.**

Malcolm moved that Mission Presbytery concur with the request of First, San Saba to dismiss them to ECO. **Motion carried.**

Malcolm moved that upon completion of its work, the AC be dismissed. **Motion carried.**

### **#metoo Event**

Rev. Ilene Dunn presented information on the #metoo Event sponsored by the Empowering Women Network and the Synod of the Sun.

### **Synod of the Sun**

RE Valerie Young, Synod Exec for the Synod of the Sun brought greetings from the ten other presbyteries that make up the synod. She thanked the presbytery for opportunity to participate in Mission in Mission, and for the relationship between the presbytery and the Synod. The Synod does have grants and scholarships available and encouraged the body to look at those grants that are available on the Synod website. She shared information about the Solar School, which is part of Solar Under the Sun.

### **Mission Co-Workers**

Judy invited Bernie Adeney-Risakotta and Farsijana Adeney-Risakotta, Mission Co-Workers, Indonesia to bring greetings and share about their work.

### **Bi-vocational Ministry Project**

Dr. Phil Helsel presented about the bi-vocational ministry project he is working on. He invited members of the presbytery to participate in a survey if working in a pastoral relationship.

### **Mission, Outreach and Justice Committee**

RE Tom O'Meara presented the report (report I). He shared ways for people to get involved with the situation on the border. There are two sign-up lists for Immigration Task Force and with Ed Sackett. There is a survey available to take to share information on what each congregation is doing in mission, outreach and justice. MOJC also has grants available and the process is open. The grants can be found on the presbytery website.

He invited RE Caly Fernandez, Immigration Task Force, to share information about the caravan that is travelling to the US. The caravan is about a month away from the border. The task force is going to start planning a "wall of welcome and prayer" in November in Hidalgo. Updates will be coming through the website.

### **Education and Congregational Nurture**

RE Sandy Pinaire presented the report (report J). ECN is offering ten \$450 scholarships for 2019 APCE in Galveston. The ECN resource give-away is ongoing and everyone is encouraged to take some books home with you.

### **Youth Connection Committee**

Rev. Katy Walters and Rev. Ellen Williams Hensle, co-chairs, presented on behalf of the committee (Report K). They announced the deadline for Youth Triennium is November 15<sup>th</sup>. The MidWinters Conferences will be held at Mo Ranch in January. The theme is "Meet Me at the Cross Roads". Youth Connection Committee has slot available for youth members.

### **Installation of the New Moderator**

RE Judy Ferguson invited Rev. Peter Crouch, moderator-elect to come forward. She presented Peter with the symbols of the office. She charged the presbytery to support and encourage Peter.



Peter thanked Judy for her year as moderator and presented her with a gift of appreciation.

**Stated Clerk's Report** (Report L)

Rev. Tricia Tedrow, Stated Clerk, presented the report (report L). She pointed the body to the information regarding the minimum terms of call. She announced that there have been changes made to the statistical report for 2019. The reporting season opens on December 7, 2018. On December 8 at 10:00 a.m. a tutorial to the changes called "It's Stat Season" will be held at Covenant Presbyterian Church. Those who cannot physically attend can attend by Zoom video conferencing and a video of the tutorial will be uploaded to the Clerks' page on the website as well.

The offering for Su Casa was \$2069.45

The attendance for the meeting was:

Voting Members:

Ministers – 56  
Ruling Elders – 86  
Members of General Council – 10  
Commissioned Pastors – 8  
Certified CE –  
Certified Associate CE –

Voting Total – 160

Non-Voting Members

Corresponding members - 7  
Presenters given voice – 6  
Visitors – 52  
Presbytery Staff – 4

Non-Voting Total - 69

Total - 229

Tricia reported that she attended the Mid Council Leadership Gather in Chicago and while there were many significant things that happened, one she wanted to share with the body was the phrase, "every time someone new enters a group, the group

*October 26-27, 2018 Presbytery Meeting*

becomes new.” Almost half of those elected to serve on our committees have never served on one before. By the end of the year we will have ordained nine new ministers and welcomed a slew of transferring members to the Presbytery. We are a new presbytery and we are better together.

Rev. Peter Crouch closed the meeting with prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:26.

The Presbytery will reconvene on March 1, 2019 at Shepherd of the Hills Presbyterian in Church, Austin.

Submitted,

Tricia Tedrow, Stated Clerk



## MISSION PRESBYTERY

BETTER TOGETHER

October 08, 2018

Dear Friends of Mission Presbytery,

Many of us will soon gather in the Valley to do mission. How exciting is that?

Mission Presbytery doing mission and worshipping at First Presbyterian Church in Mission, TX...Mission X 3!

Seriously, this is a great opportunity to not only fellowship and worship together, but also to be of service to our brothers and sisters in the Rio Grande Valley. Presbyterians across the Valley have been involved in mission with those effected by flood, poverty, immigration debacles, and more. This is our chance to be a part of those efforts.

We will not follow our usual structure for a presbytery meeting. We will convene at 9:00 am on Friday, October 26, 2018, and after a few minutes of necessary business and instructions, we will disperse to do our mission work. Each team will have a Scripture verse on which to meditate and share in our worship service when we reconvene at 3:00 pm that afternoon. We will do a bit more business and then be off for an evening of fellowship either with dinner at the church or elsewhere. Saturday morning, Oct. 27, we will finish our business and be on our way back home by noon...full of increased awareness of the needs in the Valley and gratitude that as Mission Presbytery, "we are better together."

Once last thing...while you are at the church in Mission, please make an effort to meet and visit with Bernie and Farsijana Adeney-Risakotta, our mission co-workers serving in Indonesia. They are not from the area hit by the recent tsunami, but, obviously, are very concerned about the country. Please join me in welcoming them to our presbytery and holding them in prayer.

Grace and peace,

*Judy Ferguson*

Judy Ferguson, Moderator

# First Presbyterian Church, Mission, Texas

*Where God's Love Makes all the Difference!*

September 19, 2018

Dear Members of Mission Presbytery,

On behalf of the session and members of First Presbyterian Church of Mission and all our colleagues in the Rio Grande Valley Cluster, I welcome everyone to "Mission Presbytery doing Mission in Mission" on October 26-27.

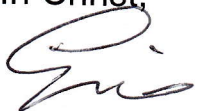
This Presbytery Meeting will have a different feel, opening up our hearts to serve by doing mission together in the poorest Metropolitan area in the United States, the Rio Grande Valley. There is much need here due to poverty, a need that has been exacerbated by recent flooding. Your commitment to give of time and resources to explore the mission opportunities here and help us do mission together is much needed and greatly appreciated.

Parking at First Presbyterian Church is at a premium. Carpool if you can. We have also received permission to park at the Firestone Parking Lot between our church and Business 83. Parking attendants will help you find a place to park, and maybe even offer a ride to the Sanctuary in our golf cart!

It is a long drive to Mission for most of you, the same distance Rio Grande Valley Cluster members drive to attend Presbytery Meetings in your area ☺. I sincerely hope you will take the time to come for 2, 3 or 4 days to absorb our blended culture and serve the Lord by serving the least of these in the neighborhoods we reach out to in generous compassion.

Have a safe journey, and may God bless you always!

In Christ,



Eric Dittman

Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Mission, TX



# LET'S MEAT

## IN



# MISSION



**26**  
OCT



**\$10**

## MISSION PRESBYTERY DINNER

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MISSION TX  
MAKE YOUR RESERVATION NOW!

210-826-3296 MISSIONPBY@MISSIONPBY.ORG



# Resources Give-away!

October 26 & 27

**At the October Presbytery meeting at First Presbyterian Church, Mission, the resources from the Resource Center at First Presbyterian Church, Mercedes, will be given away. We encourage Commissioners coming to the meeting to bring a book bag or two.**

**Members of the Education and Congregational Nurture Committee express our gratitude to CP Esther Russell-Hughes and the members of FPC-Mercedes for the many years of maintaining this Center.**

**Location: First Presbyterian Church  
1102 Ash Drive  
Mission, TX 78572**





# PRESBYTERIAN YOUTH TRIENNIUM 2019

**The 2019 Presbyterian Youth Triennium information is here!**

**Theme:** "Here's My Heart"

**Date:** July 16-20, 2019 (We will be traveling on July 15 and 21)

**Where:** Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana

## **What is it?**

Triennium is an event sponsored by the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Cumberland Presbyterian Churches (CPC and CPCA) for the purpose of gathering over 5,000 Presbyterian and Reformed young people from across the United States and the world for worship, prayer, play, and community. Mission Presbytery will take a 55-person delegation to the event.

## **How will we get there?**

The delegation will travel overnight by charter bus to Purdue University. It will take about 24 hours. The bus will pick up passengers in San Antonio and Austin.

## **Who can attend?**

- 50 rising high school freshmen through graduated high school seniors (as of summer 2019)
- 5 adult sponsors (YCC policy is 25 years or above—adults do not fill out the application. Contact Caitlin if you are interested.)
- College students who have been accepted to serve on Work Crew (apply here: <https://presbyterianyouthtriennium.org/work-crew-volunteer-application/>)

## What is the process to apply to be a youth member of the delegation?

1. Apply to be part of the 55-person Mission Presbytery delegation to Triennium. The size of our delegation is limited by the number of seats available on the bus. Apply via the link provided here. **Applications are due Wednesday November 14, 2018.**  
<https://goo.gl/forms/eRsk6QXNqsESj5nb2>
2. **Delegation selections will be made by December 1, 2018.** Those who are selected as part of the delegation will need to make a deposit of **\$250 by December 15, 2018** to secure their spot in the delegation.
3. Additional payments will be due on March 1, 2019 and May 1, 2019.
4. All delegation members are expected to attend the Triennium commissioning service and delegation orientation during the Presbytery meeting on **Saturday, June 22 at Crossroads Church in San Antonio.**

**Total cost per person for the presbytery delegation is \$740.** Triennium registration fee is \$555 and covers housing, meals, a Triennium t-shirt, supplies, program and university fees. The additional fee covers meals on the way up and back, a presbytery t-shirt, buttons to trade, plus a travel fee contribution.

We suggest a funding split of: 1/3 from the individual/family, 1/3 from their church, and 1/3 from fundraising.

### Payment schedule:

Deposit	\$250	December 15, 2018
2nd payment	\$250	March 1, 2019
Final Payment	\$240	May 1, 2019

Additional information can be found at [www.presbyterianyouthtriennium.org](http://www.presbyterianyouthtriennium.org).

Please contact Caitlin Supcoff at [youth@missionpby.org](mailto:youth@missionpby.org) with any questions.



# Midwinter Youth Conferences

## Mo-Ranch

### CONFERENCE DATES:

January 11-13, 2019 and January 18-20, 2019

Both are **BLENDED** Conferences for 6th-12th Graders



Cost is \$155 per person-youth and adult. Payment due upon registration.

Registrations accepted by mail only. Due December 15.

NO REFUNDS will be issued without prior arrangement 14 days before a conference.

Questions? Contact  
Caitlin Supcuff at  
[youth@missionpby.org](mailto:youth@missionpby.org).

### HOW TO REGISTER

1. Fill out the "Group Registration Form".
2. Mail registration form (No Walk-ins) and check to:  
2018 Midwinters  
c/o Mission Presbytery  
7201 Broadway, Suite #303  
San Antonio, TX 78209
3. Distribute to and collect from each participant the "individual form" and the "permission slip/medical authorization"
4. Bring 2 copies of the medical form - one for your sponsors and one for the conference to keep on file over the weekend.

**Small Group Leaders** are needed each weekend.

Please contact Caitlin Supcuff if you are willing to assist a Midwinter Planning Team member in this exciting opportunity! Curriculum and supplies are provided.

### Important Info

- EIGHT \$50 Scholarships available from the Sylvia Washer Scholarship Fund. Applications available at [www.mission-presbytery.org](http://www.mission-presbytery.org)
- Review the **COMMUNITY COVENANT** on the individual form with your youth before arriving.
- Please ensure the safety of all by completing adult leader background checks.
- Guests not permitted unless registered for the event.
- Youth to adult ratio is at least 1 adult per 5 youth and male and female leaders are to be in proportion to the numbers of youth attending.

## Fall/Annual 2018 Presbytery Meeting

October 26-27, 2018

### Thursday, October 25

5:00-6:30pm Registration Open Narthex  
6:30pm General Council Dinner/Meeting

### Friday, October 26

8:00-4:00 Registration Open Narthex  
8:00-Close Exhibit Hall Narthex/Sanctuary  
8:00 -3:00 Snacks Available Fellowship Hall

8:00 – Close Prayer Room Pastor’s Study/Garden

9:00am Presbytery Convenes Sanctuary  
- Welcome and Introductions Judy Ferguson  
- Opening Motions

9:15-3:00 Mission in Mission Projects

3:30pm Worship Sanctuary  
4:30pm John Knox Ranch Report (Report A) Beth Watson Mueller  
5:00pm Order of the Day – Commission on Ministry (Report B) Rev. Bill Poe  
6:00pm Dinner (by reservation) Fellowship Hall

### Saturday, October 27

8:00am Registration Open Narthex

8:30am Meeting reconvened Sanctuary  
- Opening Prayer

8:40am Presbytery Business  
- General Presbyter Report Rev. Sallie Watson  
- General Assembly Co-Moderator Greetings Vilmarie Cintron-Olivieri  
- Report on the 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly GA Commissioners  
- General Council Report (Report C) Anna Bohart  
- Fiscal & Stewardship Oversight Report (Report D) Rita Livingston  
- Loaves & Fishes Rev. Bill Reagan

9:30am Order of the Day – Break

9:45am Presbytery Business  
- Committee on Representation & Participation (Report E) Kris Bair

10:00am	Order of the Day – Committee on the Preparation for Ministry (Report F)	Rev. Kathy Escandell
10:30am	Presbytery Business	
	- Church Development & Evangelism (Report G)	Rev. Leon Bloder
	- Trustees Report (Report H)	Scott Russell
	- #MeToo Synod Event	Rev. Ilene Dunn
	- Synod of the Sun Greetings	Valerie Young
	- Pastoral Care Committee Report	Rev. Carol Rahn
	- Bi-vocational Ministry Project	Dr. Phil Helsel
	- Mission, Outreach & Justice (Report I)	Tom O’Meara
	- Education & Congregational Nurture (Report J)	Sandy Pinaire
	- Youth Connection Committee (Report K)	
11:30am	Installation of New Moderator Peter Crouch	Judy Ferguson
11:40am	Stated Clerk’s Report (Report L)	Rev. Tricia Tedrow
11:50am	Adjournment	

Mission Presbytery Report

John Knox Ranch

Beth Watson Mueller, Interim Director

October 2018

Summer Camp:

This summer went well. We doubled last year's registration numbers, and managed to get a critical mass in each age group, so camp was more fun, and more age appropriate. This was mostly made possible by providing scholarships for lots of kids. I spent every penny of scholarship money available to me, and we will have to work hard to replenish scholarship funds for next year. Getting kids to camp, and making sure they had a great time, was my highest priority (and I believe we succeeded!)

Facilities:

In my time here, I have been working hard to address some of the deferred maintenance issues on camp. The kitchen of Oak Commons has been given a facelift; rebuilt cabinetry, new paint, new countertops, and the concrete floors re-stained. The concrete floors in the meeting House and the large space of Oak Commons have also been re-stained, and the duplex cabin floors are in the works. We have built wooden decks at Blue Hole, painted the dining hall, repaired the Lookout Tower and tree house, and the bridge to the archery range. The director's house had 2 rooms without flooring (and ugly brown walls), in which we have laid floor tile, and repainted. We have repaired the "Chaplain's Cabin", one of the small screened cabins near the shower house, that was in great disrepair. The 2 remaining (and pressing) projects are to rebuild the bath house by the pool, and get the pool resurfaced. Both of these things need to be done before next summer.

We have added 2 queen beds and 2 full beds to the Ranch House, which can sleep 14-18, so that couples or families have some more comfortable housing options at JKR. Beginning in November, we will have queen beds in 2 of our duplex cabins, creating 4 adult bedrooms.

A HUGE Thank you

Rob and I are deeply grateful to our churches Shepherd of the Hills and Divine Redeemer, for allowing us to “disappear” this summer and attend to John Knox Ranch. It is through their generosity and commitment to the ministry that happens there, that we have been able to help for this time.

How you can help!

Many of our churches support John Knox Ranch through annual gifts. The ranch continues to need your financial support for operating expenses. If your church does not already support JKR, please consider making us your mission partner. The work and ministry that happens at JKR supports all our churches, and builds future leaders for our presbytery and denomination. JKR also needs the pool bath house, and pool resurfacing done before summer, projects costing close to \$25,000. Dedicated gifts to these projects would be deeply appreciated.

This is YOUR camp! Please come use the property! Plan a picnic or retreat! Let us work with you on a program. Tell us how we can support and enable the ministry of your church!

Respectfully Submitted,

Beth Watson Mueller

Interim Executive Director

**Commission on Ministry  
Report to Mission Presbytery  
October 26, 2018**

**Action Item:** The Commission on Ministry has been working with Hope Presbyterian Church of Austin for the past couple of years on discerning a design for pastoral staffing that fits the church's needs. The Rev. Joel Moody has been serving the church in a temporary capacity through much of that time. After completing a lengthy and comprehensive process required by COM, the congregation is now ready to call Joel as their installed Associate Pastor, and the congregation has voted to do so, with presbytery's approval.

Therefore, the Commission on Ministry endorses the request of Hope Presbyterian Church, Austin, and **moves** that presbytery approve the call to the Rev. Joel Moody to serve as their Associate Pastor, effective January 1, 2019, pursuant to G-2.0504c, which requires a  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority vote of the presbytery.

The Commission on Ministry, in its capacity as a commission of Mission Presbytery, has taken the following actions since those reported at the last Presbytery Meeting:

Approved the following Terms of Call/Contracts:

- Martha Langford & First, La Grange (effective 10/1/18)  
Compensation:  
    Salary                      42,000  
    Housing                     18,000  
Benefits:  
    BOP                         Full participation  
     $\frac{1}{2}$  SECA                    4,590  
Reimbursables:  
    Auto                         1,500  
    Study Leave                1,800
  
- Jose Munoz & First, New Braunfels (CP,  $\frac{1}{4}$  time, effective 6/1/18)  
Compensation:  
    Salary                       175 wkly  
Reimbursables:  
    ConEd/Books               400
  
- Rob Lohmeyer & First, Kerrville (effective 7/1/18)  
Compensation:  
    Salary                       47,567  
    Housing                     37,090  
Benefits:  
    BOP                         Full participation  
     $\frac{1}{2}$  SECA                    3,638.88

## REPORT B

- Reimbursables:
- |              |       |
|--------------|-------|
| Auto         | 4,202 |
| Professional | 4,000 |
- Elaine Dreeben & First, Kerrville (associate, effective 8/1/18)  
Compensation:

Salary	26,265
Housing	26,265

Benefits:

BOP	Full participation
½ SECA	2,009.27

Reimbursables:

Auto	2,100
Professional	2,000
  - Cazden Minter & Live Oak, Leander (effective 9/2/18)  
Compensation:

Salary	15,029.90
Housing	33,795

Benefits:

BOP	18,065
½ SECA	3,735.10
  - William Carlson & Memorial, Fredericksburg (stated supply, 18 hrs/week, effective 9/1/18)  
Compensation:

Salary	35,556
--------	--------

Benefits:

½ SECA	3,059.64
--------	----------

Reimbursables:

Auto	IRS rate
Other	1,380
  - Mary Breden & New Hope, La Feria (stated supply, 18% time, effective 6/1/18)  
Compensation:

Housing	7,200
---------	-------
  - Bill Poe & First, Georgetown (transitional minister, effective 10/1/18)  
Compensation:

Salary	70,283
Housing	30,006
½ SECA	7,672

Benefits:

BOP (12%)	12,034
-----------	--------

## REPORT B

- |                |       |
|----------------|-------|
| ½ SECA         | 7,672 |
| Reimbursables: |       |
| ConEd/Books    | 1,500 |
| Professional   | 3,300 |
- Bruce Goodlock & Six Mile, Port Lavaca (commissioned pastor, effective 4/18/18)  
Compensation:

Salary	2,400
--------	-------
  - Elise Neal & Northminster (effective 7/1/18)  
Compensation:

Salary	23,000
Housing	30,000

Benefits:

BOP	full participation
½ SECA	4,389
403(b)	2,000

Reimbursables:

Auto	IRS rate
Professional	1,500
Study Leave	3,000
Other (Md/Dental)	6,162
  - Carl McCauley & Gonzales (interim, effective 8/1/18)  
Compensation:

Salary	38,000
Housing	12,000

Benefits:

½ SECA	5,000
BOP	6,168.96

Reimbursables:

Auto	13,200
Con. Ed.	1,000
Professional	800
  - Chuck Kimball & First Port Lavaca/First Palacios (yoked stated supply, effective 7/1/18)  
Compensation:

Salary	20,417.73
Housing	25,000

Benefits:

½ SECA	3,762.27
BOP	16,804.56
  - Chad Lawson & Canyon Lake (effective 8/26/18)



## REPORT B

Compensation:	
Salary/Housing	49,000
Benefits:	
BOP	18,130
½ SECA	3,749
Reimbursables:	
Auto	2,800
Professional	1,000
Other	500

- Karen Stocks & St. Andrew, San Antonio (interim, effective 9/18/18)

Compensation:	
Salary	15,000
Housing	45,000
Reimbursables:	
Expenses	5,000

- Approved a Parish Associate relationship between St. Andrew, Austin, and the Rev. Ilene Dunn.
- Approved a Transitional Ministry contract between First, Georgetown and the Rev. William Poe, effective Oct. 1, 2018.

### Sustained the following examinations:

- Martha Langford, to serve as pastor for First, La Grange.
- MariLyn Jones, Member-at-Large.
- Stephen Murray, Honorably Retired.
- Nancy Benson-Nicol, Member-at-Large.

### Triennial Visits Completed:

- First, Georgetown on May 22, 2018.
- Leander, Leander on June 24, 2018.
- First Presbyterian, Collegeport on June 27, 2018.
- St. Paul's, Schulenberg on July 9, 2018.
- Grace, Victoria on August 9, 2018.
- First, Kerrville on August 27, 2018.
- Tivoli, Tivoli on Oct. 10, 2018.
- First, Brownsville on Sept. 18, 2018.
- First, Copperas Cove on September 29, 2018.

### Ordination/Installations:

- To approve the administrative commission to install Rev. Krystal Leedy as Associate Pastor, University, Austin on June 17, 2018 at 11:00 a.m.  
Rev. Bill Poe (to preside/ask the constitutional questions)  
Rev. Fred Morgan (to charge the pastor and congregation)  
Rev. Ellen Williams (to lead the installation prayer)

## REPORT B

RE Bee Moorhead, University Austin  
RE Marci Shrull, First Austin  
RE Neil McKown, Shepherd of the Hills

Guests:

Rev. Matt Gaventa (to preach the sermon)

- To dismiss the administrative commission to install Rev. Krystal Leedy.
- To approve the administrative commission to install Rev. Chad Lawson as pastor, Canyon Lake on September 16, 2018 at 4:00 p.m.:  
RE Judy Ferguson, First Kerrville (to preside/ask constitutional questions)  
Rev. Kyle Walker (to lead the installation prayer)  
Rev. Sarah Allen (to charge the congregation)  
Rev. Sarah de la Fuente (to charge the pastor)  
RE Joe de la Fuente, First Austin  
RE Cathrine Matier, Canyon Lake (to ask congregational questions)  
Guests:  
Rev. Layton Williams, Chicago Presbytery (to preach the sermon)
- To dismiss the administrative commission to install Chad Lawson as pastor, Canyon Lake on September 16, 2018.
- To approve the administrative commission to install Erin McGee as pastor, First El Campo on September 30, 2018 at 11:00 a.m.:  
Rev. Kathy Anderson (to lead installation prayer)  
Rev. Bette Burris (to ask congregational questions)  
Rev. Sam Junkin (to preach the sermon)  
RE Judy Ferguson, First Kerrville (to moderate/ask constitutional questions)  
RE Jim Gardner, First El Campo (to ask congregational questions)  
RE Bonnie Wilkinson, First Victoria (to charge the congregation)  
Guests:  
Rev. John Ryan, Charlotte Presbytery (to charge the pastor)  
Rev. Wayne Clement, Christ Lutheran Church (ELCA) El Campo  
Will Swenson, First El Campo (to ask constitutional questions)
- To dismiss the administrative commission to install Erin McGee as pastor, First El Campo on September 30, 2018.
- To approve the administrative commission to ordain Kelsey Penn on Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018 4:00 p.m. at First, Kerrville:  
Rev. Elaine Dreeben (To charge the pastor)  
Rev. Rob Mueller  
Rev. Gini Norris-Lane (to lead the ordination prayer)  
RE Judy Ferguson, First Kerrville (to preside/ask constitutional questions)  
RE Alex Cornejo, Divine Redeemer  
RE Ron Tefteller, Covenant San Antonio

Guests:

Rev. David Van Dyke (HR), Twin Cities Presbytery (to preach)

- To dismiss the administrative commission to ordain Kelsey Penn on September 23, 2018.

Approved Requests for Honorably Retired Status:

- Charlie Schuler, effective Oct. 31, 2018.
- Linda Bourianoff, effective June 3, 2018.
- Gerald Hurst, effective Oct. 1, 2018.
- Rick Rhodes, effective Nov. 30, 2018.

Appointed Moderators:

- Tom Heger and Crestholme, San Antonio
- Bill Poe and First, Georgetown
- Carla Matthews and Northwoods, San Antonio
- Ed Brogan and First, Del Rio
- Laura Neely and First, Rockport

Transferred Ministers:

- Traci Smith to Chicago Presbytery to serve as Pastor of Elmhurst Presbyterian Church.
- David Coello to Long Island Presbytery to serve a Pastor of Middle Island Presbyterian Church.
- Fred Lee to Presbytery of San Jose to serve at Taiwanese Presbyterian Church, San Jose.
- Kathy Vineyard (HR) to Grace Presbytery.

Deaths of Minister Members:

- Rev. Forrest Fitzhugh (HR) passed away on June 9, 2018.
- Rev. David Gallaher (HR) passed away on August 12, 2018.

Other actions:

- Approved closing the installed pastoral position at Hyde Park, Austin.
- Approved First, Georgetown electing a PNC.
- Approved a shared pastoral ministry between the Rev. Chuck Kimball and First, Port Lavaca and First, Palacios.
- Approved a listening team to work with Community Fellowship, New Braunfels on immediate and long-term needs.
- Approved Emmanuel, San Antonio seeking pastoral leadership, whether ordained, CP, Seminarian, or someone in training to become a CP.
- Approved closing the installed position for First, Uvalde.
- Approved requesting presbytery to appoint an Administrative Commission to work with St. Mark, Boerne in the areas of personnel policies, staffing concerns, polity and elder training, other concerns as they may arise, and to assume original jurisdiction if necessary.

## REPORT B

- Approved a temporary pastoral position in children's ministry for Westminster, Austin.
- Approved two additional pieces to be added to its Manual as Appendices on Calling a Designated Pastor (Attached).
- Approved the establishment of a validated Stated Supply Associate position for Hispanic ministries for First, Weslaco.
- Validated the position of Director of Programs for Education Beyond the Walls, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary,
- Sustained the following examinations:
  - Erica Knisely
  - Charlotte Trafton
  - Karla Lara Maldonado
  - Eric Peterson

COM reminds all Ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are engaged in validated specialized ministries that the deadline for annual reports to COM is December 31, 2018. The form for these reports is on the presbytery's website.

Respectfully submitted,

William C. Poe, Chair of COM

## **CALLING TO A DESIGNATED PASTORAL POSITION**

G-2.0504a: The installed pastoral relationships are pastor, co-pastor, and associate pastor. A teaching elder may be installed in a pastoral relationship for an indefinite period or for *a designated term determined by the presbytery in consultation with the congregation and specified in the call.*

In Mission Presbytery, the recommended designated term may be for two, three or four years, which is approved by a vote of the congregation following the pastoral election process. Each pastoral candidate screened by the presbytery's Commission on Ministry will be considered seriously for interview by the congregation's Designated Pastoral Nominating Committee (DPNC). Any materials received by the DPNC from another source will be sent to the Commission on Ministry for screening.

The DPNC will not set aside the plan of seeking a designated pastor without giving the process a fair opportunity, and without an in-depth consultation with the Commission on Ministry.

When the search is completed, the DPNC will recommend a candidate to the congregation for election to the designated pastoral position. The presbytery will conduct a service of installation for the new pastor. If at the end of the designated term, the choice is made to continue the pastoral relationship to continue, it is not necessary to have a second installation service, although public acknowledgement of the change is encouraged.

The session will participate in an annual review of the ministry with the pastor. Six months prior to the ending date of the call, the session will consider with the pastor and Commission on Ministry whether or not to continue the relationship for another designated period, or for an indefinite term. If the session and designated Pastor determine to convert the relationship to an indefinite term, the session will submit a request to COM for approval. Upon COM approval, the congregation will vote on the election of the person as Pastor, Associate Pastor or Co-pastor.

A. A pastor may be called for the designated term of 2 or more years (By vote of the congregation following the regular pastor-election process).

## REPORT B

B. Only persons whom the Presbytery Commission on Ministry has screened will be considered.

C. The Designated Pastor Nominating Committee (DPNC) will seriously consider every person that Committee on Ministry recommends to us for interview.

D. The DPNC will forward to the Commission on Ministry any dossiers which are received from some other source.

E. The DPNC will not set aside the plan of seeking a designated pastor without giving it a fair opportunity, and without an in-depth consultation with the Commission on Ministry.

F. The DPNC will recommend a candidate to the congregation for election as Designated Pastor, Associate Pastor, or Co-Pastor.

G. The Designated Pastor will be installed by the presbytery.

H. The session will participate in an annual review of the ministry with the pastor. Six months prior to the ending date of the call, the session will consider with the pastor and Commission on Ministry whether or not to continue the relationship for another designated period, or for an indefinite term.

I. If the session and designated Pastor determine to convert the relationship to an indefinite term, the session will submit a request to COM for approval.

J. Upon COM approval, the congregation will vote on the election of the person as Pastor, Associate Pastor or Co-pastor.

K. A second installation is not necessary, although COM encourages a public acknowledgement of the change in status of the pastor.

---

## **CALLING A DESIGNATED PASTOR OR ASSOCIATE PASTOR**

### **Mission Presbytery Commission on Ministry**

A designated pastoral relationship, full or part-time, is a call to a minister of the Word and Sacrament established by the presbytery for a term of not less than two nor more than four years. The congregation and the minister must both have agreed to be considered for a designated relationship. The congregation's pastoral nominating committee shall nominate to the congregation for its consideration and vote, only from among those ministers designated to it by the presbytery's committee on ministry. The minister is installed by the presbytery and is a member of the session.

The call approved by the presbytery is renewable anytime during the last six months of the term. It cannot be changed or dissolved except by consent of the presbytery, at the request of the pastor or at the request of the church by action of the congregation, when the presbytery (after consultation with the minister and the congregation) finds that the church's mission under the Word imperatively demands it, or when the term specified in the call expires without action having been taken to renew the call. The presbytery may designate and the congregation may call more than one minister to serve as designated pastor, sharing duties within the congregation as agreed upon by the session and approved by the presbytery. When there is more than one pastor, the ministers and the session shall agree on a schedule for sharing the times each will moderate.

If there has been an open search process conducted by the Commission on Ministry and after at least two years of the designated pastor relationship, upon the concurrence of the Commission on Ministry, the designated pastor and the PNC or session, a congregational meeting may be held to call the designated pastor as pastor. The session, with the concurrence of the Commission on Ministry, may call a congregational meeting to elect a pastor nominating committee to conduct a full pastoral search or to prosecute the call to the designated pastor to become pastor. The action of the congregation shall be reported to the presbytery.

#### **In sum:**

##### ***Designated Pastor or Associate Pastor:***

- is selected from among a few candidates forwarded by presbytery's Commission on Ministry (COM);
- is generally able to move into a new position fairly quickly;
- is an installed position;
- is a term-limited position;
- requires two votes of the congregation: (1) to establish position and then (2) to approve specific call;
- requires approval by COM to (1) establish position and then (2) to approve specific call;
- requires an installation;
- requires review and reconsideration as the designated term concludes – whether to convert to a called-installed “permanent” position, or to part company.

**Approved by COM: August 6, 2018**

**Erica Knisely – Director of Programs, Education Beyond the Walls, APTS  
Statement of Faith**

I believe that I belong to God. I am God's creation. As an 18<sup>th</sup> century rabbi once said, "I am but dust and ashes," and "the world was created for my sake." I am the daughter of God, the Great I Am, Who delights in me and calls me good. I am one tiny, yet beloved part of God's incredible love story with the whole world.

I believe that God IS, that God loves, and that God's love is the final word.

When Moses asked God for God's name, the reply was: I am who I am. I will be who I will be. God is not object, but subject; we are the object of God's love. In great mystery, God is far more than we can ever imagine, know, or comprehend, yet God comes close to us in Jesus, Emmanuel. I have marveled at the Himalayas, at rhesus monkeys and narwhals, at the Grand Canyon, and at the glowing eyes of a three-month old. The beauty of God, Creator, is limitless. Still, God draws near. I have felt God in the darkest places, in dreams and voices, and at the very limits of my endurance. My fear has always been met with God's gentleness.

I embrace the mystery of God: Holy One, Holy Three, Eternal Outpouring, Indwelling Love.

I believe in Jesus Christ, Light from Light, true God from true God, Who became human to redeem all of creation. He was crucified, died and was buried, but his Love conquered death. I am made whole in Jesus Christ, redeemer of my flesh, friend of my being; the One who cast off my shame and lifted my eyes toward God; my brother. His life continues to guide me in seeking right relationships with others. His death and resurrection contain the promise that Love is stronger than death. The assurance of that promise has been sealed in my heart through baptism.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, animating breath, God, the giver of life. I revel in and long for her touch. She is the still, small voice; the clap of thunder; the breath that fans the flames of my justice-loving soul. She is friend, guide, and giver of wisdom. She is the necessary pause.

I yearn for the communion of all God's people, give thanks for the forgiveness of sins, and hope for a time when all things are made new. I believe that we, the Church, are invited to partner with God in bringing about the fullness of God's beloved community. While we live in the already, but not yet of this vision, I know one day we will dwell in peace together. This promise is lived out when we gather around the table together for communion.

I believe in the church catholic and find my personal understanding best reflected in the Presbyterian denomination in which I was raised. I hold to the Presbyterian Church's emphasis on grace and to the Reformed maxim: *ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda*. To keep this in mind is to acknowledge our human imperfection and fallibility.

There are many things that I question and doubt, but never this: "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:35-39). I know that to be true to the depth of my being.



Erica Knisely

My faith story is particular to me, but it is not my own. Its beginnings are in a Baptist church in the Smoky Mountains, in a gospel harmony sung in the Panhandle of Texas, in a small pocket Bible that stopped a bullet in the Civil War. Its threads were woven on the well-worn knees of a great-grandmother who turned to prayer when her husband left her with three children to feed. It took shape reading *These Days* with one grandmother and hearing stories of the other candy-striping at the hospital. And, it was made possible by the Presbyterian Student Center at the University of North Texas where my parents met. I am a leaf on a strong branch of a great tree whose roots sink down into God's living waters.

My earliest memories of church are the tinsel halo I wore as an angel in the Christmas pageant and the felt Mary and Joseph that my mom cut out for a Sunday school lesson. I was cradled by the Presbyterian Church from birth. At home, my mom taught me to pray and told me stories about her grandmother. My dad taught me about right action through a humble account of his involvement in the Civil Rights struggle. In my family I have been surrounded by a cloud of witnesses.

Growing up, one of my strongest experiences of God came during a 7<sup>th</sup> grade field trip to see the Alvin Ailey Dance Company perform, "Revelations." During the spiritual, "Fix Me Jesus," I watched as one dancer gently cradled, guided, and lifted another dancer to a height she could not reach on her own—it filled my soul with a revelation of the love of Jesus that made me weep. I never had that kind of experience as a teenager in church. At the specified time, I went through confirmation, but shortly after stopped attending church. The way the pastor explained Jesus and salvation didn't make sense to me. When I went to college, I turned back to the church in an attempt to find an anchor. After some searching, I found my way to the Ecumenical Christian Ministry (ECM) Center at KU. There I joined a cooperative community and started a women's group. I found a space welcoming of doubt and questions. Ironically, at the same time that I admitted to myself that I didn't *believe* in Jesus, the pastor of the ECM asked me if I had considered attending seminary. I rejected that idea.

After college, I cobbled together various rituals and practices from Taoism, Buddhism, and Christianity, but had no true religious center. An obsession with fairy tale romance coupled with a deep deficit in self-esteem led me to make some damaging choices in my early 20s that dampened my soul. My first semester at the LBJ School in Austin coincided with the 9/11 attacks on the world trade center. My desperation with our country's response led me into a spiritual crisis. Finally, finally at the end of myself—my intellectual hubris crushed—I called upon Jesus for help. And there he was—astonishing Love.

I felt close to God in a way I never had before. I became active in church and very soon started sensing a call to ministry, a call which still took 7 years to heed. Out of an upswelling of emotion I became somewhat zealous and found community mostly in evangelical circles. Over time I lost sight of the grace of God and became rigid in my beliefs, holding myself to impossibly high standards. That came crashing down when I developed debilitating arthritis in my late 20s; I needed joy and freedom back in my life. God sent people to help me find the way back: a spiritual mother from Cuba, friends who loved camping, revelry, and Christ, and my then-to-be husband who excelled at improvised songs. I finally began seminary—and loved it. It challenged me, fanned the flames of my feminist soul. It helped me leave rigidity behind and claim my identity as a pastor. It made way for me to be more of who I am in Christ.

I continue on the journey of faith; more of the story waits to be written. The story is particular to me, but it is not my own. And the roots are deep.

**Statement of Faith of Karla Lara - First, Weslaco**

I believe in the great “I am,” the Trinitarian God, the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer who loves the world and has mercy on it as an act of divine sovereignty.

God, the Creator, is the author of the universe, the earth, the humans, and all creatures in them, seen and unseen. God created humankind in God’s image and gives us the responsibility of taking care of the earth and all its living creatures.

God, Jesus Christ, is our Redeemer who shared fully human and fully divine features while he was on earth. I believe in his salvific work through his incarnation, life, death, and resurrection. I trust he will come again to make the final judgment.

God, the Holy Spirit, instills our faith and enables to follow Jesus Christ. The Spirit knows our actions and thoughts, reveals in our hearts when our activities are pleasant or regrettable for God and empower us to do the right things.

Scriptures reveal the Word of God through the work of the Holy Spirit. They are like a pair of “spectacles” that allow us to see who God is and by default who God is not. The Holy Scriptures make a consistent and compelling call to surrender and obey God in the hearts of its readers and hearers. They have the power to challenge, mold and transform the lives of Christians.

We show our gratitude to our merciful Creator when we worship, we praise, and we reconcile with God and with one another. Our thanksgiving is complete when we strive to grow spiritually through Christian discipleship and service to others.

In communal worship we receive the Word of God written, sung, and proclaimed. The sacraments nourish us spiritually. By the use of ordinary things -water, bread and wine- and prayer, we announce extraordinary things for us, such as the love and grace of God toward creation through Jesus Christ and God’s coming reign.

I don’t have the means to understand what will happen beyond my earthly life. However, I rely on God eternal, omnipotent and loving who has been faithful in this life and who will persist in this nature beyond. In the meantime, my job is to love, worship and serve our Triune God, to collaborate in the divine mission of helping my neighbors, to take care of my family and of myself.

## **My Journey of Faith for Mission Presbytery**

My name is Karla Lara Maldonado. I am Mexican. My Catholic mom and grandmother baptized me when I was an infant, but we did not attend church regularly. While I studied a bachelor and a master in Biology, I embraced Evolutionism. During this time, I didn't have any spiritual guidance, and I adopted the principles that my family and my professors taught me: studying, working hard and competing to win. According to them, people who practiced these habits would be successful and happy.

As I followed the pieces of advice of my role models, at the age of twenty-five, I had already obtained several academic, professional and economic achievements, that I considered good enough. However, I was in a state of unhappiness, dissatisfaction, and a deep emptiness. I did not know why, nor how to find a solution to my spiritual bankruptcy. But God would provide me with a response, soon.

In my job, there was a group of colleagues, who didn't talk about Christianity, but they practiced it every day. They were generous, collaborative and altruistic with others. Their goodwill actions attracted my attention. After interacting with them, they seemed peaceful, harmonious, and full of hope. I was curious, and I wanted to find why they were different. I asked them directly, and they invited me to their church. In a year, I got convinced that a Christian lifestyle is the one that gives you life in abundance and I decided to become a Christian. One of these Christian colleagues became my now husband, Orlando.

In 2012, Orlando, our six-year-old daughter Sarah and I lived a happy and beautiful life in Monterrey, Mx. However, our circumstances changed drastically. Suddenly, our daughter was in danger of death due to a very rare disease. In Mexico, the doctors treated her excellently, but the available knowledge and medicine were surpassed. They advised us to take her to the global research center of Kawasaki Disease in Radi Children's Hospital in San Diego, California.

The salaries we earned in pesos was not enough to pay for the research medicine she needed. Thus, in 2013, Orlando got a job relocation to San Antonio, TX, and we all moved together. American research treatments saved my daughter's life. Thanks to God, now she is safe and sound. This family experience is the most difficult that I have lived my whole life. But at the same time, this has made me be closer to God, my faith has been purified by fire, and we all have grown stronger as a family.

Due to my gratitude to God who has given so much to me, I wanted to give something in return to our Merciful Creator and the community of saints by praising, serving and fellowship. In 2013, I became a member of Saint Andrew Presbyterian Church, San Antonio, TX where I looked to serve as a singer, liturgist, minister and guest preacher (in the Spanish worship). After two years of prayer, discernment, and many conversations with my home church and family, I enrolled at Austin Seminary in the Fall of 2015.

We had three challenging, but rewarding years as part of the seminary community. Just a few months before graduation we received a wonderful blessing when, after six years of planning, but not solidifying, God is sending us a second daughter, Emma, to be born on December 2018.

Last year, pastor David McCann and two members of the session of First Presbyterian Church Weslaco saw me at the October meeting of Mission Presbytery when I was received as a Candidate for Minister of Word and Sacrament. In December, they invited me to work with them as a Spanish speaking minister. I felt the Lord's hand strongly upon and within this call and believe that the God has been preparing me for this service with and to this congregation for my entire life. I start next September 16, 2018. I am very grateful for this opportunity and very excited!

Eric Peterson – Director of Spiritual Life, Pan American School

### Statement of Faith

I believe in God's sovereignty who made all creation. I trust that God created in the image of God. I trust that God came into humanity because of the love God has for humanity. I have faith that God is both transcendent and immanent. I trust and recognize that God never ceases to be and is always among us. I find refuge in God and that God gives me strength through the best and worst times.

I believe in Jesus Christ who is my redeemer. Through Christ, God becomes tangible for humanity to see and recognize as who God is. I have faith that Jesus was resurrected from death by God. I have faith that Jesus is fully human and fully divine. I trust that Jesus preached and lived the Good News by healing the sick and dining with people who were considered outcasts and forgiving their sins. I have faith that Jesus wants me to honor the two great commandments which is to love my God with all my heart and soul and love my neighbor.

I trust that the power of the Holy Spirit is at work in us. I believe that the Holy Spirit gives me courage and confidence to serve Christ in what Christ calls me to do and the Holy Spirit regenerates me when I am poor in spirit. I trust that nothing can separate me from the love of God through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

I have faith that Baptism is the sign and seal of God's unconditional love. I believe that it is a sign that we are the adopted children of God. Through Baptism, God transforms us into a new creation and that in both life and in death we belong to God. I believe that the Lord's Supper renews and nourishes us as we remember the new covenant of grace and love that Jesus made for us from his life, death, and resurrection. I believe that the Lord's Supper reminds us of the continuing spiritual presence of Christ.

I trust in the authoritative witness of Scripture. This witness reveals the Word of God to us through reading and proclaiming and responding through what the Word reveals. The Word of God is living and breathing and continually shows us how we are God's people and we are transformed through the narrative of God's story with us as creation.

I believe that we are an incarnational body recreated and reborn through the risen Christ and our stories connect and mend and build into a strong new creation that is called to be in right relationship with one another as well as with God.

I believe that we as the body of Christ affirm in the hope of God's final triumphant reign that will bring about a new heaven and new earth. I believe that this hope of what is to come empowers us to focus on the here and now. The body of Christ, a gift from God, continually strive to work in solidarity as active and renewed participants in God's redemptive creation. We do all of this because we trust in the loving power of God in Christ who was, is, and is to come. Amen.

My call to ministry began as a teenager. As a highly involved participant in my home church's youth ministry program, I looked forward to any youth-led service opportunity. I was an enthusiastic volunteer- I wanted to preach, practice liturgy, and give back to the congregation that fundamentally shaped the start of my personal journey of faith.

At the same time, one of the other great passions of my life is music. My young life was dedicated to its practice and I committed to developing my musical talents with piano and organ. Music is as much a part of my faith journey as my faith itself; it provides both the melody and refrain to the most important parts of my life. In my college years, my time and attention turned toward developing my talent and learning about the all-consuming profession of musicianship. This made it challenging to reconcile my heart for ministry with such demanding preparation for a career. However, during those late nights in the practice rooms, I felt the desire and push from the Spirit to become part of a faith community again. I sought out a congregational fit and found both a spiritual and musical home at University Presbyterian in Austin and there, my call to ministry began to swell again.

In the spring of 2011, this tension between the stress of preparing to become a professional musician alongside the everyday stress of being a young adult navigating a complex and broken world, became overwhelming. I sank into a situational depression and turned to God for comfort and strength, as well as the strong faith community I had around me. I found spiritual direction from the campus minister of University Presbyterian at the time, Rev. Kaci Clark-Porter. This season in the "spiritual wilderness", as well as her courageous hope in leading me through it, became pivotal in discerning that the path of music performance was not the plan God had in store for me.

I rediscovered the passion of my youth ministry days and was highly involved in the college ministry at University Presbyterian while also serving the music ministry of another congregation nearby. It was in this practice, that I found I wanted to be more of a servant leader. My desire to walk with people in their most difficult and most joyful moments started to crescendo. It was in this work, both alongside the campus ministry and the music ministry, that I decided to answer God's call for me to ministry and attended and graduated from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

Seminary enriched my understanding of my faith, my theology, and our denomination. It was there that I truly developed an identity as a disciple, a servant of Christ, for the important work of reconciliation, radical hospitality, and creating space for God's love to be known and at work in the world. Seminary is an important and indelible mark on my ministry and who I am, and I must acknowledge the impact that Dr. Gregory Cuellar made on me, introducing me to Latino/Latina theologians, connecting my faith to my personal heritage and identity, and giving me a special understanding of faith at the border, whether a physical border or the borders we build ourselves.

After graduating from seminary in 2015, I was humbled and privileged to accept my first call in ministry as Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries at First Presbyterian Church in Bryan, Texas. I learned what it meant to work alongside a congregation, to shape a ministry, and the importance of a consistent presence and commitment to growing these important parts of the future of our church. In the challenges and opportunities of the call, my friend and mentor from University Presbyterian, Rev. John Leedy, helped me navigate these uncharted waters.

I owe everything in my professional and personal development during that time to the FPC Bryan leadership, Rev. Ted Foote and Rev. Marie Mickey. They taught me so much about being a pastor in a church and pushed me to challenge myself, to work outside of my comfort zone, and encouraged me as I began the process to seek ordination. My time at FPC Bryan allowed me to work closely with youth and young adults, to enhance their understanding of their faith, to guide their growth as disciples of Jesus Christ, and to serve and be served by a congregation who never once ceased to be a model of generosity and kindness. This support allowed me to develop my ministry, to start local interfaith initiatives, revive a young adult program, and commit to the support and development of the youth program. In working with

this population of youth and young adults, my call to serve this integral, unique and diverse group within our denomination strengthened.

I feel called to connect the future of the church with possibilities to learn, serve, and grow in faithful discipleship amongst each other and the church family at large at the Presbyterian Pan American School. I have a passion, eagerness, and direction from the Spirit to serve the church and this ministry, as Director of Spiritual Life, will help in fulfilling that call by God. As the son of an immigrant, I have a heart for working with immigrant, migrant, and international communities. I turn back to seminary and my mission trips to the border areas and am joyfully grateful to God for planting the seed of these important communities in my heart and helping me to blossom that ministry into a reflection of my personal heritage and identity alongside the opportunity to shape that faith journey for the next generation.

I am learning a lot every day at Pan Am. I see Christ at work here, in the cross-cultural, cross-boundary or border relationships and the collaborative environment that the students bring to campus ministry. I know I am called to minister in this world in myriad ways, and my passion for walking and shepherding others in their faith, my advocacy work on behalf of inclusion for all and my experience navigating ways to be better disciples in Christ affirms my desire to be a minister of word and sacrament (teaching elder) in this position for the Presbyterian Pan American School.

Lastly, the most important person in life is my wife, Chelsea Kindred. She is the most supportive, loving, and caring person that anyone could ever ask for. She challenges me to my best self as a human being and as a minister. She helps me navigate the anxiety that comes out of my desire to be the best I can be as a spiritual and servant leader to the students and staff at Pan Am. I believe I am equipped with the tools necessary, including the knowledge, experience, and support of people in my life, to be a teaching elder for the Presbyterian Pan American School.

Statement of Faith of Charlotte Trafton – Westminster, Austin

September, 2018

I believe in God who acts in unity of being, action and purpose. God is Trinitarian and through the three persons of God, through this communal relationship at the heart of the being of God, we know that living in right relationship is truly godly. God fosters relationship, making it possible to leave behind what divides, destroys and separates. God brings us closer to our truest selves, redeemed at baptism by Jesus Christ. Through this work, God brings all of creation to redemption, that is to full relationship with its Creator.

I believe in God who nurtures creation, breathing it into being, actively participating in its healing to bring about the kingdom of God. God is present and near. God invites and calls people of every time and place into relationship and action. In turn, God responds to people with warmth, compassion, and mercy. I believe God calls me to live in relationship to our Trinitarian God, and to live in good relations to others and myself. Namely, by living as my true self, the child of God I was when the waters of baptism cleansed me of separation and divided loyalties.

I believe in Jesus, the son of God, who came to earth to demonstrate the fullness of God's love and devotion. Jesus taught and modeled right relationships to God, self, and others. Jesus lived as one redeemed: healing the sick, reaching out to the shunned, lifting up the poor. His life and work threatened the authorities in power and he was killed. The depth of the grave did not separate Jesus from his truest nature, even as he truly and fully died. Death had no final power over him. He was raised on the third day, appearing to the women, and then other faithful disciples. Even now Jesus lives, offering salvation and healing to those who believe, forgiving sins, and nurturing us in deeper connection to God. By this, Jesus is my Lord and Savior who forgives me and molds me like a potter does the clay.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, present before the formation of this earth, moving across the deep, breathing and enlivening all that is. The Spirit calls each to relationship, to service, and to deeds that bring God's good kingdom to Earth, so that one day we will see the end of hatred, racism, classism, prejudice due to sexual orientation, and all which harms and divides. The Spirit of God is at work wherever God wills. God's Spirit blows beyond the walls and reaches of the church, and also within the walls and work of the church.

In order to strengthen and nurture the saints of God with visible signs of an invisible grace, Jesus ordained two sacraments. In baptism and communion, God's self-giving presence is visible and concrete, solid and near. In baptism, a person is washed in the waters, but the whole community renews their faith by witnessing the presence of God's grace in the timbre of water and expressions of the one getting wet. In communion, the gathered believers meet Jesus at the table joining in the feast crossing time and space. They receive bread and drink that feeds spirit and body. By these sacraments, I am renewed with the community of faith for continued service to God.

The Bible tells of God's activity in the world through quite a few pieces of history. Through Jesus' work in the Holy Spirit, we are given the ability to see through the Bible to God's work in our world now. Having heard the Word, people are transformed according to God's will. In the Bible, I find hope, renewal, challenge and conversation. Studying the Bible is key to my spiritual health, redirecting me to the center of my being, the me created and claimed by God for my role in bringing about the kingdom of heaven.



As a third-grader I did a book report on Father Damien and I remember being touched by his service to the lepers on the Hawaiian Islands. I was so convicted by his compassion that I mentioned to my mom that I thought I wanted to be a missionary like him. My mother took it in stride, and still when missionaries came to visit our church, First Presbyterian Church, Lake Charles, Louisiana, I made a point of going to their talks, imagining myself in their work and ministry. I felt God's call persistently through my childhood and youth. Crazy as it sounds to me now, my friends and I volunteered to serve on adult church committees following the model of other members we loved, being active in the life and worship of the church.

In my faith journey of this time, my high school Sunday school teacher stands out as a pivotal relationship. Mickey Stoker modeled God's self-giving love by teaching us about the Bible in our own language – the apostles or the parables. She came to class imperfectly with bags under her eyes and coffee-breath to love us perfectly, joining us in figuring out what God might have to do with our weekly lives.

As a youth, my church regularly attended Synod of the Sun's Synod Youth Workshop. When I was a teenager, I heard Rodger Nishioka as a keynote speaker there and many other faithful, dynamic presenters. In these years, I first started to wonder about the call to ordination as a Minister of Word and Sacrament. I wrote a letter to one of my small group leaders asking what he thought and Ron Holloman gave me nothing but encouragement. I continued to feel this call, and to have it confirmed. Still, my calls came with a particular order – missionary service, family and ordination. It was puzzling to many that there would be an order to the calls, but I can only testify to the call I have received, whether puzzling or not.

After teaching in elementary schools for two years after college, I applied to PCUSA to do mission service and they matched my teaching background to a need in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia teaching English in a girls' school through our partner church, Bethel Mekane Yesus Church. When I followed the call to Ethiopia, it felt amazingly clear, free of worry or concern, confident in my faith that God had led me there and I was confirmed in this during my time there. Being a bridge from my Louisiana home to my Ethiopian one, witnessing God's work in another beautiful context, and being part of that work even briefly, was exhilarating. My Ethiopian teaching colleagues, in particular Getachew Alemayehu, really helped me to make the decision to come back to the U.S. He explained that no work should come above family and children, and he wanted a happy family to be my priority in my next phase of life.

Returning to the U.S., I settled in Austin, joined Westminster Presbyterian, and soon married the dear man who had waited patiently for me to do my teaching service in Ethiopia. I started at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary initially as a non-degree student in 2001. I quickly found I loved being a seminarian and poured as much energy as I could into reading and absorbing what I heard. To balance all the studies, I started work part-time in a local preschool. In joining the staff of Good Shepherd Episcopal School, I realized it was the perfect place to be mentored and to hone my skills as a teacher. In this period, I was ordained as an elder at Westminster and became enrolled as an Inquirer with Mission Presbytery. Over time, my seminary studies fed into my work at the school, and I was given the chance to lead the school's chapel program as their chaplain. Finishing seminary, having done my SPM with Faith Presbyterian in Austin and with all my ordination exams completed, I imagined that God would lead me to ordination as Minister of Word and Sacrament as soon as my own attention on nurturing my two new babies would allow. Owen Adam was born in the December before I finished seminary, and Meredith Inez was born two years after I finished seminary. Two years after her birth, I worked as a Summer Intern with the Seton CPE program. I continued to meet regularly with liaisons from the Committee on Preparation for Ministry confirming my call to pastoral ordination, yet I also felt called to be right where I was serving as chaplain at Good Shepherd Episcopal School, teaching preschool children. I have remained active at Westminster Presbyterian since moving to Austin and strove to preach in other church settings over the years. When in 2017 Westminster decided to separate the children's ministry role from the youth ministry role as part of a reorganization, it gave me a chance to imagine myself serving in children's ministry while continuing to work at the preschool as chaplain and teacher. This possibility felt like a clear call to me matching my own skills in teaching and being with children with the chance to work in a Presbyterian congregation. I have been very grateful for the support of people at Westminster Presbyterian who have watched this ordination path unfold – to Martha Richardson as my session liaison, and to Bill Clark, Judy Skaggs, Lana Russell and Ellen Williams who have shown me what it is like to share ministry in a congregation. I am also grateful to many others on the staff and in the congregation, my faith family. This

ministry role has led me to discussions with CPM and COM about ordination in this position and through ordination service to the larger church, P.C. (U.S.A.)

## Statement of Faith – Honorably Retired

Rev. Marsha E. Brown April 15, 2018

In life and in death I belong to the triune God; Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of all that is and all that shall be. I trust in this mystery that pervades all of life and calls me to an awareness and an experience of the sacred around me. As Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount, I strive to serve others' spiritual, emotional, and physical needs, loving them as I love myself. Jesus' whole life showed who God is to us and for us; loving us completely and dangerously and calling us to 'come and follow me' in that lifelong journey. This journey of never-ending new life is powered by the Holy Spirit who lives between and around and inside us all. This journey gives voice to our souls so that we might support each other in this call of compassion. I seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to discover and to participate in God's grace for all people. This is also what I hope for Christ's church- a continual commitment to trust in this Love in all that we say and do.

As a follower of Jesus' Way, I believe that how we treat others is the fullest expression of what we believe and therefore what we are. Peace and justice for all is a major component of this way of life. I believe that true joy comes from a committed path of lifelong learning, compassion, and love. This includes seeking to question and honoring questions as much or maybe more than answers. This calling of love in action is what the church was meant to nurture; it is what we are to do and to be. It is the endpoint of my faith in Jesus Christ; loving my neighbors as myself and experiencing grace and gratitude for my life and all of creation.

The symbols of my Christian faith lead me to deeper awareness of God's love for me and all that is: the cross, and our 2 sacraments; baptism and communion. The Bible, in both Greek and Hebrew scripture, is the inspired Word of God which leads me to a deeper understanding of the mystery that is the triune God. Serving and being in communion with God in my everyday life is what I am called to at this stage of life. I remain open to new understandings of how that will play out in the future and look forward to experiencing a continued journey of faith in Texas near family and life-long friends.

Journey of Faith Rev. Marsha E. Brown April 15, 2018

I grew up in a large family in a small community in central rural Texas. Ours was a religious home where every one of us went to the little church down the road every time the doors were open—even if we had been out most of the night before. I understood God as “out there somewhere”, to be prayed to when times were tough. As I matured and went to college, became a nurse, married and then went to graduate school and had two children, I began to seek other ways of understanding God. Through Bible study and 12 Step work I came to know a benevolent presence that guided me and urged me to seek more understanding and eventually a different calling as a chaplain and pastor. I somehow got through seminary and four units of CPE with two small children and a busy husband and graduated in 1996. I served as chaplain at Brackenridge and Seton Northwest Hospitals for 3 years, then served my internship church, Shepherd of the Hills Christian in Austin as Interim Associate Pastor for 1 year until being called to St. Andrew’s Presbyterian in Austin as Associate Pastor for Education in 2000. In 2005 I left to serve First Presbyterian in Copperas Cove as Stated Supply Pastor and was there 2 ½ years. First Presbyterian in Lebanon IN called me as their solo pastor in 2007. By this time, I had been divorced for several years and remarried Ron Bickerstaff in 2006 and he came ‘up north’ with me on this adventure. We served the community in Lebanon for 2 years, until I was called to New Horizons Presbyterian in St Louis which I served until 2016. Their practical ministry through sheltering homeless persons in their church, and a large food pantry in the basement drew my interest and energy. After six years, in 2016 I was called as the full-time Executive Director of Ritenour Co-Care Food Pantry which had been formerly housed at New Horizons. My work with this 501c3 non-profit ministry was deemed a validated ministry in the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy. We grew the pantry to serve over 2,000 people a month mostly fresh, frozen and perishable food in a free-standing building with a wonderful group of volunteers who served people with respect and kindness. We became the 4<sup>th</sup> largest food pantry in St. Louis. My husband was the operations manager who had the vision, passion and skills to develop such a fine resource for the community. We received several awards for our work in this endeavor. Last year, in 2017 I stepped down from being the director to train volunteers as a new director came on board. In January of 2018, we handed it over to the volunteers we had trained and planned to move back to Texas.

Presbyter service included serving on the education committee in Mission Presbytery for many years, and moderating it for a while. I also served as camp chaplain at John Knox Ranch several years. In St Louis, I served on the social justice committee and helped to partner with an immigrant church to drill a water well in Kenya, writing grants and getting it dug several years ago. In the past 4 years I have served as the moderator of Self Development of People Committee in St. Louis.

In my last church, I took several contemplative retreats through Parker Palmer’s Center for Courage and Renewal, and I have found this contemplative mindfulness an oasis in my life and in others’ too. I was trained to lead a spiritual program called “Geography of Grace” which uses poetry and images as metaphors for the soul work involved in a safe group setting which I found very healing for all involved. I might like to continue this work on some level after we get settled. We will see.

As I return to Mission Presbytery, my home Presbytery, it feels good to be among familiar faces and places (and Tex-Mex!) and to continue this faith journey. I look forward to the rest of my life here and whatever life calls me to.

Mary D. D'Alessio – Honorably Retired  
Statement of Faith

I affirm my faith as a Christian, meaning I belong-body, mind, and soul-in life and death, not to myself but to my faithful Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I believe in the One True and Holy God-eternal and sovereign-who is one in substance and yet distinct in three equal Persons-Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

I believe in God the Father, Creator of the world seen and the world unseen, whom Jesus called Abba, and who is Lord of Hosts. I believe God created in love and rules in love, continually working to bring about God's purposes.

I believe in Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, who for love and for our salvation laid aside his glory and took on flesh, being born of a virgin, becoming fully human, yet being fully divine. He lived among us as the perfect revelation of God. I believe he is the sole Redeemer and Savior of the world and I affirm there is no other sacrifice for sin than that of Jesus Christ. I believe he died, was buried, and was raised bodily from the dead. He ascended into Heaven where he now sits in the seat of authority as Head of the Church, interceding on behalf of the Church and the world. I believe he will return to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, who from the beginning has been at work creating, sustaining, renewing, and empowering. The Spirit is at work in the world today, bearing God's grace, calling us into ever deepening relationship with God and one another, convicting us of sin, guiding us, transforming and renewing us. It is the Spirit who initiates new life in Christ, and through his indwelling and abiding presence equips us with the necessary gifts for ministry, enabling us to serve God in joyful obedience, and sealing us in Christ.

I believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God written, and by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ. **All** that is necessary for us to glorify and enjoy God, and **all** that is necessary for life lived as God's children is to be found in, or may be deduced from, the prayerful reading of the Scriptures. I believe we are to live in obedience to Jesus Christ under the authority of Scripture.

I believe the Church is the covenant community of Jesus Christ, called, gathered, protected, and preserved by God. There is one universal Church consisting of a visible Church and an invisible Church. Jesus Christ is the Head. As members of Christ's Body we are to bear witness to God through our words and deeds. Through the right proclamation of the Word and the proper celebration of the Sacraments-baptism and communion-through communal worship of God, through love expressed for one another and for the world, the Church brings honor to God and bears witness in heaven and on earth to God's wisdom.

In God I have hope for this world. In God I have hope for the world to come. Praise to the One, True and Holy Triune God! To Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be all honor and glory and praise today and forevermore! Amen

Mary D. D'Alessio, Spiritual Journey

When our daughter was almost four she met a little girl at church who had just moved to town. They quickly became great buddies, wanting to be together every day. We parents wondered how on earth they could be so close at such a young age. Then one day these little girls matter -of-factly informed us that they had known each other in heaven!

So, where does *my* story begin? Surely before the foundation of the world! Yet, the first proofs of my spiritual journey are a worn baptismal certificate and a dog-eared photograph of me as a chubby two-month old garbed in the family heirloom baptismal gown and cap, being held in my grandmother's arms while Mom, Dad, Granddad, and big sister posed with me in front of the church. On that October morning in 1950 something was set in motion, and it continues.

I was nurtured in the Christian faith at church through Sunday school classes, youth group meetings, worship services, and church camps. As a youngster my faith grew as I listened to my grandmother telling me stories about Jesus, sharing how he was her best friend and that he wanted to be mine, too. I learned early on that Jesus was not an idea. Jesus was a real person who walked with us and talked with us. Jesus loved me!

So, where does my story begin? When I was ten, shortly after my grandmother's death, I clearly heard Jesus call me "to come to **him**." Yet I responded, "No!" Most graciously, Christ Jesus remained ever faithful, and over the course of the next 25+ years asked me again and again to "come to **him**." During my long struggle I never stopped loving him; truth is, I just did not want to live in his kingdom under his rule. So, in my rebellion I went to live in the far country where I made many poor choices, chief among them my continued refusals to yield to him. Yet still he called. Still he loved me.

Then, one September evening as a 30-something-year-old woman-of-the-world, I heard **him** call again. Through the faith of the living saints who for years had prayed for me to come "home," I finally bowed before **him** and said, "Yes" and ran into his open arms and the abundant life he promises. Like the woman at the well, living water welled up within me. So, where does my story begin?

I returned to the Church. I served with joy, happy to be settling in to a new place of being and belonging. Then in a vision while in prayer Jesus called again, saying, "Rebuild my Church." This was not a call to come to **him**, but a call to serve him in ordained ministry. Again, I struggled, asking, "Me, Lord? How?" Soon I said, "Yes, Lord." So, to Columbia Seminary I went-to learn, to grow, to question, to grapple, to receive, to give. So, where does my story begin?

Since the day of my ordination in 1992 in various ways, in various places I have sought to be pliable in his hands, to pray, to trust, to yield more and more to **him**, to become more and more the person God has created me to be. Since coming "home" I have rejoiced in his presence, wept in his arms, spouted angry words at him, and knelt at his feet to listen and learn and seek forgiveness. Even after retirement in 2016 I continue on the journey. I am becoming. I am living into the promises of God affirmed on my behalf by a loving family on a long -ago Sunday morning. I am living into the love and grace of God in new and surprising ways.

For many years, on the cover of my planner I penned this quote from a popular secular author, "There will come a time when you think everything is finished. That will be the beginning." And so it is. Then and now, and in days to come, on this fascinating journey I rejoice that I am privileged to know and serve Jesus Christ. He is Lord. He was Lord at the beginning and he will be Lord, my Lord, forevermore! Amen.

I believe in the eternal, all-loving, all-powerful God who created and continues to create the universe and everything in it. This God paints with the palette of love, shapes with the clay of grace, composes with the music of relationship, and invigorates with the breath of curiosity.

I believe this God became incarnate in Jesus the Christ—to more completely reveal God’s nature to us. Jesus’ life expresses the relationships we are created for. His ministry shows us the abundant life God intends for all people. His death and resurrection reveal the depth and breadth of God’s love and power.

Because of the incarnation, we see that human flesh and blood, muscle and bone, mind and emotions matter to God. So the Holy Spirit compels us to respond to suffering and oppression with acts of love and justice. The Holy Spirit accompanies and sustains us in this work—filling our hearts with faith and our lives with hope. The Holy Spirit strengthens and empowers us to continue Christ’s ministry— individually as well as corporately.

Because of the incarnation, God’s presence is made known to us through our physical senses as well as through extrasensory experiences. The cleansing, renewing, life-giving waters of Baptism remind us that we are birthed into God’s family and we live our identity as God’s children. As the aroma of fresh-baked bread wafts around the Communion table, we breathe it in and this Holy Spirit breath draws us into Christ’s presence. As we eat the bread and drink from the cup, we “taste and see that the Lord is good.” (Psalm 34:8)

I believe that we meet this creating, saving, renewing God in the stories and poems, the parables and letters, the histories and visions recorded in Scripture. I believe that we come to know this loving, forgiving, transforming God through Word and Sacrament. I believe we experience the abundant life God plans for us through relationships—relating with God’s world, relating with God’s people, and relating with God.

*Family:* My faith journey begins with family. Nurtured and encouraged by my nuclear family, empowered and protected by my extended family, I grew up confident that I was loved and valued. Family ties included my church family with whom the Bible stories we read at home took on added dimensions. At church, I used my voice to sing the stories, my hands to craft reminders, and my memory to recite the scriptures from which the stories came. Through church, I practiced living our faith—laughing and learning, playing and working with other youth as well as adults from our community and surrounding areas. Family—nuclear, extended and church family—set my feet on my faith journey and accompanied me in the early stages of it.

*Sacraments:* When I went away to college, I seemed to veer off course in my faith journey. But God's loving presence is with us no matter what detours we take. My sophomore year at UT, a group of young Catholic women in my dorm invited me to Folk Mass. As we walked across campus, they prepared me for the flow and liturgy of the worship to come. And they told me, "You need Communion," so they prepared me for that as well. They were right. I needed to be drawn into Christ's presence. I needed to be nourished with the bread of life and the cup of salvation. I needed to remember the depth of God's love and the breadth of God's power. I needed to give thanks. They were right; I needed Communion.

*Revelation:* When (Catholic-reared) Kevin and (Southern Baptist-reared) I decided to marry, we were determined to find a church where both of us could worship authentically. God led us to Faith Presbyterian Church in south Austin. With Rev. Keith Wright leading studies, I learned to read the Bible critically—to ask questions when scriptures seemed to conflict with one another, to listen to the insights of fellow study participants, to read commentary along with the scripture, to reflect on corporate response to God's word in addition to individual response. At Faith PC, my gifts for teaching children were affirmed and my passion for including children in worship was stoked.

*Heart knowledge:* As the commute time from Round Rock to south Austin increased, we looked for a church closer to home, and the Holy Spirit nudged us to Grace Presbyterian Fellowship in Round Rock. There we found spirit-filled worship, boisterous fellowship, and opportunities to creatively share God's love and grace with limited financial resources.

*Grace:* In the fall of 1999, I attended a 72-hour spiritual renewal retreat called Walk to Emmaus. During that weekend, I experienced God's grace in a way that surpassed the head knowledge from Faith PC and the heart knowledge from Grace PF. From my Walk to Emmaus experience, I was moved to respond to God's grace—not out of fear of "going to hell," not of guilt, not out of a sense of responsibility, but out of a deep sense of gratitude. I find this response freeing and joy-filled.

*Call to ministry:* This experience of God's grace led me to spiritual practices of prayer, Bible study, and journaling—which prepared me to hear and respond "yes" to God's call to seminary. At the end of that time of work and fellowship, study and discernment, God led me to parish ministry in 2 small churches in the mid-west. Gifts for working with children and youth were affirmed with my first call. Gifts for pastoral care, nurturing ecumenical relationships, and facilitating Bible study were affirmed with my second call. Because I know God is always with me, I look forward to seeing and engaging what awaits me around the bend as I continue my journey of faith.



That “God is God” is the only unequivocal thing that human beings may say about God. Yet, through the witness of scripture, the teachings of the church, and the community of faith, I have come to place my faith and trust in the triune God, sovereign creator of heaven and earth and all living things. This is the God of whom the psalmist sings, “O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures” (Ps 104:24).

I believe in the mystery of creation. God looked upon creation, pronounced it good, and gave it into the keeping of human kind—male and female—created in the image and likeness of God. We humans are established as stewards of God’s creation and gifted with freedom to choose our ultimate allegiance without constraint. Yet, with our God-given freedom, human beings have chosen in every way to reject the life that our creator intends. We choose death, yet the witness of faith tells me that God is a God of steadfast loving kindness, whose love will not let us go.

I believe in the mystery of redemption. With all grace and mercy and in perfect freedom, God seeks reconciliation with human kind. In Abraham and Sarah, God established a covenant people. Through Moses and Aaron and Miriam, God led the descendants of Jacob from bondage, reformed them in the wilderness, and blessed their entry into the land of promised. When this people went astray, God spoke through the voice of the prophets and reclaimed Israel to the practice of justice and kindness and humility and love.

I believe in the mystery of incarnation. Having sent messengers to proclaim the shape of God’s reign, God became both messenger and message, as the birth of Jesus Christ made God’s love manifest to the world. In his person—both human and divine—Jesus reconciled us to God and to one another. In life, Jesus healed, preached, taught, and bore witness to the life that God intends for human kind. In humility and obedience, he challenged the evils of his age, calling all to repent and to lead lives worthy of the gospel. Dying at the hands of corrupt authorities, Jesus was raised from the dead breaking human bondage to the powers of sin and death. Ascended into heaven, Jesus entrusts his followers to be living witnesses to and participants in his work of reconciliation, of healing and teaching and witness and compassion.

I believe in the mystery of immanence. Pentecost witnessed the sending of the Holy Spirit to give the disciples comfort and fit them with courage to proclaim the gospel. That same Spirit sustains us today, sealing us in covenant community through the waters of Baptism, moving us to faith in the living God, nourishing us at the table of The Lord’s Supper, inspiring us through the word of scripture. The Holy Spirit draws us deeper into all of God’s mysteries, transforms us in a life-long process of spiritual growth, grows us in the love of God, and equips us to demonstrate the love of God through care for our neighbors.

I believe in the mystery of church. In Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, God calls us to be the church, the Body of Christ in the world. The church exists as a laboratory for discipleship, a community of worship, a house of prayer for all peoples, a herald voice for the gospel, a place of mutual encouragement, a community of care, and an ardent voice for the oppressed. The people of the church are called together in particular places to share gifts of energy, intelligence, imagination, and love as they care for each other and proclaim hope to our broken and fearful world.

I believe in the mystery of the triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—for it is in God, with God, and through God that we live, God who is at the center of all that is, and all that is working within us. Amen.

## Autobiographical Essay – Martha C. Langford

My journey begins in Houston, Texas in November 1961. My parents, Tom and Wynelle Langford, were deeply rooted in Christian faith and firmly planted at Trinity Presbyterian Church. My earliest memories of church are days spent with Mrs. Miles in the church pre-school program.

The journey is paved with relationships—I am the youngest of five children (by seven years). I was blessed with a childhood that held four “mothers”—my mother; my maternal grandmother, who lived on our block; and my two older sisters Rae and Anne. My mothers and my church nurtured me; my father and my two brothers—Tom and Bill—challenged me.

I attended Texas A&M University and was a member of its Corps of Cadets. Between semesters in my senior year, I married another cadet—Jerome Kelly. In May, we were both commissioned as US Army officers, whereupon I served on active duty for five years. On December 13, 1985, our daughter Carolyn Anne was born. Becoming a mother changed the path of my life.

Returning to Houston after leaving military service, I became active at Braeburn Presbyterian Church where my sister, her husband, and my brother were members. The church’s pre-school nurtured Carolyn and I found a place to express a growing call to God’s service. In 1993, I was ordained as a Presbyterian Elder.

At the urging of Braeburn’s pastor, I was nominated to serve the Presbytery of New Covenant’s Evangelism and Church Development ministry. As a liaison to the Indian Presbyterian Church in Livingston, I met and became friends with people whose lives were an extraordinary witness to God’s faithfulness. It was this congregation’s pastor, the Rev. Pam Morgan, who first suggested that I consider seminary. Attending my first Systematic Theology class with the Rev. Dr. Tom Currie, III was a “God-moment”—giving me a palpable sense of vocation.

Along the way, I served six years as The Presbytery of New Covenant’s Director of Communications; struggled through a divorce; graduated from Austin Theological Seminary; was ordained while serving a two-year Lily Pastoral Residency at Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago IL; served ten years as the Associate Pastor for Congregational Care at Third Presbyterian Church in Rochester NY and three months as a supply pastor for First Presbyterian Church in Caledonia NY.

As my vocational journey continues to unfold, I have found a deep resonance in the foundational practices of the faith. My sense of call continues to be transformed by my certification as a Spiritual Director from San Francisco Theological Seminary where I am currently working on the Doctor of Ministry degree in Spiritual Leadership.

The winds of change are also blowing through my personal life. In March, my mother celebrated her 92nd birthday in Houston; in April, my granddaughter celebrated her fourth birthday in Dallas. The urge to renew and strengthen family ties has become the voice of Texas calling me home.

It is such a joy that this call to First Presbyterian Church of La Grange returns me to my roots even as it enlists me in the deep vocation of the parish pastorate. I look forward to the journey ahead.

Chad Lawson  
Canyon Lake Presbyterian Church  
Statement of Faith

In life and in death humanity belongs to the Triune God—Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer.

The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God who disclosed God-self to the world through Jesus Christ, the God who calls, equips, and empowers the church through the Holy Spirit, is the one true God.

I trust in God the Creator, who called the worlds into being. All human beings were created in God's image and for God's glory. God created the world and deemed the world good. The goodness of God's creation is a reflection of the goodness of God. When humans come into contact with God's goodness and holiness, we soon realize our sin and estrangement. Because sin affects all of human life, and separates humanity from God, God sent Jesus to be with humanity to offer us God's grace. There is no greater example of God's grace for the whole world than Jesus Christ, Emmanuel—God with us! The God we see in Jesus Christ is the God we know to be the one true God, who has forgiven us and set us free from the bondages of sin, death, and the grave.

I trust in Jesus Christ. Born in the most inconceivable of ways, Jesus intruded the world scene with a message of hope, joy, peace, and love. In his public ministry, Jesus preached a message of good news and justice for the poor; he was crucified and died a criminal's death, was raised to new life through the power of God and is seated at the right-hand of God where he intercedes for the world. Through Christ, God brought about a new creation and called the church into existence. The church is the Body of Christ called to proclaim the good news in word and in deed. As heirs of Christ's mission in the world, the church follows the leading of the Holy Spirit who shows us the way into God's future.

I trust in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit calls humanity to a life of grace and freedom. The Holy Spirit is active in the church and reflects the livingness of God here-and-now by calling, uniting, equipping, and comforting God's people. The Holy Spirit equips the people of God for service, gives us the words to pray, illumines our path, and enables us to encounter Christ in the church's proclamation and sacraments.

The sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are signs and seals of God's grace and provision. Baptism is an outward sign of God's invisible grace. Baptism marks the beginning of a life-long adventure of faith and trust. Each time the mystery of God's grace is shone forth in the water, the bread, and the wine, the promises of Christ's benefits become apparent. We encounter the grace and real presence of Christ when we receive the bread and wine because we trust that Christ is present with us through faith.

All Glory to God—Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer!

## Chad Lawson – Journey of Faith

My call to ministry has been an adventure marked by a number of key relationships. As a young person, I always felt a connection to a Higher Power, but I failed to relate with the narrow theology of the Southern Baptist church of my youth which espoused - in my view at the time - a God who was angry and vengeful. I was baptized at the age of nine. In hindsight, this experience was less than memorable, but I now believe God claimed me in the waters. For the next thirteen years after my baptism, I lived as if nothing had changed. Thankfully my mother and two aunts continued to pray for me and continually remind me of my God belovedness. There were many good traits of these three women that I think I have “inherited”: a deep capacity for empathy, a healthy sense of humor, intellectual inquisitiveness, and pragmatism.

After suffering a mental breakdown and dealing with a number of difficult relationship losses, I experienced a crisis at the age of twenty-two. During this time, I began to seek out support and ultimately came to faith in Jesus Christ through the ministry of an Assemblies of God church. It was through this connection to the local church where I first encountered the living God and converted from nihilism to a life of meaning. I joined an A/G church and soon thereafter answered the call to the ministry. When I applied for college I had little support. But knew deep down that God had called me to ministry. At about this time, I met Angela, my now wife of eleven years and mother of my two children. She continues to be my biggest supporter.

As a sophomore in undergrad, I was hired by a local church to serve as the assistant pastor for discipleship. During this chapter I got a chance to make a number of important connections. I visited several countries as a short-term mission worker, preached sermons, led mission teams, taught Bible studies, and facilitated prayer groups. Due in part to my unrelenting theological curiosity I soon became disenchanted with the narrow worldview of the AG. At this crucial juncture I also began reading theologians like Calvin and Barth for the first time. I fell in love with the depth, history, and beauty of Reformed Theology.

As graduation began to draw near, I had a decision to make. I felt called to ministry, but did not have a church home, nor did I have a clear sense of my call. I am not even sure how exactly I came to apply to Austin Seminary. In hindsight it seems like such an unlikely occurrence. In any case, one day I found myself perusing the website of APTS and noticed that one of the professors was a Barthian feminist scholar. This label piqued my interest enough that I applied, was accepted, and later became her Barthian feminist teaching assistant. Prior to my admissions interview at APTS, I had never knowingly met a Presbyterian. I began my studies at APTS in the Fall of 2011 and soon discovered I was at home in the PC (USA). I felt a deep connection to the theology, polity, hymnody, liturgy and social justice emphasis. I felt that Presbyterians most authentically integrated the head, heart, and hands in the life of faith.

I joined First Austin in 2012 and there discovered the breadth and depth of the congregational life. I was welcomed in and felt encouraged by my pastor to continue on the path to ministry. She gave me opportunities to learn and grow, and challenged me to use my hands, head, and heart in unison to bring glory to God. I was ordained as a Deacon in 2013 and soon thereafter began the ordination process. From that point on I have committed myself to serving Jesus Christ through the various ministries of the PC USA. My life has been continually enriched by the grace of God and through the many connections I have made. And here I am now. A Presbyterian by training, calling and passion.

Rev. Erin L. McGee - First, El Campo  
Statement of Faith

I believe in the Triune God, who created the world, everything in it, and proclaimed it inherently good. God created humanity, including human free will, because of a desire to be in relationship with us. God does not need humanity in that God is perfect and whole, but God chose to create humanity and be in continual relationship with us, even though humans will always fall short in sin.

I believe in Jesus Christ who is God incarnate. We live in a broken world; it is not God's kingdom to come. God loves us so much that Jesus became part of our world to make our relationship with God whole. Jesus was model, teacher, preacher, and healer, but most importantly Jesus opened our eyes to the complete meaning of this desired relationship between God and humanity, a love of redemption that went all the way to the cross and rose again on Easter. It is a relationship of love that calls us to live love, justice, and compassion in the world.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, God with us now. God guides us, directs us, stays close to us, comforts us, prods us, guides us, and prays with us. God goes before us, beside us, and after us.

I believe in the body of Christ, called the church, where we are nourished and called through Word and Sacraments. The Bible is inspired Word of God, a gift to humanity which tells the story of God and God's people. It is a light, illumined by the Holy Spirit, and discerned within the body of Christ. The sacraments are signs and seals of God's active and continuing work in the world. The sacraments show us God's grace in Jesus Christ and renew us for service. Together as the body of Christ, humans wonder, struggle, worship, are supported, support each other, and embody God's love to and for our world in need. We are individuals beloved of God. It is our call and our gift to be the body of Christ.

Rev. Erin L. McGee

## Faith Journey

One of my earliest memories is of being lost and found at church. At about age three, my brother, who is my senior by eight years, was instructed to drop me off in my nursery classroom at church and meet my parents and other brother in the sanctuary for worship. As he and I stood in the check-in line, my brother realized time was ticking away and he was about to be late for worship. So he said to me, “Stand right here,” meaning, stand in this line and until you can go into the classroom. To my three year old ears, however, this meant, stand on *this particular spot*. Worship got started and everyone was happily in their classrooms. But I was standing in the hallway, on the spot my brother directed, all by myself. So realizing I was lost, I followed my mother’s instructions and returned to the last spot I had seen her and waited—the church parking lot. But she did not come. A young couple came rushing in and found me standing there. They asked why I was there all by myself. When I explained I was lost, they responded that it was OK, they had found me. They took me inside to my classroom. That day Jesus’ parable of the lost sheep was embodied and the seeds of my faith sprouted.

Throughout my childhood, I was nurtured in faith not only by the experience of being lost and found, but by faithful parents and a paternal grandmother who seemed to be able to answer any question about the Bible that crossed my mind. My brothers and I were baptized in the United Methodist Church in the congregation that had baptized my grandmother and father, and I was nurtured and loved in several Presbyterian and United Methodist churches as my family moved from city to city (a result of my father’s employment).

My mother worked in the church office for many years and when I was a sophomore in high school, she took a call to be the Director of Christian Education at a neighboring congregation. This was a turning point for me as she was committed to supporting me in making a purposeful decision about where I would worship and engage in ministry. I ended up taking myself to Pine Shores Presbyterian Church, a different congregation from where she was called. At this church, I served on a committee, taught Sunday school, was trained as a Stephen’s Minister, participated and became a leader in youth ministry, and helped to lead the mid-week program for children. This congregation recognized and grew the gifts that God had given me and they encouraged me to consider a vocation of ministry.

My faith and call to ministry continued to be nurtured by my stepfather (a Presbyterian (USA) minister), the Davidson College campus ministry, the ministers of congregations where I attended and served as youth intern through out college, seminary professors, and dear friends.

Since my graduation from seminary, I have served in pastoral ministry for two decades. My personal faith journey has been supported and grown by colleagues and friendships, spiritual directors, continuing education, retreats, and being a parent. I do not say it lightly; it is a privilege to serve as a pastor—to preach, to care, to teach, to gather. I look forward to another twenty years!

## STATEMENT OF FAITH

My theology can best be described as classic and Reformed. I affirm the great convictions common to Christians at all times – the reality of the triune God and the incarnation of the eternal Word of God in Jesus Christ. I also affirm the great truths of our Reformed understanding – Scripture alone, Christ alone, grace alone, faith alone, and the stewardship of God's gifts in all of life as we serve God in the world.

In summary, I would describe my theology as that of orthodox confessional Christianity. As I reflect on the way this theology is lived out in my life and ministry, several facets are especially important to me:

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD: This doctrine affirms that God is not asleep at the wheel, but rather is in charge of all things. The God who is creator of heaven and earth is also a God who pays attention to us. The Lord is present in all our comings and our goings. Nothing can separate us from God's love in Jesus Christ. No matter what is out there in the future, God is ahead of it. Presbyterians are the true optimists because we know God is sovereign. This understanding helps calm us in the midst of change. Knowing that God is in charge, we can approach daily life with a **grace-filled resiliency.**

THE CENTRALITY OF THE CROSS: On the cross God's love is revealed in Jesus Christ. Though made in God's image and created to bring glory to God, we persistently choose self over God. On the cross God deals with our sin as one who has eternally loved us. The sacrificial and redemptive work of Jesus Christ shapes our knowledge of God, including the gracious knowledge that we are forgiven. In the cross we also discover what it is to be truly human, for there we find that **God is a vulnerable God, or as Martin Luther said, "a strangely human God" who shares our deepest fears and longings.** Therefore, we also find authentic life in dying to self, and receiving with child-like trust the mercy of God in Jesus Christ.

TAKING THE BIBLE SERIOUSLY: The Bible is truly God's Word to us. In Scripture the voice of the Living God speaks, and the great redemptive acts of God are revealed. All Scripture is inspired by God and is beneficial for the building up of God's people. Through the hearing of Scripture, we come to know the Living Word. It's the Holy Spirit who enlivens the words of Scripture so that we are nurtured in the faith. **The Bible is the final authority** for the church's faith and life. It's not only God's Word to the church, but to me personally, as with an open heart I hear it in fresh ways.

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY: The Christian faith is essentially a corporate faith, not a private thing. The church is a covenant community that draws people out of their autonomous selves and into a fellowship invigorated by the Holy Spirit. God's ultimate purpose is not simply to make great individual saints, but to build a people. These people of God are one, holy, catholic, and apostolic, with Christ as the Head. Everything that a church does – its worship, its fellowship, its governing processes – must be done in ways that build-up one another. This means a polity in which power and decisions are shared for the good of the whole church.

THE SACRAMENTS: The Lord's Supper and Baptism are the grace of God made visible. The water, the bread, and the cup are tangible realities that connect us to the risen Jesus. They are signs of grace that form us into a common life around the risen Lord. The sacraments are corporate acts that bear witness to the gracious initiative of God, and invite us to respond to that grace with holy and hopeful lives.

MINISTRY & MISSION: The church gathers to equip the people for the work of ministry and for the building-up of the body of Christ in unity. This happens as we worship together, learn together, pray together, and serve together. The church is called to mission – to share the renewing power of the Holy Spirit in all of life, and the good news that Jesus Christ is Lord. This involves both the Great Commission to go and make disciples, and the Great Commandment to love our neighbors in acts of mercy and justice.

RESURRECTION LIFE: Christians are a resurrection people. This resurrection life is not just something that starts at the end of time after we die, but is a new life breaking in on us right now. It's the presence of the risen Christ right now that invigorates us for ministry and mission. A church is authentically alive in light of this mighty resurrection life that we share. We have the courage to share our faith with others and the strength to reach out in acts of compassion that touch human needs. We live this joyful resurrection life even as we wait for the new heaven and the new earth, and our future glory of eternal life with God.

GRACE IS THE CONSTANT: When I think back over my own life as a Christian, grace is the constant. It's amazing to me that "there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." (ROMANS 8:1) This act of divine grace is humbling. This grace is empowering for the church. When a congregation is gripped by the reality of God's grace, people move forward in self-giving service. I can think of no higher calling than helping a people know the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

STEPHEN A. MURRAY



## JOURNEY OF FAITH

When I reflect on my years in ministry, journey is a good word for it. Journey involves passage from one time and place to another, and my journey of faith and ministry has certainly been that. Journey implies I've been at it for a while; long enough that several things stand out when I consider my journey of faith.

A first thought is simply, "Where has the time gone?" It seems like just yesterday that I had a sense of God's call as a nine year old. That sense of call waned at times, but became clear during my sophomore year in college. Then came seminary for a M.Div., marriage to Diane, my first call, the birth of children, a D. Min., more calls to churches, grown children, grandchildren, and now a new time of life living in Georgetown, Texas.

This journey has had a lot of changes. When I accepted my first call, Diane and I had just married. Both sets of our parents were living. Our three children – Daniel, Peter, Ellen – were born within the first nine years. When I accepted my final call in California, we had no grandchildren. Now there are five with two more on the way. All four of our parents have died. What I just described in the previous six sentences took forty years, but it seems like just yesterday. Time moves so fast. The pull of the calendar is inexorable.

What stands out in this journey are the people who've shaped my life and ministry. It started with my parents who had a remarkable ministry of hospitality. Whenever guest preachers or missionaries were at the church, they were often hosted by my parents in our home. So as a child I grew up hearing their stories as we all sat around a dinner table. This is where my own call to ministry began.

Dr. Eric Snyder, recently retired from First Presbyterian of Champaign, Illinois, has been a great pastoral mentor for me. We first met in Blackhawk Presbytery. He is wise and encouraging, and his insights about church growth have impacted all my ministry.

Steve Kilpatrick, a CPA by profession, was an Elder at First Presbyterian of Arlington, Texas who also became a life-long best friend. When I faced particularly challenging situations in church life, and didn't know what to do, Steve offered sound advice and ran interference when needed.

I've been blessed with Associate Pastors who were professional in the best sense of the word. They were colleagues who I could trust and who worked hard. We could share the yearnings and aches of our hearts with one another. I was sustained in so many ways by Margaret, Betsy, Daniel, and Timothy.

The most important person in my journey is Diane. God has blessed my life through her in so many ways. She believed whole-heartedly in my call. She's an obedient and prayerful disciple of Jesus Christ. Her insights into people and church life have been ministry-saving for me. At my farewell reception in California in April, the Chair of the PNC who called me shared that when they did reference calls about me, several people referred to Diane as "a gem," so much so they wondered if it was planned. It wasn't. People were correct.

My ministry gifts and passions have been communicating the written Word (preaching and teaching), and sharing the Living Word (connecting people to Jesus through mission, service, and witness). God bends to our human understanding by speaking in the words of Scripture, so it's been a joy to communicate God's thoughts through preaching and teaching. In addition to Scripture, I'm a committed reader and a lover of books – with particular fondness for history, biography, the Inklings, memoir, Russian literature, and poetry.

My great yearning has been to see people receive God's grace in Jesus Christ. So encouraging Presbyterians to share their faith, and training them to do so, has been central to my ministry. I'm also grateful for opportunities to share the good news of Jesus Christ in acts of kindness, mercy, and justice: a homeless ministry, a church coffee house, neighborhood Bible studies, mission fairs, president of a city-wide charity, providing more resources for foreign missions. Mission trips, two to Kenya and one to Lebanon, are highlights.

Stephen Murray

REPORT B.22

What have I loved and found most rewarding about the ministry? It's the people. What have I found most challenging and discouraging about the ministry? It's the people. By God's grace, there's always been enough challenges and frustrations to keep me dependent on God; and more than enough affirmations and grace-filled responses from people to know that I've been called of God.

My final sermon at First Presbyterian in Visalia, California was from 1 Corinthians 2:2 – "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." That's been my passion: to share Christ's life-giving presence in our lives through his cross and resurrection, and his life-giving power for God's mission in the world. I've had a strong emphasis on God's sovereign grace, and also a strong Trinitarian emphasis, so the closing words from *A Brief Statement of Faith* are a great summary of my journey:

"With believers in every time and place, we rejoice that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen."

STEPHEN A. MURRAY

## Statement of Faith

Rev. Elise Renee Neal  
Northminster, San Antonio

### God

1. I believe in one triune God, the creator, redeemer, sustainer, and judge of all things seen and unseen.

### Jesus

1. I believe in one messiah, Jesus Christ, God's only son.

2. Jesus Christ was human by nature and divine in spirit and truth.

3. Jesus Christ suffered a human death, but rose from death to join with God in heaven and reigns over all.

4. I believe that according to scripture, Jesus Christ will come again to judge the living and the dead and God's kingdom will never end.

### Spirit

1. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, giver of life.

2. The Holy Spirit proceeds from God and the Son who, with God and the Son, is worshiped and glorified.

3. I believe in the universal church and the communion of saints.

4. I acknowledge one baptism for forgiveness of sin, and the sharing of the Eucharist/Lords Supper for our salvation and connection to Christ.

5. I believe in the resurrection of the dead and in life everlasting.

In general I believe that God's greatest commandment given to us through Christ is "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all our mind and with all your strength. The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." -- Mark 12:30-31. Love is at the root of everything! We are called to love all in our walk as disciples of Christ. And we are blessed by the love, grace, and mercy that Christ shows us every day of our earthly life. At the core of my being I want to show the world the love of Jesus Christ.

I began my earthly life on May 28, 1979, born to Suzann and Frank Murphy in the small town of Philippi, West Virginia. In that same year, I was baptized at Philippi Presbyterian Church by my grandfather, Rev. Robert C Steele, who was a United Church of Christ minister, and by Rev. Dan Unger, a Baptist minister, who was the interim for the congregation at the time.

Four years later my brother Colin was born. We grew up attending Philippi Presbyterian Church with my parents and my grandparents. I have wonderful memories of growing up in the church, learning about God and about relationships with one another. This little Presbyterian Church, that in its heyday had about 75 members, loved and nurtured me from baptism into adulthood.

In middle school and high school I was very active in our youth group and wanted to be more involved in church ministry, so I joined the Presbytery of West Virginia youth ministry council. It was there that I became moderator for the council and helped lead both the middle school and high school youth retreat for the Presbytery. At the time I did not recognize how significant this would be for my faith journey. But looking back, it meant a whole lot.

It was also during that time that I was able to attend the youth triennium. It was on that trip that a female minister named Denise Hall told me I would become a pastor. I was 14 years old at the time and I can remember the conversation word for word. I vividly remember my response, which was "There's no way I'm going to become a pastor." All I can say about it now is that she saw something in me then that I couldn't see in myself and I'm glad that she took the opportunity to point it out, even if I wasn't ready to listen.

After that experience, my faith continued to grow stronger and stronger with every year that passed. My church family meant so much to me and by the time I was ready to graduate from high school I knew I had a strong faith. That fall I began studies in elementary education with a specialization in early childhood at Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia. During my time at Marshall I was part of the Presbyterian campus ministry and involved with a group called P.R.O.W.L, or People Reaching Out With Love. In that group I held various leadership roles and responsibilities. I also continued to serve

local churches by helping out with their different ministries throughout my time at Marshall.

In the fall of 2001, I moved to Lumberton, North Carolina, to begin my first teaching job. There I began attending the First Presbyterian Church and within a few months I became the youth director and then the Christian educator. All this while working full-time as an elementary education teacher. And, at this point in my life, I was in a relationship with my now-husband Ryan Neal who was living in Wilmington, North Carolina.

By December of my second year of teaching I knew that I wanted to be working in the church full time. So I decided to enter seminary and moved to Richmond, Virginia, to attend Union Theological Seminary -Presbyterian School of Christian Education and pursue a dual degree in Christian Education and Masters of Divinity with the full intent of being a full-time Christian educator.

The road through seminary was difficult but I owe a lot to Carson Brisson who was my Hebrew professor. He, like Denise Hall, saw something in me that was more than I was able to see for myself. I truly believe it was because of him that I was able to succeed. My journey through seminary had many highs and lows and even though Ryan was four hours away, he continued to support me.

In the summer of 2005, Ryan and I married and a couple of months later he moved to Richmond and joined me on campus for my final year. In May 2007 I graduated from Union PSCE (today known as Union Presbyterian Seminary) with my Masters of Divinity. At this point I was working full-time as the Christian Educator of Chester Presbyterian Church in nearby Chester, Va., while still working through the processes of being able to receive my first call. It was also during this time our daughter was born.

I was grateful for my time with the Chester Presbyterian congregation but moved on when I received my first call to ordained ministry in Sioux City, Iowa, as the Associate Pastor for Christian Education and Youth at First Presbyterian Church. It was during our time there that our two sons were born.

And as so often is the case, God will close one door and open another. Unexpectedly, I was called by two congregations in West Virginia who wanted to interview me for their solo pastor positions. I couldn't believe that God could be calling me back home to West Virginia. But he did and I came home and recently served the First Presbyterian Church of Fairmont, West Virginia, for the past six years.

It has been an amazing journey! All that I had learned up to that point has led me to where I am today. I am excited for the new opportunities that God has in store for Northminster Presbyterian Church. I'm excited about the new opportunities that await my children and my husband as we journey together down this road of life. The congregation of Northminster Presbyterian Church has a lot to offer and together I have no doubt that we will be able to continually grow the ministry and flourish as a faith community for years to come.

Blessings, Rev. Elise Renee Neal  
Pastor at Northminster Presbyterian Church  
Joint congregation of Trinity Presbytery of the Cumberland Presbyterian  
Church & Mission Presbytery of the PCUSA  
Husband Ryan married 13 years Children Kaylen 9 Knox 8 Terryn 6

## Fall/Annual 2018 Presbytery Meeting

October 26-27, 2018

### Thursday, October 25

5:00-6:30pm Registration Open Narthex  
6:30pm General Council Dinner/Meeting

### Friday, October 26

8:00-4:00 Registration Open Narthex  
8:00-Close Exhibit Hall Narthex/Sanctuary  
8:00 -3:00 Snacks Available Fellowship Hall

8:00 – Close Prayer Room Pastor’s Study/Garden

9:00am Presbytery Convenes Sanctuary  
- Welcome and Introductions Judy Ferguson  
- Opening Motions

9:15-3:00 Mission in Mission Projects

3:30pm Worship Sanctuary  
4:30pm John Knox Ranch Report (Report A) Beth Watson Mueller  
5:00pm Order of the Day – Commission on Ministry (Report B) Rev. Bill Poe  
6:00pm Dinner (by reservation) Fellowship Hall

### Saturday, October 27

8:00am Registration Open Narthex

8:30am Meeting reconvened Sanctuary  
- Opening Prayer

8:40am Presbytery Business  
- General Presbyter Report Rev. Sallie Watson  
- General Assembly Co-Moderator Greetings Vilmarie Cintron-Olivieri  
- Report on the 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly GA Commissioners  
- General Council Report (Report C) Anna Bohart  
- Fiscal & Stewardship Oversight Report (Report D) Rita Livingston  
- Loaves & Fishes Rev. Bill Reagan

9:30am Order of the Day – Break

9:45am Presbytery Business  
- Committee on Representation & Participation (Report E) Kris Bair

10:00am	Order of the Day – Committee on the Preparation for Ministry (Report F)	Rev. Kathy Escandell
10:30am	Presbytery Business	
	- Church Development & Evangelism (Report G)	Rev. Leon Bloder
	- Trustees Report (Report H)	Scott Russell
	- #MeToo Synod Event	Rev. Ilene Dunn
	- Synod of the Sun Greetings	Valerie Young
	- Pastoral Care Committee Report	Rev. Carol Rahn
	- Bi-vocational Ministry Project	Dr. Phil Hesel
	- Mission, Outreach & Justice (Report I)	Tom O’Meara
	- Education & Congregational Nurture (Report J)	Sandy Pinaire
	- Youth Connection Committee (Report K)	
11:30am	Installation of New Moderator Peter Crouch	Judy Ferguson
11:40am	Stated Clerk’s Report (Report L)	Rev. Tricia Tedrow
11:50am	Adjournment	



**General Council Report**  
**September 29, 2018, 10 a.m.**  
**St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, Marble Falls, TX**

The General Council of Mission Presbytery was called to order by Chair, Anna Bohart, at St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, with a quorum present. Anna thanked Rev. John Brantley, St. Andrews and Susan Stacy for their hospitality. Rev. John Brantley opened the meeting with prayer and a brief devotional on the growth and change at St. Andrews.

A motion was made and **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the June 8, 2018 and August 7, 2018 General Council meetings.

A motion was made and **RESOLVED** to give voice to Ed Sackett, Disaster Recovery Coordinator and TE Rob Muller, Mission Presbytery Trustee.

A motion was made by Moderator Elect Judy Ferguson and **RESOLVED** funds from the General Council FPCSA Settlement Funds pay for the Council dinner at Palenque Grill, 421 E. Nolana Ave. Mcallen, October 25, 2018, at 6:30 p.m.

**Presbyter's Report:**

A grant has been given to First McAllen in the amount of \$7,100.00 from PMA.

The following will be attending the October Presbytery meeting:

Vilmarie Cintron-Olivieri, co-moderator of General Assembly  
Leslie Scanlon, Presyterian Outlook  
Valerie Young, Synod of the Sun

Lety Martinez, Valley Regional Chair was thanked for the work of the Valley Colleague group in in organizing the Mission groups throughout the valley.

Kathryn Threadgill will take part in the covenant service, for Vital Congregations at the June 2019 Presbyter meeting. Sallie has met with four regions to discuss participation in "Vital Congregations".

Equipment for video conferencing and live stream of Presbytery meetings will be purchased from the \$20,000.00 set aside for the purchase of technical equipment was discussed by Ed Sackett, at the Presbyter's invitation. The equipment will be purchased from Sling Production and any funds not used will be returned to General Council FPCSA Settlement funds.

**Disaster Recovery:**

Ed Sackett, reported several thousand families in the Coastal Bend need continued support. A Thanksgiving promotion to encourage volunteerism through PDA is planned for 2018. He requested Council members share the need for volunteers with their Congregations.

The Rio Grande Valley have approximately 10,000 homes either damaged or destroyed from the July Flood and need support from congregations and communities.

Mo Ranch has agreed to house equipment for disaster relief which includes shower trailers, generators, cots, etc.

### **Stated Clerk, Trish Tedrow's, Report**

Upon the Stated Clerk's recommend change to the Manual of Operations Appendix a, General Council Handbook (page 5).

It was moved, with a friendly amendment to remove the word "designating", and **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation that the Leadership Team shall be responsible for appointing Investigating Committees as needed for disciplinary cases, and **designating** the Committee of Counsel for remedial cases in which the Presbytery is either the complainant or the respondent.

Stated Clerk's recommendation:

Based on the annual adjustments of the Consumer Price Index – All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) US City Average, it was moved by Carol Rahm and **RESOLVED the minimum terms of call be increased in the amount of 2.7 %**. It was moved by Peter Crouch and **RESOLVED** an additional \$1,000.00 increase for CCEs minimum terms of call, effective January 1, 2019 are as follows:

Full Time Pastoral Calls: \$43, 570

Full Time Certified Christian Educators: \$29,152

Full Time Associate Certified Christian Educators: \$28,152

It was moved by Cara Herlin and **RESOLVED** that General Council review the formula used for setting the minimum terms taking into account that we have many rural and small churches and that COM and HR bring a recommendation to General Council for the future terms of call.

### **October 2018 Presbytery Meeting:**

It was moved by Peter Crouch and **RESOLVED** to approve display requests for the following:

Habitat for Humanity Texas

Pentos de Christo

Refugee Art Exhibit

### **Human Resources Team:**

No Action Items:

It is requested all General Council members submit responses to the performance survey no later than October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

HR will bring recommendations to Council in regards to payroll processing procedures and General Council heard a report on the hiring of Henry Owen, Director of John Knox Ranch.

### **Trustees, Rob Mueller**

Reported on the disaffiliation agreement with First, San Saba to be presented at the October Presbytery meeting.

### **Commission on Ministry: Bill Poe**

The commission on Ministry moved and it was **RESOLVED** that General Council approve the appendices for designated pastors be added to the COM Handbook.

### **Mission Outreach and Justice Committee: Tom O'Meara**

The committee moved and it was **RESOLVED** that a grant-writing workshop be held at the March 2019 presbytery meeting.

Requested time on the October, 2019 docket and a workshop for Charles and Melissa Johnson.

MOJC is creating study groups on the Letter from Birmingham Jail given the GA recommendation to include it in the Book of confessions.

### **Committee on Representation and Participation: Kris Bair**

The committee moved and it was **RESOLVED** General Council approve Co-chairs or the MP Trustees.

The committee moved and it was **RESOLVED** the following chairs for 2019:

CORP	Amy Meyer & Kris Bair
COM	Carol Clarke
CPM	Laura Walters & Kathy Escandell
MoJC	Tom O'Meara
ECN	Sandy Pinaire
CDE	Nancy Reeves
SFOC	Rita Livingston
HR	Claudia Smith
PCC	Carol Rahm
Trustee	Scott Russell & Bart Roush
HMK	Alex Villapando
YCC	Katy Walters & Ellen Williams

It was reported by the co-chair, Kris Bair, that eight of the nine members of the Steering Committee for JKR have agreed to serve.

A new handbook is being prepared by the committee.

It was moved and **RESOLVED** that General Council recommend to the Presbytery that the Chair of the JKR steering committee have a seat on Council with voice and vote.

### **John Knox Ranch: Beth Mueller**

Deferred maintenance is being addressed prior to the new director's start date of December 1, 2018.

Two expenses which need to be addressed prior to the 2019 season is resurfacing the pool and improving the poolside bathrooms. The scholarship funds need to be resupplied.

### **Fiscal Oversight & Stewardship: Rita Livingston**

The 2016 and 2017 accounts have been closed. The Financial Review Task Force finished the review of 2016 and are still working on 2017. The Task Force will report to the Presbytery at the October Presbytery meeting.

The 2019 Budget is being proposed to General Council. Benevolence giving is down. All General Council committees are asked to use their settlement funds. A summary Budget is being prepared for Presbytery and a separate report of designated funds for committees will be available for the October Presbytery meeting.

The committee moved and it was **RESOLVED** that the 2019 budget be approved.

The committee moved and it was **RESOLVED** that the 2018 funds obtained from the Austin Korean Church for their property be used to pay the settlement ( \$13,741) as negotiated for John Knox Ranch. The first payment of \$25,000.00 would be apportioned per the Presbytery Policy (5% to Synod of the Sun, 5% to GA, 10% to CDE and 10% to Trustees). The remaining 70% (\$17,500.00) Presbytery policy says goes to the Better Together Fund be used to pay the JKR settlement with the remaining \$3, 759 deposited into the General and until the final \$25,000 is received in November.

The committee moves and is **RESOLVED** the 70% from the November payment from Austin Korean Church be deposited in the General Fund to help defer any budget deficit. If no deficit exists, these funds would be deposited in the Better Together Fund.

### **Grant Requests from Better Together Fund: Anna Bohart**

The Leadership Team moved and it was **RESOLVED** to approve the grants from the Better Together Fund. A report to General Council was given and it was moved and it was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendations of the Leadership Team. The Better Together Fund grants are the interest only from the FPCSA settlement fund. For more information the Better Together Fund grant requirements are posted to the Presbytery web site. The grants are as follows:

#### **Interfaith Coalition \$5,000.00**

Sponsored by MOJC and University Presbyterian Church, the fund would be paid to the Travel Ministry. Volunteers work at the bus station to greet Mothers and children as they begin their final leg of their journey to family in the US.

#### **Empowering Women: \$4,000.00**

Sponsored by the Pastoral Care Committee, Empowering Women Network, Synod of the Sun, Madison Square Presbyterian Church, San Antonio and St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, Austin.

The Empowering Women Network is a group of women church leaders throughout the Synod of the Sun who want to bring healing, reconciliation and empowerment to all women in the church through retreats, seminars, training, worship and conversations. The BTF will help pay for the first retreat and follow up groups.

#### **Solar Under the Sun: \$2,000.00**

Sponsored by MOJC, First Presbyterian Church, Kerrville, and Synod of the Sun. First Kerrville is beginning ministry in foreign ministry. The church is planning to install solar panels in El Olmo, Honduras for six to eight families which is a remote location which cannot access the power grid.

### **Mo-Ranch and Presbyterian Children's Home: \$1,000.00**

Sponsored by ECN, Mo Ranch and the Presbyterian Children's Home. This proposed retreat will afford parents some adult time to visit with and learn from other adoptive parents. "So how are you doing with X, Y, Z topic?" will be the leading question, facilitated by someone trained in these possible areas: trans-racial adoption, contact with birth family/family of origin, Sibling relationships, Behavioral connections/TBRI, Extended family relationships, International adoption/cultural identity & preservation, Single parent families and Advocacy on behalf of foster care & adoption. Children and youth will explore some of Mo Ranch's programming while their parents are occupied.

### **Hurricane Harvey Benefit Concert: \$350.00**

Sponsored by Regional Churches affected by Hurricane Harvey and MOJC. Funds were used to purchase sheet music for two anthems for the sixteen churches participating in the Concert. A free-will offering was received with the funds equally divided between Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and the Coastal Ben Disaster Recovery Group which oversees work projects in the region A pot-luck supper followed to encourage fellowship between members of the regional churches.

### **Region Reports: Lety Martinez and Kris Bair**

**Corpus Christi:** Kris Bair reported that the concert was held at Parkway on the anniversary of Hurricane Harvey. Over \$4000.00 was raised for recovery.

**Valley:** Lety Martinez reported that the Mission in Mission projects are ready. The brochure created for sharing information about the congregations in the Valley will be distributed at the Presbytery meeting. All fifteen churches are working together and meeting regularly.

### **ECN: Sandy Pinaire**

Ten scholarships will be awarded for APCE 2019, which is to be held in Galveston, TX.

Trish Tedrow reminded council of deadlines for reports and PowerPoint/videos for the upcoming Presbytery meeting.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned. Rob Mueller closed with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Bohart  
General Council Chair



**Nominations Committee Report  
Mission Presbytery/Mission, TX  
Oct. 26-27, 2018**

CORP moves presbytery adopt the following slate of nominees:

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
<b>CORP</b>			TE Kyle Walker RE Elizabeth Duhan CP Kris Bair
<b>COM</b>	TE Martha Langford		RE Trevor Dragon TE Jane Pettit RE Raquel Ybarra TE Miranda Fontaine RE Hannah Kuykendall RE Rita Odom RE Marilyn Cook
<b>CPM</b>			TE Laura Walters TE Jim Dement TE MariLyn Jones TE David Meriweather
<b>HR Team</b>			RE Lisa Ringler TE Bill Clark
<b>MOJC</b>			RE Caly Fernandez TE Dave Dierkson RE Karen Sprouse TE Andries Coetzee Edward Esparza
<b>ECN</b>			CCE Laverne "Sam" Baublitt TE David Roach TE Jennifer Mitchell
<b>CDE</b>			TE John Roberts TE Nancy Reeves RE Randy Spencer
<b>SFOC</b>			TE Allen Mosiman RE Tina Sullivan TE Eric Dittman

<b>JKR</b>	TE Sarah Allen Meredith Weatherby	David Junkin Andrew Brock RE Lynn Ware	TE Elise Neal RE Andy Sansom Tim Huchton
<b>PCC</b>		TE Mary Breden TE Marsha Brown	TE David Marx RE Peggy Shepherd
<b>HM King</b>			RE David Evans TE Kris Brown
<b>YCC</b> (serves 2-yr terms)	<b>2019</b> RE Neil McKown RE Christine Moore	<b>2020</b> TE Katy Walters TE Ellen Williams	
<b>MP Trustees</b> (serves 5-yr terms)	<b>2021</b> RE Sandra Davis	<b>2022</b> TE Suzanne Crouch	<b>2023</b> TE Matt Gaventa RE Richard Galloway
<b>Synod Commissioner</b>	<b>2020</b> RE Denise Haley		
<b>Regional Rep</b>	<b>2019</b> RE Liz Anzaldua (CC)	<b>2020</b> TE Dan Milford (SA)	
<b>Moderator-Elect</b>	TE Stacy Ikard		