

Minutes

Called Meeting of Mission Presbytery

September 9, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church, Kingsville, TX

Moderator Fred Gamble called the meeting of Mission Presbytery to order at 10:00 a.m.

He asked Moderator Elect CP Sheri Dittman to open the meeting with prayer. Presbytery followed by singing a hymn.

Fred stated that, for reference, Mission Presbytery's bylaws state that not fewer than 12 ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are members of the presbytery and 12 ruling elder commissioners from 12 different congregations can call a special meeting of presbytery. This was achieved with the members of the Commission on Ministry and the General Council combined. That list is attached to these minutes.

The purpose of the called meeting is for the Commission on Ministry to present a report about Betania Presbyterian Church, McAllen. COM will move that the congregation be dissolved.

A quorum was declared. The same standards for calling a meeting determine the quorum for a called or stated meeting of the presbytery: not fewer than 12 ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are members of the presbytery and 12 ruling elder commissioners from 12 different congregations

Fred asked if there were any guests at the meeting. They raised their hands. A motion was made that guests be given the opportunity to speak but not vote. The motion received a second. The motion passed.

Fred called RE Gordon Ringler forward, chair of the Commission on Ministry, to give a report on behalf of the COM.

Gordon stated that he represents the Commission on Ministry.

With much sadness, the Commission on Ministry moves to dissolve Betania Presbyterian Church in McAllen, Texas. The motion did not require a second.

The rationale for this decision:

This request is not made lightly, but after long, careful, and prayerful consideration, as well as many years of ineffective interventions on Betania's behalf.

The Commission on Ministry asked for the latest Administrative Commission to be formed in 2021, which Mission Presbytery approved. We hoped that the AC could help Betania with administrative issues.

This was not Betania's first Administrative Commission. One met with the church in the 1980s. A listening team was assembled in 2009 to try to help the congregation. Yet the issues have remained unresolved over the years.

This is a summary of the issues that the latest Administrative Commission tried to resolve with the church:

There is little knowledge of Book of Order requirements of PC(USA) congregations, or those things have been willfully ignored for years. Betania has not had a consistent functional session or rotating elders for many years. Each congregation may ask for an exemption to have rotating elders. The church did not request it from Mission Presbytery. Elders have not been trained.

- Betania does not carry any form of property insurance after being asked to secure it over the years, placing not only themselves but also the presbytery at risk in the event of a tragedy on the church property. It leased space to ministries but did not require them to carry an insurance certificate.
- When the last Administrative Commission was working with Betania, part of the ceiling caved in the sanctuary. Temporary Presbyter Monica Smith reached out to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and secured \$5,000 for Betania to repair it. As of yet, no follow-up required report has been filed with PDA.
- Other administrative issues that have lingered for years are:
 - There had been no financial accountability. No operating budget. The church made steps in this direction and secured a Treasurer, but the Treasurer recently resigned. There has been no financial review for years.
 - The church has no bylaws or manual of operations.
 - Betania has not filled out a statistical report and has not supported the work of Mission Presbytery via paying per capita or giving any benevolences.
 - There has been no contract with the pastor.
- The congregation has been resolutely unwilling to work with two Administrative Commissions and one Listening Team, who have visited and done their best to support the life and ministry of Betania Presbyterian Church. Rather, these groups have been met with either unkept promises in the best cases or open hostility in the worst.

Mr. Moderator, that is the motion and the report of the Commission on Ministry and concurred by the General Council.

Fred opened the floor for discussion.

Kevin Jones, chair of Trustees, moved to amend the motion: That Betania PC be dissolved upon legally transferring the property to an entity. The motion was seconded. During the discussion, Nancy McCranie offered a rationale for signing the property to Betania: The intent is not to be punitive. They will need their limited resources for repair work. It will enable them to continue ministering to their immediate neighborhood.

After discussion, Fred called for the vote for the amendment, which passed.

Fred called for the vote of the original motion as amended. The presbytery voted by ballot, and the motion passed unanimously.

Fred called upon Rev. Nancy McCranie, chair of General Council, to give the report of General Council.

Nancy moved the following on behalf of the General Council:
General Council recommends that Mission Presbytery relinquish the property to Betania and the Trustees to secure a real estate attorney to take care of the legal matters therein. The motion does not require a second.

The rationale is recorded above. The Trustees have contracted with a real estate lawyer in the RGV to fulfill the motion.

Nancy asked Gordon Ringler and Kevin Jones to help answer questions.

Fred opened the floor for discussion.

When discussion ceased, Fred called for the vote by ballot.

The vote passed unanimously.

Fred asked for a motion and a second to adjourn the meeting. He called upon Rev. Ezequiel Herrera to close the meeting with prayer at 10:30 a.m.

Minutes submitted by Rev. Laurie Palmer.

September 9, 2023, Called Meeting of Mission Presbytery; August 5, 2023, meeting

	<u>RULING ELDERS</u>	<u>CHURCH</u>	<u>COM/GC</u>
1.	Gordon Ringler	1. Cross Roads PC, SA	COM
2.	Rick Carlson	2. Goliad PC, Goliad	COM
3.	Bob Orr	3. Island PC, CC	COM
4.	Duane Manning	4. Pipe Creek PC, Pipe Creek	COM
5.	Steve Frazier	5. Treasure Hills PC, Harlingen	COM
6.	Claudia Smith	6. FPC, Elgin	COM
7.	Lou Williams	7. University PC, SA	COM
8.	Hanna Kurkyndal	repeat, UPC, SA	COM
9.	Fred Gamble	8.FPC, Kerrville	GC
10.	Mike Day		GC
11.	Sheri Dittman	9.FPC, Brownsville	GC
12.	Jo Ann Currie	10.Lake Travis PC, Austin	GC
13.	Lori Black	11.Grace PC, RR	GC
14.	Meredith Weatherby	12. Covenant PC, A	GC
15.	Marilyn Cook	Island PC, CC (repeat; Bob Orr)	

	<u>MINISTERS</u>		
1.	Regina Maas, retired		COM
2.	Gary Dill, retired		COM
3.	Erin McGee	13, FPC, El Campo	COM
4.	Cheryl Homsher	14. FPC, Gonzalez	COM
5.	Jim Currie, retired		COM
6.	Daryl Johnson	15. FPC, Kingsville	COM
7.	Kathy Escandell	16. FPC, McAllen	COM
8.	Martha Langford	17. FPC, LaGrange	COM
9.	Fred Morgan, retired		COM
10.	Jim Barker	18. Harper 19. Junction	COM
11.	Jon Watt	20. Northwood PC, SA	COM
12.	Josh Robinson	21. Hope, A	COM
13.	Kurt Simon	22. FPC, Rockport	COM
14.	Amy Sutherlun	23. FPC, San Marcos	COM
15.	Chris Dunn, chaplain		COM
16.	Nancy McCrainie, chaplain		GC

17.	Kevin Jones	24. FPC, Lampasas	GC
18.	Becca Longino		GC
19.	Ellen Hensle	25. Westminster PC, A	GC
20.	Rachel Watson	26. University PC, A	GC
	Eric Dittman, retired; repeat, FO, RE Mike Day		
	Ann Marie Quigley Swanson, repeat, Learn, Jo Ann Currie		
	14 RE, 20 TE, 26 churches		