

PRESBYTERY OF MINNESOTA VALLEYS STATED MEETING

October 21, 2023

First Presbyterian Church

Willmar, MN

Mission Statement:

“We are congregations who seek to be a collective expression of the Body of Christ joyfully participating in Christ’s on-going life and work.”

The Presbytery of MN met in a stated meeting on October 21, 2023 in person at the First Presbyterian Church, Willmar, MN. A commissioner briefing was held prior to the meeting which was led by Jerry Olson (RE, St.James), member of the Commission on Presbytery Life.

Worship with Communion

The meeting began with worship led by the moderator, Leanne Thompson (TE-Willmar). Utilizing the work composed and written by Carol Meier. The name of the worship service was “The Light of the World” with that emphasis. Scott Thompson (TE-Willmar) and Brian Jones (TE-Spicer) also helped with worship. The worship service included the celebration of the Lord’s Supper.

At the conclusion of worship, Randy Knuth (TE-Ellsworth and Rushmore) introduced the Christmas Joy Offering with a minute for mission. The total of the Christmas Joy offering received was \$413.00.

Call to Order and agenda

Moderator Leanne Thompson (TE-Willmar) called the Presbytery to order at 11:00 AM with prayer. Stated Clerk Pam Prouty (TE-Windom) presented the proposed agenda; a recommendation from the Occidente Task Force was added. PRESBYTERY VOTED to APPROVE the amended agenda.

Words of Welcome

Scott Thompson (TE-Willmar) welcomed us to the First Presbyterian Church, Willmar, and shared historical information. Part of the introduction was the announcement that Mark Adams and Miriam were looking for individuals to help transport some orchestral instruments recently purchased from the Anoka School District to be used in educational purposes in Mexico.

Establishing the Roll and Quorum

Stated Clerk Pam Prouty established the roll and quorum for the meeting.

2023 Presbytery Attendance	2/18	4/18	10/21	12/4
Candace Adams	X	X	X	
Aaron Alfred	X			
Karen Anderson-Dent				
Jon Armajani				
SanDawna Ashley				
Robert Bartlett				
Kathy Blair		X		
Levi Bollerud				
Steven Boots				
Elaine Boyd	X	X	X	

Beverly Brock	X	X		
Beth Buckwalter-Miller	X	X	X	
Jeffrey Bullock		X		
Mark Chamberlain				
Chris Conlin	X			
Beverly Crute	X	X	X	
Andrew Davis	X	X		
Sue DeNio				
Douglas Dent	X		X	
Jerry Dirks				
Daniel Duggan				
Mark Ford	X	X	X	
Tom Gard				
Cory Germain				
Edward Godshall				
Michael Hartwell	X	X	X	
Rollin Haynes		X		
Allen Jergenson	X	X	X	
Dwight Johnson				
Brian Jones		X	X	
Randall Knuth	X	X	X	
Jeanne Kumbalek	X		X	
Raymond Larson				
David Lick	X	X		
John Lindholm				
Robert Maharry				
Lynne Matthews		X		
Laura Messer	X	X	X	
Ed Morgan				
Tony Oltmann		X		
Don Ottenhoff				
Pamela Prouty	X	X	X	
Scott Prouty	X	X	X	
Wayne Purintun				
Herbert Rotunda	X		X	
Bonnie Sue Roys				
Michael Roys				
Patricia Schick				
Darin Seaman	X			
Galen Smith	X	X	X	
Paul Snyder	X	X	X	
Robert Springer				

Norma Spurgin				
Tim Sutton				
Penny Temple-Johnson		X		
Leanne Thompson	X	X	X	
Scott Thompson	X		X	
Elizabeth Tot				
Anne Veldhuisen		X		
Tom Voigt				
Steve Voris			X	
Barbara Whipple				
Anna Williamson	X	X		
Leslie Winters				
William Yueill				
Commissioned Ruling Elders				
Sue Goebel				
Deb Klaassen	X	X		
Dennis Peterson	X	X	X	
Kathy Terpstra	X	X	X	
By Virtue of Office				
COL – Michael Hartwell	X	X	X	
COL – Louella Voigt	X	X		
CPL – Leanne Thompson	X	X	X	
COO – Patty Brandts		X	X	
COO – Le Roy Ennenga	X	X	X	
CN – Galen Smith	X	X	X	
CN – Beverly Brock	X	X		
PW Moderator – Gloria Rust				
Moderator – Leanne Thompson	X	X	X	
Vice Mod – Douglas Dent	X		X	
Past Mod – Nancy Skoog	X	X		

Ruling Elder Commissioners

Amboy – EXCUSE
Ashby – EXCUSE
Baxter – EXCUSE
Beaver Creek – EXCUSE
Blue Earth – EXCUSE
Brewster – EXCUSE
Browns Valley – EXCUSE
Cambria – EXCUSE
Canby – EXCUSE
Crosslake – EXCUSE
Dawson – Sharilyn Bates

Doran – EXCUSE
Edgerton – EXCUSE
Ellsworth – EXCUSE
Fergus Falls – Connie Seltz
Foley – EXCUSE
Fulda – EXCUSE
Holland – EXCUSE
Iona – EXCUSE
Kasota – EXCUSE
Lake Crystal – EXCUSE
Lismore – Kathy Knips
Litchfield – EXCUSE

Luverne – Barb Antoine
Madelia – EXCUSE
Maine – EXCUSE
Mankato – EXCUSE
Marshall – EXCUSE
Maynard – EXCUSE
Milroy – EXCUSE
Mountain Lake – EXCUSE
Osakis – Keven Withers
Pipestone – EXCUSE
Randall – EXCUSE
Redwood Falls – Sonya Alexander
Renville – Joy Peterson
Round Lake – Ronda Sammons
Rushmore – EXCUSE
Russell – EXCUSE

Saint Cloud – EXCUSE
Saint James – Jerry Olson
Saint Peter – Marge Johnson
Silver Lake – EXCUSE
Slayton – EXCUSE
Spicer Harrison – Lori Klose
Spicer Hope – Kathy Terpstra
Willmar – Betty Knutson
Windom – David Easler
Winnebago – EXCUSE
Worthington – Norma Cook
Visitors
Karen Lange, Presbytery staff
Rene Myers, Ministry Engagement Advisor, PCUSA
Barb Wawrzyniak
Sharon Oleson

PRESBYTERY VOTED to seat Rene Myers, Presbyterian Mission Agency, Ministry Engagement officer as a corresponding member. First time commissioners and guests were recognized.

Consent Agenda

Stated Clerk, Pamela Prouty presented the Consent Agenda noting the one recommendation in the Commission on Presbytery Life report.

1. Approve the minutes from the April 18, 2023 Stated Meeting.
2. Receive the Stated Clerk's Report (Attachment A)
3. Receive the Executive Presbyter's report (Attachment C)
4. Receive Administrative Commission reports from Brooten and Jackson (Attachment H)
5. Receive the Commission on Presbytery Life report including one recommendation (Attachment I)
6. Receive the Commission on Presbytery Leadership report (Attachment D)
7. Receive the Commission on Presbytery Operations report (Attachment E)
8. Receive the Committee for Congregational Nurture report (Attachment F)

PRESBYTERY VOTED to approve the Consent Agenda including the one recommendation from the Commission on Presbytery Life.

Stated Clerk's Report (Attachment A)

Stated Clerk Pamela Prouty share that she recently attended the Polity, Benefits, and Mission Conference for Mid Council Leaders in St. Louis. She encouraged people to research the Board of Pensions Season of Rebuilding information on the changes the Board is considering at their website, pensions.org. She shared prayers concerns for Anna Williamsson and Michael and Bonnie Roys and reminded people about the Rev. Laura Messer's installation service

Welcome new pastors (Attachment B)

The Rev. Steve Morse, interim pastor at Luverne was welcomed with a ritual and presentation of a book.

Report from the Presbyterian Mission Agency

René Myers, the Mission Engagement Officer from PMA gave an oral report. She outlined the activity of the Presbyterian Mission Agency and all of its various programs. She also talked about ways to engage and support through shared mission and the four denominational offerings. She share a video which talked about the Matthew 25 congregations in our presbytery and those who have given to the four denominational offerings.

Recognition of Karen Lange

Karen, Associate for Administration has served the presbytery for 20 years. She was honored with a gift and great appreciation.

Executive Presbyter Report (Attachment C)

Rev. Beth Buckwalter-Miller has visited the Ashby Dalton/ Maine churches in addition to her written report.

The Presbytery recessed at 11:46 a.m. with a prayer. The Presbytery reconvened at 1:00 p.m. with prayer.

Commission on Leadership (Attachment D)

Rev. Michael Hartwell (TE, Randall) co-chair gave the report. He brought forth two recommendations. The first one was the 2024 Compensation Policy. The new language is italicized. The biggest change is the addition of the newly required 12 week family leave. PRESBYTERY VOTED to approve the 2024 Compensation Policy.

The second recommendation had to do with the transfer of the Rev. Dr. Sarah Hoogendoorn from the Christian Reformed Church to the PCUSA. She is an ordained pastor in good standing in the Christian Reformed Church. She serves as a chaplain at St. Cloud VA Health Care System. COL leadership have all met with Sarah and believe she will be an asset to the Presbytery. The Stated Clerk will work with her through the process of transferring. Since she was ordained in a Reformed Denomination more than five years ago, she can be exempt from being required to pass the ordination exams with a two-thirds vote of Presbytery. However, COL is recommending that she take the polity ordination exam and she meet with a COL member to talk over the Confessions.

PRESBYTERY VOTED to recommend to the Presbytery to exempt the Rev. Dr. Sarah Hoogendoorn who is seeking to transfer her membership from the Christian Reformed Church to the Presbyterian Church USA from taking the standard ordination exams except for the Standard Polity Exam. (G-2.0505 a. 2.). Presbytery voted affirmatively 29 yeses 0 nos out of 37 in attendance.

Commission on Operations (Attachment E)

Budget and Finance chair Patty Brandts (RE, St. James) shared that the Budget and Finance Task Force is putting together a preliminary 2024 Budget including per capita amounts. This will be presented at the special Presbytery meeting in December. It looks like Per Capita will be \$45.00 per member

Commission on Representation

Chair Mark Ford (TE-Baxter/Brainerd) is still looking for people to serve in the Presbytery leadership

He placed into nomination Doug Dent (TE Fergus Falls) to serve as Presbytery Moderator. The floor was opened to nominations. PRESBYTERY VOTED to close nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Doug Dent as Presbytery Moderator for the term from today through the October 2024 Presbytery meeting.

Occidente Task Force

Mark Ford (TE-Baxter/Brainerd) organizer of the Occidente Task Force shared that the Task Force met recently to talk about our relationship with the Presbytery of Occidente in Guatemala. The Task Force has had issues with overall communication and finding people to serve on the Task Force. They are recommending this relationship be dissolved at the end of our agreement which would be the end of 2024.

PRESBYTERY VOTED to dissolve the relationship with the Occidente Presbytery, Guatemala at the end of 2024.

Synod Commissioners report

Dennis Peterson (RE, Harrison, Spicer) and Scott Prouty (TE, Redwood Falls) shared about upcoming Synod events: Synod School – July 21 - 26, 2024 at Buena Vista. They also talked about how the Synod works and the Synod Strategic Plan.

New Business They was no new business.

Speak Out and Committee highlights and other Announcements

A time of sharing stories and announcements was held.

Installation of new moderator

Doug Dent (TE- Fergus Falls) was installed as the Presbytery moderator by current moderator Leanne Thompson (TE, Willmar).

The Prayers of the People with the Lord's Prayer was led by Doug Dent (TE- Fergus Falls).

Benediction and Adjournment

The Presbytery of MN Valleys meeting was adjourned by Moderator Doug Dent at 2:39 PM

The next meeting of the Presbytery of MN Valleys will be a special meeting called for Monday, December 4, 2023 at via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela R. Prouty
Stated Clerk

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**Stated Clerk's Report
To the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys
October 21, 2023**

1. The Leadership Team which consists of the chairs and co-chairs of all the Presbytery Commissions and Committees have called a special presbytery meeting on Monday, December 4, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom for the purpose of approving the 2024 Presbytery Budget and to complete the nominations to Presbytery Committees and Commissions.
2. The 2022 minutes of the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys have been approved without exception by the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.
3. The Presbytery review of records happened this summer; the report is attached.
4. Since the August Presbytery meeting, I have attended Commission on Leadership meetings, attended a Synod Clerk meeting, a Presbytery Leader meeting, Presbytery staff meeting, attended Presbytery planning meetings, attended the Mid Council Leader Meeting in St. Louis, attended the Presbytery pastor retreat, prepared for this meeting, and answered questions, reviewed documents and more.

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**Session Records Report to Presbytery
October 21, 2023**

City/Church Name	With No Exceptions	With Noted Exceptions	Not Read
Amboy, First Presbyterian		X	
Ashby, First Presbyterian	X		
Baxter, Lakes Area Presbyterian	X		
Beaver Creek, First Presbyterian	X		
Blue Earth, First Presbyterian	X		
Brewster, First Presbyterian	X		
Browns Valley, United Methodist-Presbyterian	X		
Cambria, Cambria Presbyterian	X		
Canby, First Presbyterian		X	
Crosslake, Crosslake Presbyterian		X	
Dawson, First Presbyterian	X		
Doran, First Presbyterian			X
Edgerton, First Presbyterian		X	
Ellsworth, Zion Presbyterian	X		
Fergus Falls, Federated	X		
Foley, First Presbyterian	X		
Fulda, First Presbyterian	X		
Holland, First Presbyterian	X		
Iona, First Presbyterian	X		
Kasota, First Presbyterian	X		
Lake Crystal, First Presbyterian	X		
Lismore, First Presbyterian	X		
Litchfield, First Presbyterian	X		
Luverne, First Presbyterian	X		
Madelia, First Presbyterian	X		
Mankato, First Presbyterian	X		
Marshall, Christ United Presbyterian			X
Maynard, First Presbyterian	X		
Milroy, Ashford Presbyterian	X		

Mountain Lake, First Presbyterian	X		
Osakis, First Presbyterian	X		
Pipestone, First Presbyterian	X		
Randall, Randall Presbyterian	X		
Redwood Falls, First Presbyterian	X		
Renville, Ebenezer Presbyterian	X		
Round Lake, First Presbyterian	X		
Rushmore, Emmanuel First United Presbyterian	X		
Russell, Grace First Parish			X
Saint Cloud, First Presbyterian	X		
Saint James, First Presbyterian	X		
Saint Peter, Union Presbyterian	X		
Silver Lake, Faith Presbyterian			X
Slayton, First Presbyterian	X		
Spicer, Harrison Presbyterian	X		
Spicer, Hope Presbyterian	X		
Underwood, Maine Presbyterian	X		
Willmar, First Presbyterian	X		
Windom, First Presbyterian			X
Winnebago, First Presbyterian	X		
Worthington, Westminster Presbyterian	X		

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Statement of Faith
Rev. Dr. Steven J. Voris, MFA

My Christian faith stems from a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Because I know God loves me and all of creation, my life is filled with a sense of acceptance and grace which inspires me to be as accepting of others as Christ is of me. God's love has precipitated a change in my life which has literally caused me to become a new person. I seek to repent of my old selfish ways and strive to show God's unceasing love to others. Each day is an opportunity for me to renew my relationship with God and to find new ways to use my God-given gifts through the Holy Spirit. Though I continually fall short of doing and being all that I would like to do and be, I find peace in the life I have.

While Jesus Christ is the Word incarnate, the Bible is the written word that teaches the Christian community about how people should interact with each other and with God. As *The Confession of 1967* attests, "the Bible is the witness without parallel" which speaks to each generation of believers, providing them with all they need to fulfill God's purpose for their time. The Book of Confessions provides an excellent exposition of the Bible, clarifying points of contention in times of crisis. I believe them to be useful and authoritative for my life and for the life of the Church. I adhere to the essential tenets of the Reformed Tradition.

I believe the Presbyterian system of governance, with its appropriate checks and balances of power, helps protect the Church from those who either intentionally or unintentionally do harm. I am proud to be part of the Presbyterian Church and readily submit to its discipline. I still honor my ordination vows. I have a responsibility to participate in more inclusive church governing bodies as is appropriate for being a Presbyterian.

Our lives are meant to be in relationship with God making prayer essential to life. The Fourth-century mystic, Evagrius Ponticus, got it right when he wrote, "If you are a theologian, you truly pray. If you truly pray, you are a theologian." As a teacher and theologian, I am not interested in teaching ABOUT God as much as I am interested in sharing the insights the biblical writers and other theologians have gleaned from their personal encounters with the Almighty so others can experience that relationship too.

A life of prayer and loving neighbors through Christian service are not mutually exclusive, but intertwined and inseparable. I have been personally involved in overcoming physical hunger through work with food banks and food pantries and in overcoming spiritual hunger through teaching, preaching, writing, and leading retreats and workshops on the spiritual life.

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**Executive Presbyter Report
Rev. Beth Buckwalter-Miller**

Since our last Presbytery meeting, my job has continued to provide many interesting opportunities and activities! Here are some highlights:

Church visits: Redwood Falls, Milroy, Fergus Falls, St. Cloud, Willmar, Spicer, Canby, Marshall, and Worthington have been the wonderful congregations with which I have had opportunity to share worship. I preached in Fergus Falls, St. Cloud, and Willmar as well. It is always a special joy to have an opportunity to preach – something I miss from my days as a pastor serving a congregation. I also attended a funeral at our Luverne church and had the opportunity to meet with leaders from Round Lake and Brewster as well as Worthington.

Conferences and Travel: I traveled to Buffalo, MN for the Synod Leadership Summit, then to Denver, CO for the Board of Pensions conference, and then to Baltimore, Maryland for a week of “Executive Presbyter Residency.” Each event was packed with information as well as opportunities to get better acquainted and network with others in the denomination.

Church Musicians’ Retreat: A special joy was working with Carol Meier and Leaders of Faith Presbyterian in Silver Lake to plan our Church Musicians’ Retreat. Sixteen music leaders attended, and we received a request to provide something like this every year.

Crafting in Windom: While I did not personally attend this second Craft Day it is still something I celebrate. Both the Church Musicians’ Retreat and the Craft Day came out of the desire to bring people together through the common ground of work and hobbies, and it is gratifying to watch people connect and these groups begin to develop a life of their own.

New Church Leadership Connection System: Much of my time has gone into learning how to use our new Church Leadership Connection (CLC) system that helps to match churches with vacancies with pastors who are seeking a call. We now have five congregations that have successfully posted their information on the new system. Session Clerks play a larger role in our new system, and there is a learning curve for all, so this feels like a real victory! Unfortunately, we still have a pastor shortage, and the new system will not solve that problem. It does help us face the reality a little more quickly, as PNC’s can find out right away if a pastor is even interested, before they invest a lot of time in reading resumes.

Shared Ministry, Growing our own Leaders, Regional Partnerships: The way forward in this season of a pastor shortage for rural communities combined with decreased membership in many of our churches, includes options like shared ministry, encouraging members of our churches to go to seminary or to begin classes with the Academy to prepare to become Commissioned Ruling Elders, and developing regional partnerships where perhaps a Teaching Elder (Minister of Word and Sacrament) and a couple of Commissioned Ruling Elders (CRE’s) work together to serve several churches. I am learning a lot about all of these options, and we are experimenting in our Presbytery as congregations test the waters with some of these options and new ways of staffing churches begin to emerge.

Valley Bridge: I continue to write articles for the Valley Bridge and to work closely with Karen Lange, our administrator, as we strive to bring you rich content and many resources every week.

Ministry Leader’s Retreat and Coming Up Soon: Next week (as I write this today) I will be on the Ministry Leader’s Retreat. In October I will participate in a Zoom Synod Retreat and will fly to St. Louis for the Polity, Benefits and Mission Conference.

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**Commission on Leadership (COL) Report
To the Presbytery of MN Valleys
October 21, 2023**

Included in this report are two recommendations which will come to the floor of the Presbytery; the two recommendations are NOT included in the Consent Agenda.

The following actions were taken at the May 4, 2023 zoom meeting

1. COL VOTED to approve the Co-chair actions.
 - a. Authorize Ruling Elder Hollis Davenport of Federated Church to administer the Lord's Supper at the Federated Church on July 2. Hollis has been trained by and assisted the Rev. Dr. Doug Dent in the serving of communion.
 - b. Authorize Gloria VandeBrake to administer the Lord's Supper at First Presbyterian Church of Foley on November 5, 2023. Gloria has been previously trained to officiate communion.
 - c. Authorize Commissioned Ruling Elder Gordy Pennertz to administer the Lord's Supper at Harrison Community Presbyterian Church as needed from May 1, 2023, to April 30, 2024.
2. COL VOTED to grant the request of the Faith Presbyterian Church, Silver Lake to act as the Pastoral Nominating Committee for the purpose of calling the Rev. Laura Messer as their installed pastor. She previously served as the Designated Pastor.
3. COL VOTED to grant an exemption to the First presbyterian Church of Blue Earth to G-2.0404 Terms of Service for Ruling Elder Connie Hedland to serve on the Session to fill out the rest of an unfilled term through 2023 and serve another full term through 2026.
4. COL VOTED to receive the annual report from the Rev. Tony Oltmann.
5. COL VOTED to transfer the membership of the Rev. Lindsay Jacaruso to the Presbytery of North Carolina and the Rev. Jim Krapf to the Presbytery of Florida.

The following actions were taken at the June 1, 2023 zoom meeting

1. COL VOTED to approve the following co-chair actions:
 - a. Permission granted for 1 year for Kathy Knips to serve communion for the Round Lake & Brewster Churches from May 2023 through April 2024.
 - b. Permission for First Presbyterian Church of Mankato to submit their MDF to CLC.
 - c. Permission for First Presbyterian Church of Luverne to submit their MIF to CLC
 - d. Permission to Clerk of Session Ruling Elder Mary Thielke to moderate an emergency Session meeting at the Christ United Presbyterian Church, Marshall on May, 2023.
2. COL VOTED to approve the request of the Session of The First Presbyterian Church of Luverne requests to extend Interim Pastor the Rev. Dr. Val Putnam's service to the church through June 30, 2024. We know it is under Presbytery salary guidelines.
3. COL VOTED to renew the partnership with the First Presbyterian Church of Mountain Lake and the First Presbyterian Church of St James for one year, from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023. There is no change in the agreement.
4. COL VOTED that those churches who have an approved MIF (Ministry Information Form) can transfer it to the MDP (Ministry Discernment Profile without coming back to COL.

The following actions were taken at the August 3, 2023 zoom meeting

1. Approve Co-Chair actions:
 - a. Permission for the Rev. Anna Williamson to train Session members to officiate Communion in her absence.
 - b. Permission to Ruling Elder Kathy Knips (who has been trained) to officiate at Communion at the First Presbyterian Church, Luverne on August 6, 2023.
 - c. Permission granted to Ruling Elder Jean Volkers and Ruling Elder Stan Menning to officiate communion for one year at the First Presbyterian Church, Pipestone.

2. Dissolve the relationship between the Rev. Dr. Val Putnam and the First Presbyterian Church, Luverne effective July 12, 2023.
3. COL VOTED to approve the interim pastor relationship between the Rev. Steve Voris and the First Presbyterian Church effective August 4, 2023 – August 3, 2024. The Rev. Steve Voris will transfer his membership from the Presbytery of South Dakota; he will become the moderator of the Session and the head of staff. The terms of call are as follows: this is a part time agreement for 20-22 hours per week, preaching twice a month and three office days/week.

Salary \$12,000.

Housing \$20, 500.

Social Security \$2,486.25

Board of Pensions \$12, 675.

Other reimbursables

Travel \$1,500.

Book allowance \$325.

Continuing Education allowance (cumulative for 3 years) \$750.00

One week of continuing education including one Sunday and two weeks' vacation including two Sundays. The contract has a 30 day notice for both parties.

4. **COL VOTED to recommend the 2024 Compensation Policy to the Presbytery. (This action will come to the floor of Presbytery)**

The following actions were taken at the September 7, 2023 in person meeting

1. COL VOTED to Approve the co-chair action on approving Communion servers for the First Presbyterian Church, Winnebago who have been trained through September 12, 2024: Ruling Elders Mike Butler, Cheryl Gorackowski, Shirley Leagjeld and Carol Ricard.
2. COL VOTED to extend the contract between the Rev. Levi Bollerud (ELCA) and the First Presbyterian Church, Canby for one year. The terms are as follows: 35-40 hours a month for a \$12,000 salary. Levi has permission to moderate the Session and will become a member of the Presbytery.

The following actions were taken at the October 5, 2023 meeting

COL VOTED to receive Doug Dent's sabbatical report.

COL Actions

1. COL VOTED to approve the request of the Faith Presbyterian Church, Silver Lake's Session to change the call of the Rev. Laura Messer from a designated installed pastor to the installed pastor. The congregation approved the call at a congregational meeting on June 4, 2023.
2. COL VOTED to form an Administrative Commission for the purpose of installing the Rev. Laura Messer as the Installed Pastor at the First Presbyterian Church of Silver Lake, MN on Sunday, October 22 at 3:00 p.m. with the following members: Teaching Elders: Presbytery Moderator Leanne Thompson, Willmar, Beth Buckwalter-Miller, Executive Presbytery and Paul Snyder, Ashby and Dalton and Ruling Elders: Jerry Brooks (Silver Lake), Deb Hess (Redwood Falls), Keven Withers (Osakis).
3. COL VOTED to approve the request from the First Presbyterian Church of Osakis' Session for an exemption to G-2.0402 Terms of Service and allow Ruling Elder Shirley Helberg, the church's treasurer, to serve an additional term on session.
4. COL VOTED to modify the Separation Agreement for the Rev. Robert Bartlett so he could attend worship and other activities at the First Presbyterian Church of Round Lake and Brewster. When a new pastoral leader is called then he would step back again until invited by the new pastoral leader.

5. **COL VOTED to recommend to the Presbytery to exempt the Rev. Dr. Sarah Hoogendoorn who is seeking to transfer her membership from the Christian Reformed Church to the Presbyterian Church USA from taking the standard ordination exams except for the Standard Polity Exam. (G-2.0505 a. 2.). *This exemption requires a 2/3 vote.***

Rationale

- a. Rev. Dr. Sarah Hoogendoorn has requested to transfer her membership in the Christian Reformed Church to the PC(USA) and become a member of the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys.
- b. She is an ordained pastor in good standing in the Christian Reformed Church. She serves as a chaplain at St. Cloud VA Health Care System.
- c. COL leadership have all met with Sarah and believe she will be an asset to the Presbytery. The Stated Clerk will work with her through the process of transferring.
- d. Since she was ordained in a Reformed Denomination more than five years ago, she can be exempt from being required to pass the ordination exams with a two-thirds vote of Presbytery. However, it is probably best that she does take the polity ordination exam.

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**PRESBYTERY OF MINNESOTA VALLEYS
COMPENSATION POLICY 2024**

Policies and procedures of the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys are to assist sessions in their responsibility as employers. All policies will be guided by the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys, the Board of Pensions information, and the Book of Order.

This policy uses the Church-wide Median Annual Effective Salary for Ministers of the Word and Sacrament/Teaching Elders in determining a process for minimum compensation. The Median Annual Effective Salary for Ministers of the Word and Sacrament/teaching elders serving in full-time positions in 2023 (as reported to the Board of Pensions) is \$ \$67,100 for cash salary and housing.

Commissioned Pastors/Commissioned ruling elder minimums continue to be 75% of the teaching elder minimums shown below.

Exceptions to this policy shall be approved by the Commission on Leadership annually.

Years of Ordained Service	% Below Church wide Median	Total Compensation	*Cash Salary (div by 1.3) When a manse is provided
None	10.00%	\$60,390	\$46,454
One	9.00%	\$61,061	\$46,970
Two	8.00%	\$61,732	\$47,486
Three	7.00%	\$62,403	\$48,002
Four	6.00%	\$63,074	\$48,518
Five	5.00%	\$63,745	\$49,035
Six	4.00%	\$64,416	\$49,551
Seven	3.00%	\$65,087	\$50,067
Eight	2.00%	\$65,758	\$50,583
Nine	1.00%	\$66,429	\$51,099
Ten	0.00%	\$67,100	\$51,615

Full time Ministers of the Word and Sacrament/Teaching Elders - In addition to cash salary Ministers of the Word and Sacrament are to be provided with housing (either a manse or a housing allowance), full pension benefits, an auto expense reimbursement (reimbursed at the IRS rate), and four weeks of vacation including four Sundays. Also, they shall receive a continuing education allowance, two weeks of continuing education time including two Sundays which are cumulative over three years *and a 12 week Family Medical Leave*. Professional expense, Social Security offset, annuities, medical reimbursement deductible and other expense related accounts are all negotiable. All such items (except vacation time) are forfeited if unused prior to the dissolution of the pastoral relationship.

Part-time Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and Commissioned Pastors – In addition to cash salary, these pastoral leaders are to be provided with housing (either a manse or a housing allowance), an auto expense reimbursement (reimbursed at the IRS rate) and four weeks of vacation including four Sundays. If the Pastoral Leader is part time and providing part time worship leadership then the vacation time can be negotiated. Also, they shall receive a continuing education allowance and two weeks continuing education time including two Sundays which are cumulative over three years. *After one year of service, they are eligible for the 12 Week Family Medical Leave*. Participation in the Board of Pensions, Professional expense, Social Security offset, annuities, medical reimbursement deductible and other expense related accounts are all negotiable

Requirements: *Definition/Explanation*

- The annual terms of call (including cash salary, housing and all reimbursables) shall be approved by the congregation (*for called/installed Teaching Elders*) and the Session (*for Temporary Pastors (Stated Supply, interim, CREs, etc.)*) before a **change** in the terms of call. The new terms of call must be approved by the

congregation before the pastoral leader is paid for the first time. *If there are no changes to the terms of call, a congregational meeting is not necessary*

- Housing Allowance –
 - ◊ Housing plus utilities must be in accordance with guidelines used by the Board of Pensions to compute effective salary.
 - ◊ When the church does not provide a manse, the pastoral leader may designate any appropriate amount of cash salary with confirming action by the session prior to January 1. This amount must be recorded in the Session minutes.
 - ◊ When a manse is provided the pastoral leader may designate from the cash salary a furnishing and household expense allowance. This amount must be recorded in the Session minutes.
 - ◊ The housing allowance is based on the out-of-pocket cost of providing a home and furnishing the home. It includes mortgage payments, home insurance, rent, utilities, furnishings, and property maintenance supplies. The Internal Revenue Code of 2002 and Congress have placed a three-part test for limiting the housing allowance exclusion. The lesser of:
 - The amount designated by the council (session) **or**
 - The amount actually spent to provide primary residence **or**
 - The fair market rental value, furnished, including appurtenances & actual utilities cost.
- Continuing education - minimum of ~~\$750.00~~ *\$1250.00* per year, plus two weeks (including two Sundays, available January 1). This is a vouchered expense. Continuing education benefits (*both time and money*) are cumulative for three years. Continuing education time and expense must be approved by the Session. Thus, it is recorded in the Session minutes. At the time of termination of employment (either voluntary or involuntary) a teaching elder/commissioned ruling elder shall have no claim for pay in lieu of unused continuing education time or expense.
- Auto expenses - vouchered monthly at the current IRS allowance
- Vacation
 1. Called/installed pastors will receive four weeks (including four Sundays) per year, available January 1st.
 2. Temporary pastors (i.e., interim, stated supply, CREs) will receive four weeks of vacation (including four Sundays) during their first year of employment as defined by their contract start date. If the contract is extended beyond a year, temporary pastors will receive one week of vacation (including one Sunday) for every three-month extension. Temporary pastors may reserve up to two weeks of paid vacation time to use after the end of their contract. This arrangement must be stated in the terms of the contract. Payment for this reserved vacation time will be made at the time the contract is ended.
- ~~Maternity Leave—Six weeks paid maternity leave for childbirth or adoption; additional time can be negotiated.~~
- ~~Paternity Leave—Four weeks paid paternity leave for childbirth or adoption; additional time can be negotiated.~~
- ~~Health and Medical Leave—Pastoral Leaders have ten days of paid sick leave each calendar year cumulative up to ninety days. At the time of termination of employment (either voluntary or involuntary) a Pastoral Leaders shall have no claim for pay in lieu of unused sick leave. Pastoral Leaders shall report used sick time to the Session thus it is recorded in Session minutes. Additional time can be negotiated for emerging medical situation.~~
- ~~Emergency Leave—A maximum of five paid days per year shall be allowed for emergency leave arising out of the death of an immediate member of the family, a stillbirth or miscarriage. In the event of serious illness or other emergency related to an immediate member of the family, such leave may be allowed by action of the Session. This shall be recorded in the Session minutes.~~
- *12 Week paid Family Medical Leave (G-2.0804)- shall be accessed for the following reasons: health issues of the pastor, parental leave following birth or adoption, health issues of the pastor's immediate family (partner/spouse, child, parent) and for bereavement of the pastor's immediate family. This leave is available each calendar year and the time shall be recorded in the Session minutes.*
 - ◊ Ministers of the Word and Sacrament enrolled in the pension and death disability portion of the Board of Pensions shall be paid full salary and Board of Pension dues by the congregation for up to 90 days of

disability. Beginning with day 91, teaching elders may be placed on disability through the Board of Pensions.

- Full time shall be defined as 40 - 45 hours per week. Part time parameters are as follows:
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ time = 10 – 12 hours per week: provides a weekly sermon and monthly moderating of Session and Congregational meetings
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ time = 20 – 22 hours per week: in addition to above, provides a few hours for other ministry
 - $\frac{3}{4}$ time = 30 -33 hours per week: in addition to above , provides additional time for another ministry
- Pastoral Leaders are encouraged to take two days off per week, with at least one full, uninterrupted day off per week. When there has been an unusually heavy work week, Pastoral Leaders are encouraged to take an extra day off as negotiated with the Session. This is not considered a vacation day. This shall be recorded in the Session minutes.

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**Commission on Presbytery Operations - Budget and Finance Task Force
Report to the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys
October 28, 2023**

We met via Zoom on April 27, May 25, June 22, August 31, and September 28.

Financial Review:

- Financial position is still strong with investments performing well. Operating net income through August is favorable to budget \$33,000.
- Remittances from churches for special offerings and greater causes were over \$52,000 August YTD with \$22,178 for One Great Hour of Sharing, \$7,794 for Disaster Relief and \$8,961 for the 2022 Christmas Joy Offering.
- Through August, we have collected 82% of our annual Per Capita budget.
- Expenses are in line with amounts budgeted, after adjusting for Youth Coordinator and Circuit Pastor positions that are not yet filled and COL coaching and grants to pastors not yet incurred or funded.

Approved scholarship/grant requests for the following:

First	Fulda	Camp	\$ 375.00
First	Canby	Camp	\$ 525.00
First	Willmar	Camp	\$ 225.00
First	Willmar	Camp	\$ 75.00
Union	St. Peter	Camp	\$ 225.00
Hope	Spicer	Camp	\$ 825.00
First	Foley	Camp	\$ 225.00
First	St. Cloud	Camp	\$ 750.00
Federated	Fergus Falls	Camp	\$ 150.00
First	Amboy	Technology	\$ 750.00
First	Slayton	Technology	\$ 725.00
First	Willmar	Technology	\$ 750.00
Scott Prouty	Annual Conference of Islamic Society of North America		\$ 100.00

Approved the Mental Health Grant application requested by Beth, EP to assist the Nuer Professional Network in developing lessons to address topics related to mental health for South Sudanese immigrants. Application was approved and \$5,000 received.

Approved a request from the Administrative Commission of the Jackson Church to auction their unused building with a minimum sale price of \$1. Auction date pending.

Commission on Operations reviewed a proposal from First Presbyterian Church in Rushmore to sell their church building. We determined that the criteria set forth in the Church Sale Policy were met and approved the following terms:

- Sale Price – \$75,000
- Sellers to pay 50% cost of furnace replacement (\$4,049.75)
- Buyer – Worthington Karen Baptist Church
- Closed September 28, 2023
- Legal Description – 116 North Bishop, Rushmore, MN, Nobles County Lots 12 thru 14, Block 4

Present the preliminary 2024 Budget including 2024 Per Capita amounts.

Per Capita Comparison:

	2024	2023	2022
PMV	29.70	28.89	28.52
Synod	5.50	5.50	5.50
GA	9.80	9.85	8.98
TOTAL	45.00	44.24	43.00

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**Committee on Congregational Nurture
Report to the Presbytery of MN Valleys
October 21, 2023**

The Committee on Congregational Nurture (CCN) met twice since the last Presbytery meeting on June 5 and September 5 2023

These are the 2023 church assignments:

Darlene Baxter/Brainerd, Crosslake, Foley, Osakis, Randall,
Sally Cambria, Madelia, Mountain Lake, Saint James, Windom, Winnebago
Michael: Amboy, Blue Earth, Kasota, Lake Crystal, Mankato, Saint Peter,
Beverly: Dawson, Litchfield, Milroy, Redwood Falls, Renville
Al: Silver Lake, Spicer, Harrison, Willmar, Maynard
Galen: Brewster, Edgerton, Ellsworth, Lismore, Rushmore, Round Lake
Rollin: Canby, Fulda, Iona, Marshall, Russell, Slayton
Kathy: Beaver Creek, Holland, Luverne, Pipestone, Worthington
Vacant Ashby, Browns Valley, Doran, Fergus Falls, Maine Twp/Underwood, Maine

This committee helped to plan for the Pastoral Leaders Retreat – Sept. 17-21, 2023 Candace Adams will lead some of the spiritual/worship times. Noon meals were organized by Bev Brock. This retreat is funded in the Presbytery Life budget.

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Attachment G

Dear Friends,

My year as Presbytery Moderator is quickly coming to a close. It has been a joy to serve. It is an even greater joy that my service with you continues, not as Moderator, but as colleague in ministry, and as friend. For more than ten years Scott



and I have served in this Presbytery. That is plenty of time to settle in, to build relationships, to feel like this is home. I often think of the message Jeremiah brought to God's people in exile: "...build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce...multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare" (Jeremiah 29:5-7).

It is not unusual for the first years in a new call to feel like *exile*. You leave family and friends, you leave a place that feels familiar, and you plant yourself in a new place and pray that God will help you take root and grow. I am aware, every day, of the love and light that I give away and that is returned to me as I go about the work of ministry. I have always experienced in my congregation, but as I have gotten to know more of you - moderating your sessions, providing pulpit supply, meeting you in zoom meeting rooms and church basements, praying with you for the future, participating with you in shared ministry - I recognize that love and light all over our presbytery. That love and light help this place feel like home and all of you like family.

I get the joy of planning the October presbytery worship as outgoing Moderator, and I have chosen to invite my dear friend Carol Meier to come and lead (with plenty of presbytery help) the "Light of the World" evening prayer she created. Yes, I know it's evening prayer. Yes, I know our worship is in the morning. To paraphrase Jimmy Buffet, who am I both celebrating and mourning right now: it's evening somewhere! Those of you who have had the joy of meeting Carol and sharing in this worship know what a gift she is, and what a gift her music is, to all of us. In keeping with this theme of LIGHT, I would like to extend an invitation: show me, and the rest of the presbytery, your light. Show us how you are sharing the love of Christ, building community, caring for your neighbors. Show us what you are planting and watering with service and prayer. Here are a couple of options:

1. Send me a picture - with or without a brief description - that shows a glimmer of the light that is shining in your congregation! I will include it in a slideshow.
2. Send me a paragraph or 2 that tells a story of where you have seen God's light at work in your community. Our youth group calls these *God Sightings*. Share with me, in writing, your *God Sightings*.
3. Bring some sort of display that you can set up in the fellowship hall for people to look at - a posterboard, a tri-fold display, a scrapbook - that tells a story of meaningful ministry or mission you have had the privilege of participating in.

Don't overthink it. Don't worry about whether or not it's perfect. Think of this as if you are pulling out your phone to show me pictures of your grandkids. Pull out the thing you are excited about and let the rest of us have a look. It's amazing how much we miss what is happening in each other's churches. I promise I will ooh and ahh and tell you it's beautiful, just like your grandkids. Because if it's God's light shining in your midst, I know it is beautiful, and worth celebrating.

If you are emailing me a photo or a story, please send it to leanne.fpcwillmar@gmail.com by October 15th. If you are providing a display, please bring it on the day of the meeting, October 21st. I can't wait to celebrate with all of you the Light of the World that is shining right here in our presbytery.

In Peace,
Pastor Leanne
Rev. Leanne Thompson
Presbytery Moderator

Attachment H

**Administrative Commission Reports
To the Presbytery of MN Valleys
October 21, 2023**

Jackson

Administrative Commission for First Presbyterian Church of Jackson, MN Report to Presbytery October 21, 2023 The Jackson Administrative Commission has not met since the last presbytery meeting. We have received authorization from the Commission on Presbytery Operations to sell the main building. We are making plans to sell the building at auction. Those details will be shared when they are finalized.

Galen Smith, Chair

Broton

We have contacted a lawyer about the disposal of the cemetery and have not heard back from him yet.

Stan Menning, Chair

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**Commission on Presbytery Life Report
To the Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys
October 21, 2023**

Actions taken at the September 11, 2023 meeting:

1. PLIFE VOTED to meet the first Thursday of the month at 3:30 p.m. So, for the rest of the year, we will meet on October 5, November 2, December 7 at 3:30 via zoom.
2. PLIFE VOTED to approve a grant request from the Rev. Scott Prouty for \$500 to attend the ISNA (Islamic Society of North America) conference.
3. PLIFE VOTED to grant a \$100 scholarship to Elizabeth Tot for the pastor retreat.
4. PLIFE VOTED to recommend to the Presbytery the 2024 Presbytery meeting dates:
 - a. Saturday, April 13 from 10-3 (location to be determined) in person only
 - b. A July/August meeting if needed by zoom
 - c. Saturday, October 12 from 10-3 in Fergus Falls in person only
 - d. Thursday, December 12 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. via Zoom

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