

(Preliminary minutes – subject to approval by Presbytery of Lake Huron)

PRESBYTERY OF LAKE HURON

Stated Meeting – March 4, 2023

The Presbytery of Lake Huron was called to order with prayer by the Moderator, the Rev. Glenn Grant, at 9:30 a.m., on Saturday, March 4, 2023, and was held via Zoom.

The roll was taken, and the moderator announced that a quorum was present.
[ATTACHMENT A]

A review of Zoom protocols was given.

MOTION WAS SUSTAINED to seat the Rev. Dr. Chip Hardwick (Miami Valley), the Rev. Ruth Estell (RCA) and Catherine Lynch (Western Carolina) as Corresponding Members.

MOTION WAS SUSTAINED to adopt the docket as amended.

MOTION WAS SUSTAINED to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. The items are as follows:

1. The minutes of the December 6, 2022 Presbytery meeting.
2. A renewal of the previously Presbytery approved motion that congregations who request it be granted a one-year exception to G-2.0404, allowing elders and deacons to serve beyond the normal limit of six years.
3. The following actions with regard to the review of Session minutes and Church Registers:
 - a. The minutes of the following churches be approved without exception: Deckerville First; Marlette First
 - b. The minutes of the following churches be approved with exception: None
 - c. The minutes of the following churches were not approved: None.
 - d. The church registers for the following churches be approved without exception: Deckerville First; Marlette First
 - e. The church registers for the following church be approved with exceptions: None

WORSHIP included a sermon by the Rev. Kate Morritauk.

The **OFFERING** taken will be given to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Earthquake relief in Syria and Turkey.

A short break was taken after worship.

Preliminary Minutes – March 4, 2023

Page 2

The Moderator reconvened the presbytery.

A discussion was led by Ted McCulloch giving an overview on how amendments to the Book of Order come about.

The **STATED CLERK'S REPORT** was given by Ted McCulloch. Voting on the amendments to the Book of Order took place. [ATTACHMENT B]

The Stated Clerk presented the following items for information:

1. Schedule of the remaining 2023 Presbytery meetings:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Host</u>
June 6, 2023	Alma College
September 19, 2023	Saginaw Countryside Trinity
December 6, 2023	Midland Memorial

** Council has designated March Presbytery meetings to be by Zoom. This allows one of our smaller churches to serve as a “virtual host.” This will give churches that normally cannot host Presbytery a chance to do so. Opportunities to share the church’s history and mission will be arranged for a “virtual” host. Please contact the Stated Clerk if you have any questions.

The **NOMINATING TEAM** report was given by Mary Ann Parker.

MOTION WAS SUSTAINED to elect Elder Adam Engel (Saginaw-Second) to the Board of Trustees, Class of 2025.

It was noted that there are a few open positions on Presbytery Council left to fill.

The **COMMISSION ON MINISTRY AND MINISTRY PREPARATION** report was given by Cassie Todd. An update on the recent Ordination Exam question that was hurtful to some people was given.

The **SYNOD EXECUTIVE** report was given by Chip Hardwick.

The **PRESBYTERY COUNCIL** report was given by Wally Mayton.

MOTION WAS SUSTAINED to approve additional compensation totaling \$16, 276.20 for the part-time Pastor to Pastor position for the Presbytery of Lake Huron.

Preliminary Minutes – March 4, 2023

Page 3

The Presbytery Council presented the following items for information:

1. Re-elected Wally Mayton as Moderator of the Presbytery Council for 2023.
Andrew Miller was re-elected Vice-Moderator of the Presbytery Council for 2023.
2. The following were appointed to their respective committees:

Budget & Finance	Roger Scovill (ex-officio) and Joyce Hetzler
Personnel	Linda Kennan, Mary Ann Parker and co-opted members Charlee Litten and Andrew Miller
Planning/Visioning/Equipping	Glenn Grant and Matthew Schramm
Policies, Bills & Overtures	Byungil Ahn, Lindsey Carnes and Paul Pfeuffer
Nominating	Mary Ann Parker – co-opted
3. Approved compensation for IT services at Presbytery meetings.
4. Approved the March Presbytery meeting offering be given to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Earthquake relief in Syria and Turkey.

The **PERSONNEL TEAM** report was given by Andrew Miller. A video was shown introducing the new Pastors to Pastors for the presbytery, the Rev. Brenna Overland and the Rev. Dr. Joseph Novak.

The Personnel Team presented the following items for information:

1. Approved the Rev. Dr. Joseph Novak, Flint-First, and the Rev. Brenna Overland, Bay City-First to fill the positions of Pastor to Pastors for the Presbytery of Lake Huron.
2. A Report and Proposal for both part-time positions is attached [ATTACHMENT C]. An introduction and a time for questions will be part of the report.
3. The compensation for the position, as approved, is listed below. Compensation amounts were recommended on a percentage basis of what had previously been the salary (only) of the Executive Presbyter.

Previously approved in December, 2022		Recommended compensation for both positions		
Pastor to Pastor	Compensation	Revised cost for first position	Cost for additional position	Additional cost
Salary	\$25,200.00	\$20,160.00	\$20,160.00	\$15,120.00
FICA/Medi	\$ 1,927.80	\$ 1,542.24	\$ 1,542.24	\$ 1,156.68

Preliminary Minutes – March 4, 2023

Page 4

Professional Expenses & travel reimbursement	\$8,000.00 mileage at IRS rate & will be figured from Presbytery Office. Includes lunch & overnight stays as needed.		\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	-0-
Total	\$35,127.80		\$25,702.00	\$25,702.00	\$16,276.20

The **PRESBYTERIAN INVESTMENT LOAN PROGRAM (PILP)** report was given by Catherine Lynch. It was reported that three churches received rebate checks for paying off their loans early. Those churches are: Bay City-Westminster, Flint-Trinity United and Fenton-First.

The **MISSION COORDINATION COMMITTEE** report was given by Jamie Milton and Michael Ludwig. An update on how we are fulfilling the role of being a Matthew 25 presbytery. An update on the work being done by the Niger Mission Network was given.

The **TRUSTEES** report was given by Wally Mayton.

MOTION WAS SUSTAINED to approve the recommendation that permission be granted to Midland Memorial Presbyterian Church, 1310 Ashman Street, Midland, MI to sell the property located at 5501 Jefferson Avenue, Midland, MI (formerly the Chapel Lane Presbyterian Church building), if the way be clear, for \$550,000. The full legal property description will be included in the permanent minutes of the Presbytery.

MOTION WAS SUSTAINED to approve the recommendation that permission be granted to Sandusky Presbyterian Church to sell the manse located at 99 Fairway Court, Sandusky, MI 48471 for the purchase price of \$245,000. When sold, proceeds from the sale will be used to supplement clergy housing costs between Sandusky and Yale churches. The full legal property description will be included in the permanent minutes of the Presbytery.

Trustees presented the following items for information:

1. Wally Mayton was re-elected President, Tim Rutzen was elected as Vice President, Roger Scovill was re-elected as Treasurer and Ted McCulloch was re-elected as secretary.
2. The 2023 interest rate for all loans was set at 5.625% using the formula in our loan policy.

The **COMMISSION ON MINISTRY AND MINISTRY PREPARATION** report was presented in writing as follows:

The Commission on Ministry and Ministry Preparation reports that it took the following actions on behalf of presbytery:

1. Approved the full-time pastoral call between the Rev. Ruth Estell and Saginaw-Second effective February 1, 2023 and to permit her to be a temporary member of the presbytery. (She is a member of the RCA.) Terms are as follows:

Salary	\$40,000
Housing Allowance	\$15,000
Medical (PCUSA)	\$8,121.36
Pension (RCA)	\$7,734
Death & Disability (RCA)	\$649.20
Temporary Disability (PCUSA)	\$250
Study Leave Allowance	\$1,500
Continuing Education Allowance	\$2,500 ***
Professional Expenses	\$700
Travel Reimbursement/Car Allow	At current IRS Rate up to \$1,500
Moving Expenses	N/A
SECA Reimbursement	\$3,825
Vacation Time	4 weeks including 4 Sundays
Study Leave	2 weeks including 2 Sundays
Continuing Education Leave	1 week including 1 Sunday
Maternity Leave	Following the birth or adoption of a child: eight (8) weeks at full compensation (including salary and housing). Vacation time may be taken in addition to the 8 weeks maternity leave extending the leave to twelve (12) weeks paid.

*** Continuing Education Allowance shall be used for the Commission on Ministry and Ministry Preparation (COMMP) required Polity, Finance, and Administration classes.

Preliminary Minutes – March 4, 2023

Page 6

2. Approved the part-time (approximately 48 days/year) CRE Covenant renewal between Elder Jon Baker and Rosebush for a period of one year effective November 1, 2022. Terms are as follows:

Cash Salary	\$200/week
Vacation Time	4-8 Sundays
Study Leave	N/A

The Rev. Andrew Miller will continue to serve as his mentor.

3. Approved the part-time CRE contract renewal between Elder Liz Long and Ithaca-Lafayette effective January 1, 2023 for a period of one year. Terms are as follows:

Salary	\$160/week
Travel Reimbursement	At current IRS Rate
Vacation Allowance	4 weeks including 4 Sundays
Study Leave	2 weeks including 2 Sundays

The Rev. Ted McCulloch will serve as her mentor.

4. Approved the part-time CRE contract between Elder Mark Garavaglia and Sandusky and Yale-First congregations effective January 1, 2023 for a period of one year. Terms are as follows:

Salary	\$600/week (split 50/50 by each church)
Medical	\$600/month
Continuing Education	\$1000/year
Travel Reimbursement	At current IRS Rate
Vacation Allowance	4 weeks including 4 Sundays
Study Leave	2 weeks including 2 Sundays

The Rev. Robbie Carnes will serve as his mentor.

5. Approved the renewal of the part-time (approximately 20 hours per week) Temporary Supply contract renewal between the Rev. Scott Sherrill and Vassar-First for a period of one year effective December 1, 2022. Terms are as follows:

Cash Salary	\$39,300
Housing Allowance	N/A
BoP coverage	N/A
Travel Reimbursement	\$1,500 at the IRS Rate
Study Leave Allowance	\$750
Reimbursable Items inc. books	\$500
Professional Expenses	\$500
Study Leave	2 weeks, including 2 Sundays
Vacation Time	4 Weeks including 4 Sundays; Plus 4 additional Sundays which will be the 5 th Sunday of the month where applicable.

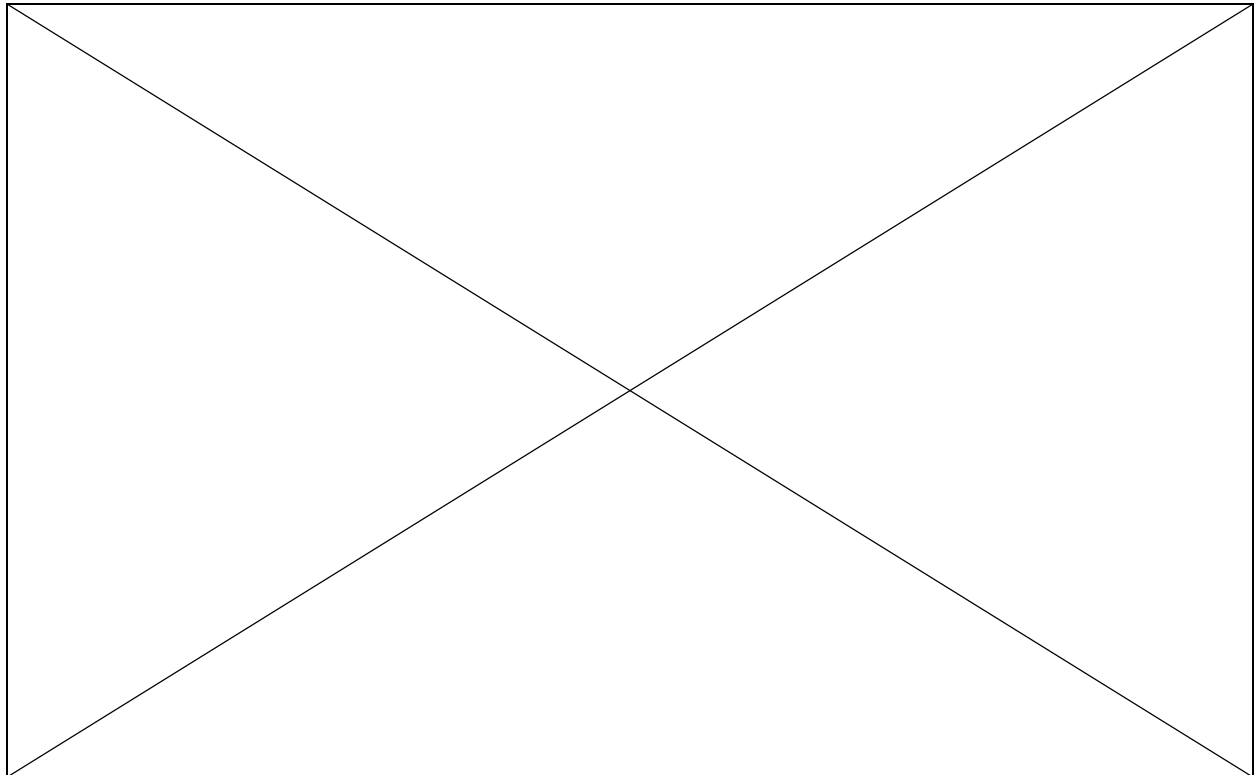
6. Enrolled the Rev. Glenn Grant as an Honorably Retired member of presbytery effective January 31, 2023.
7. Appointed the following as Moderators of Session:
- Christina Jensen for Croswell-First
 - Kate Morritauk for Grand Blanc-Kirkridge
 - Lindsey Carnes for Holly
8. Approved the following Ruling Elders to serve communion in their congregations when Presbyterian clergy is not available. They successfully completed communion training led by the Stated Clerk on Saturday, January 28, 2023.
- Kristy Prentiss (Tawas-Tawas Area)
 - Dale Nester (Ithaca-First)
 - Richard Teal (Ithaca-First)
 - Marion Nester (Ithaca-First)
 - Kimberly Butka (Grand Blanc-Kirkridge)
 - Patty Gross (Birch Run-Taymouth)
 - Rob Minard (Birch Run-Taymouth)
 - Kathy Maurer (Birch Run-Taymouth)
 - Bambi Straebel (Saginaw-First)
9. Approved the requests to transfer the membership of Timm High to Northern Waters Presbytery effective October 15, 2022 and the membership of Lucy Der-Garabedian to Tropical Florida Presbytery effective November 11, 2022.

10. Approved modifying the Pulpit Supply Policy to require \$100 be paid in the event that worship is cancelled.
11. Approved if the way be clear, to appoint an Administrative Commission to Install the Rev. Ruth Estell as Pastor of Saginaw-Second on March 12, 2023 at 3:00pm. Members of the commission to be determined.
12. Approved amending the Committee on Preparation for Ministry Handbook to indicate that the presbytery would pay the full cost of the psychological examinations that are required by all Inquirers prior to being moved to Candidate status.

The meeting adjourned following prayer by the Moderator at 12:15 pm. The next stated meeting of the Presbytery of Lake Huron is scheduled to be held Tuesday, June 6, 2023 beginning at 9:30 a.m. via Zoom and in person at Alma College, Alma, Michigan.

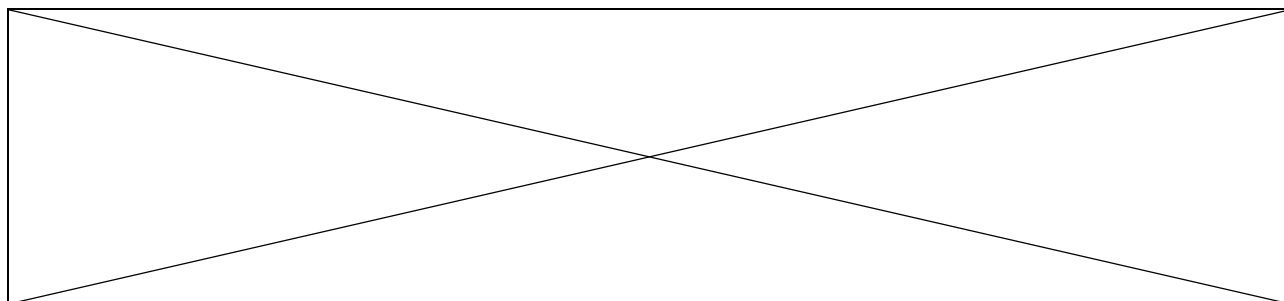
Respectfully Submitted,

Ted McCulloch
Stated Clerk



ATTACHMENT A – Attendance

NAME OF MINISTER	<u>Present</u>	<u>Excused</u>	<u>Absent</u>	NAME OF MINISTER	<u>Present</u>	<u>Excused</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Ahn, Daniel (HR)		1		Moody, Chris		1	
Becker, John (HR)		1		Moon, Hakbae		1	
Blackburn, David (HR)		1		Morritauk, Kate	1		
Blatt, Karen (HR)		1		Neumann, James (HR)		1	
Borycz, Edward (HR)		1		Neuville, Donald (HR)		1	
Browne, Roger (HR)		1		Novak, Joseph	1		
Carnes, Lindsey		1		Offrink, James (HR)		1	
Carnes, Robbie		1		Ofori-Nipaah, P.	1		
Chambers, Janice (HR)		1		Overland, Brenna	1		
Chang, Catherine		1		Park, Dong Won (HR)		1	
Cundiff, Thomas (HR)		1		Parker, Kenneth (HR)		1	
Cunningham, Bruce (HR)		1		Pekich-Bundy, K.	1		
Emrich, Robert (HR)		1		Pfeuffer, Paul	1		
Eshelman, David (HR)		1		Pickrell, Brooke		1	
Evans-Justin, Mary Anne (HR)		1		Piper, Brant	1		
Graham, Linda		1		Piper, Leslie		1	
Grant, Glenn	1			Pomerville, Andrew		1	
Grimes, Ronald (HR)		1		Russell, Dawn	1		
Hetzel, Kenneth (HR)		1		Russell, Peter (HR)		1	
Holder, Leigh		1		Saperstein, Dan (HR)		1	
Jensen, Christina	1			Schacher, Tom		1	
Kim, Do Hyeong		1		Schramm, Matt		1	
Kroener, Scott	1			Shugert, Stephen (HR)		1	
Lawther, Richard (HR)		1		Snyder, Noel		1	
Lee, Hoon Koo		1		Stilwell, Elizabeth		1	
Loenshal, Michael		1		Strunz, Kim	1		
Ludwig, Michael	1			Swihart, Dale (HR)		1	
Marquardt, Charles		1		Taylor, Robert (HR)		1	
Mayton, Wally	1			Todd, Cassie	1		
McCulloch, Ted	1			Vredevelde, Ron		1	
McMellen, Larry (HR)		1		Walser, Joseph (HR)		1	
Miller, Andrew	1			Ytterock, Paul		1	
Milton, Jamie	1						
				Total Present	18		
				Total Excused	47		
				Total Absent	0		



ATTACHMENT A – Attendance (Continued)

NAME OF CHURCH	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Elder Commissioner(s) Present</u>
Alma-First	1		Sue Malone
Bay City-First	1		Valerie Cross
Bay City-Westminster	1		Bonnie Marsh
Beaverton		1	
Birch Run	1		Ed Savage
Breckenridge		1	
Caro		1	
Cass City-First		1	
Cass City-Fraser		1	
Croswell		1	
Davison-St Andrew's	1		Phidge Howe
Deckerville		1	
Elkton-Chandler		1	
Fairgrove		1	
Fenton-First		1	
Fenton-Tyrone		1	
Flint-First	1		Lionel Wernette
Flint-Trinity United	1		Gregoire Bolduc
Flint-Unity		1	
Flushing	1		Carol Dulin
Grand Blanc-Kirkridge		1	
Harbor Beach		1	
Holly	1		Jim Lyles
Houghton Lake		1	
Ithaca-First		1	
Ithaca-Lafayette		1	
Kinde-First		1	
Lapeer-First	1		TJ Craven
Linden		1	
Marlette-First		1	
Marlette-Second		1	
Midland-Memorial	2		Barry George and Tracy Perry
Mt. Pleasant		1	
Rosebush		1	
Saginaw-Countryside Trinity	1		Mary Ann Parker
Saginaw-First	1		Janie Gugino
Saginaw-Korean		1	
Saginaw-Second		1	
Sandusky		1	
Swartz Creek		1	
Tawas	1		Kristy Prentiss
Twining		1	
Ubly		1	
Vassar		1	
Yale		1	
Total Present	15		
Total Represented	14		
Total Not Represented	31		

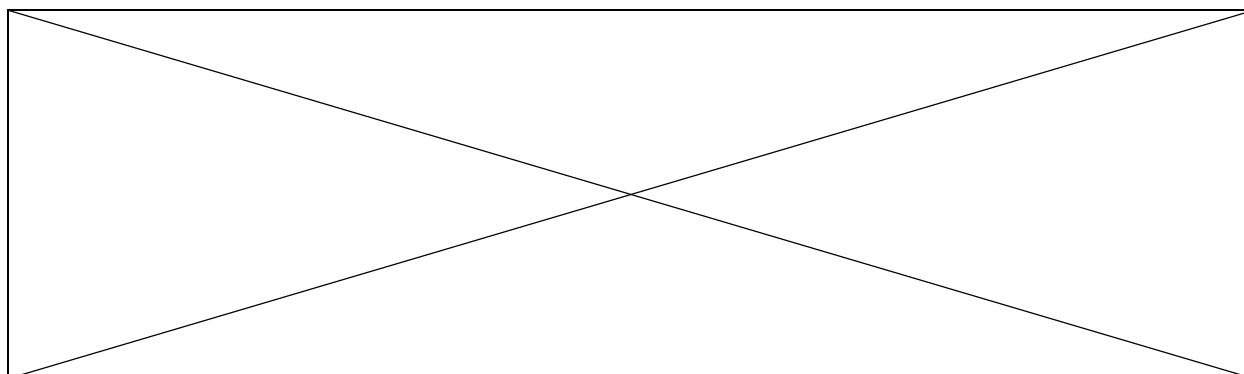
ATTACHMENT A – Attendance (Continued)

ELDER MEMBERS	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Excused</u>
Adam Engel (Trustee)			1
Joyce Hetzler (Council)	1		
Chuck Hewitt (Trustee)			1
Linda Kennan (COMMP Moderator)	1		
Sue McClary (Trustee)			1
Mary Ann Parker (Nom Moderator)			

Roger Scovill (Treasurer)			1
Tim Rutzen (Trustee)			1
Total Elder Members	2	0	5
*** Signed in as Elder Commissioner, did not count here			

COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Excused</u>
Jon Baker			1
Jon Essex			1
Mark Garavaglia			1
Shaun Hardimon			1
Liz Long			1
Kathleen Rowe			1
Bonie Rapson	1		
Chris Wolf	1		
CRE Attending	2		
CRE Not Attending	0		
CRE Excused	6		

CATEGORY	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Excused</u>
Members of Presbytery	18	0	47
Corresponding Members	3		
Commissioned Ruling Elders	2	0	6
Church Commissioners	15	31	
Elder Members	2	0	5
Visitors (Including LHP Staff)	6		
Total People in Attendance	46		
Churches represented	14		
Churches not represented		31	



ATTACHMENT B – Voting Totals for Book of Order Amendments

22-E	G-2.0503 CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP <i>Removes “honorably” before “retired” as the category for retired ministers</i>	Yes (27-6)
22-I	G-2.0804 TERMS OF CALL <i>Adds the requirement of a minimum of twelve weeks of paid family leave in terms of call for all installed pastors/associate pastors</i>	Yes (34-1)
22-Q	G-3.0303c RELATIONS WITH SESSIONS <i>Authorizes presbyteries to establish minimum requirements for severance packages in terms of call</i>	Yes (32-3)
22-C	G-1.0501 MEETINGS <i>Establishes Robert’s Rules of Order (RONR) as the default parliamentary authority for congregational meetings, and authorizes electronic congregational meetings</i>	Yes (30-0)
22-D	G-1.0503 BUSINESS PROPER TO CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS <i>Adds receiving a disciplinary decision against a church member (as opposed to a minister) to the list of proper business at a congregational meeting</i>	Yes (30-0)
22-M	G-3.0104 OFFICERS <i>Adds language that “it is appropriate” to adopt procedures for electronic session meetings</i>	Yes (30-0)
22-N	G-3.0105 MEETINGS <i>Adds provision that all councils and their commissions and committees may meet electronically</i>	Yes (30-0)
22-G	G-2.0603 PURPOSE OF INQUIRY <i>Adds the requirement of boundary training during the inquiry phase of preparation for ordination as a minister of the Word and Sacrament</i>	Yes (31-1)
22-H	G-2.0605 OVERSIGHT <i>Adds a requirement of sessions to “report to the presbytery of any matters of sexual misconduct” of their members who are enrolled as inquirers or candidates</i>	Yes (31-1)
22-K	G-2.1002 TRAINING, EXAMINING, AND COMMISSIONING <i>Adds the requirement of boundary training for those elders seeking to be Commissioned Pastors</i>	Yes (31-1)
22-L	G-2.1103 CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS <i>Adds the requirement of boundary training for those elders seeking to be certified as Christian Educators</i>	Yes (31-1)

ATTACHMENT B – Voting Totals for Book of Order Amendment (Continued)

22-O	G-3.0106 ADMINISTRATION OF MISSION <i>Adds language regarding boundary training, including sexual abuse to the requirement for sexual misconduct policies required of councils</i>	Yes (31-1)
22-P	G-3.0106 ADMINISTRATION OF MISSION <i>Adds the requirement of an antiracism policy to the required policies of councils, and clarifies other language in that list</i>	Yes (31-1)
22-A	F-1.0302c THE CATHOLICITY OF THE CHURCH <i>Expands inclusive language with reference to gender identity</i>	Yes (30-0)
22-AA	W-5.0204 PASTORAL CARE <i>Adds “particular specialized pastoral care” rather than adding to an existing list of such specialties</i>	Yes (30-0)
22-B	F-1.0404 OPENNESS <i>Expands inclusive language with reference to gender identity</i>	Yes (30-0)
22-BB	W-5.0204 PASTORAL CARE <i>Adds clarifying language in a section on “services of wholeness” to better express a Reformed understanding of those services</i>	Yes (30-0)
22-T	W-3.0205 CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS <i>Adds administration of the sacrament of Baptism to the list of appropriate actions following the proclamation of forgiveness in a service of worship</i>	Yes (16-12)
22-U	W-3.0409 THEOLOGY OF THE LORD’S SUPPER <i>Adds “when appropriate” to the recommended act of providing an invitation to baptismal preparation for those who come to the table who are unbaptized</i>	No (1-32)
22-V	W-3.0414 COMMUNION <i>Removes the current requirement that a minister of the Word and Sacrament lead the prayer of thanksgiving that concludes the Lord’s Supper liturgy</i>	Yes (30-0)
22-W	W-4.0403 ORDER OF WORSHIP <i>Adds a sentence about “signs and symbols of blessing” to the section on ordination and installation services</i>	Yes (30-0)
22-X	W-5.0104 HOUSEHOLD WORSHIP <i>Adds a sentence on the importance of household worship in faith formation in the Reformed tradition</i>	Yes (30-0)
22-Y	W-5.0104 HOUSEHOLD WORSHIP <i>Adds an additional paragraph to the existing section on household worship</i>	Yes (30-0)

ATTACHMENT B – Voting Totals for Book of Order Amendment (Continued)

22-Z	W-5.0201 THE CHURCH'S MINISTRY WITHIN THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH <i>Adds "discipleship" to a list of the Church's ministries that are connected to its worship, and adds references to statements in the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity</i>	Yes (30-0)
22-F	G-2.0505a(1) TRANSFER OF MINISTERS OF OTHER DENOMINATIONS <i>Adds the requirement to consult with the other denomination when receiving immigrant pastors without otherwise acceptable</i>	Yes (34-0)
22-J	G-2.1001 FUNCTIONS (MC-08) <i>Adds language allowing Commissioned Pastors to be commissioned to more than one validated ministry at a time</i>	Yes (34-0)
22-R	G-3.0401 COMPOSITION AND RESPONSIBILITIES <i>Authorizes synods to enroll those serving terms in elected offices of the synod as additional members of the synod as a way to fulfill principles of participation and representation</i>	Yes (34-0)
22-S	G-4.0301 TRUST AND CONFIDENTIALITY <i>Expands and clarifies "confidentiality" requirements for ministers and commissioned pastors</i>	Yes (34-0)
22-CC	D-3.0106 WHEN JURISDICTION ENDS <i>Allows a disciplinary process to continue after an accused has renounced jurisdiction</i>	Yes (34-0)
22-DD	D-10.0302 IF CHARGES ARE TO BE FILED <i>Grammatical change to an existing provision of the Rules of Discipline</i>	Yes (34-0)
22-EE	D-10.0303 PETITION FOR REVIEW <i>Amends the current Rules of Discipline to include notifying the person accused if no charges will be filed (instead of just the person(s) who made the accusation)</i>	Yes (34-0)
22-FF	AMENDING THE USE OF "THE ACCUSED" IN THE CURRENT RULES OF DISCIPLINE <i>Changes "the accused" to "the person accused" wherever it occurs in the current rules of Discipline.</i>	Yes (34-0)

ATTACHMENT C – Pastors To Pastors Proposal

Pastoral Care for the Lake Huron Presbytery

A Report and Proposal

Table of Contents

1. About Us	3
Joseph Novak	3
Brenna Overland	3
2. Our Vision: Flourishing Pastors in the Lake Huron Presbytery	4
3. Dimensions of Pastoral Care	8
Crisis Care	9
Spiritual Care	9
Financial Stability	9
Mental Health	10
Physical Health	10
Professional Development	10
Social/Community Participation	10
4. Target Milestones for 2023	11
→ February-March 2023	11
→ March-May 2023	11
→ May-September 2023...	11
→ September-December 2023...	11

1. About Us



Joseph Novak

The Rev. Dr. Joseph Novak currently serves as the Senior Pastor and Head of Staff at First Presbyterian Church of Flint and has been in full-time pastoral ministry since 2012, all of which has been here in the Lake Huron Presbytery. He is an alumnus of Fuller Theological Seminary (M.Div, Ph.D) where he focused on liturgy, preaching, and church ministry. Here in Lake Huron, Joseph has served on the Committee on Preparation for Ministry and the Nominating Committee and has been a participant-leader in Region 3's weekly coffee fellowship for pastors. Joseph is married to Katie and they have five children—all boys. They reside in Flushing, Michigan.



Brenna Overland

The Rev. Brenna Overland (M.Div) currently serves as the Head of Staff at First Presbyterian Church in Bay City and has been in full-time pastoral ministry since 2016. She previously served in the Presbytery of the Redwoods in California, and Seattle Presbytery in Washington State. In her time as a minister she has served on CPM, helping candidates navigate the call and ordination process and served on a special committee focused on connecting pastors to one another and welcoming new pastors to the presbytery. Brenna is married to her husband Aaron, and they are expecting their first child this March.

2. Our Vision: Flourishing Pastors in the Lake Huron Presbytery

The Presbytery of Lake Huron has determined that its next missional priority is to hire two local pastors on a part-time basis to coordinate the pastoral care to the clergy, CREs, and Presbytery staff here in our region.

Given the numerous stresses facing our pastors we believe this to be a vital and necessary act, and we are thrilled by our recommendation from the Personnel Team and Presbytery Council to serve as the inaugural co-pastors to the Presbytery. In our own ways, we both earnestly desire the Lake Huron Presbytery to be a place known for how it practices radical care for its pastors—both ministers of Word and Sacrament and Commissioned Ruling Elders.

For the past few weeks, we (Brenna and Joseph) have been exploring what we think it means to provide spiritual care for spiritual care providers. How *does* one help the helpers? What does pastoral care look like when it is applied to pastors? What does it mean for pastors to flourish as pastors and how might mid-Councils support such effort?

As an aspect of pastoral ministry, ‘pastoral care’ covers a wide set of terrain, including crisis care in times of sudden medical, personal, or family emergencies. Indeed, this is perhaps the type of care we most often associate with the work of pastors. Sitting beside bedsides, praying in hospital rooms, reading Scripture before surgeries, listening to a weeping parent whose son was just arrested—these are the crisis moments and they are important moments for pastoral care.

Both of us have faced various personal crises in the midst of our vocation as pastors which required direct acts of care and compassion.

Just a few months into my current pastoral call, I (Joseph) found myself floundering and at a loss when my wife, at a routine ultrasound at 22 weeks was informed there was no longer a detectable heartbeat and my wife would have to immediately deliver our stillborn child. In that moment and in the aching hours that followed, I needed a pastor, someone who could help us pray, someone who would help us process this loss, someone who would be available to us, and who would offer to read us words of Scripture when, for grief, we could not.

In that moment and in the aching hours that followed, I needed a pastor, someone who could help us pray, someone who would help us process this loss, someone who would be available to us, and who would offer to read us words of Scripture when, for grief, we could not.

In a similar way to Joseph, I (Brenna) also found myself in a place of deep grief and needing support a few months into my call here in the Lake Huron Presbytery. My husband and I had gone to our first ultrasound at 9 weeks to see our baby's heartbeat for the first time only to find out that I had had a missed miscarriage. I had to have surgery 2 days later and had no idea who I could call to help process my grief. I had to be in the pulpit two days later and desperately needed a person who could act as a pastor to me, help me hold space and tension between who I was as a person and how to keep serving as a pastor in the midst of deep sorrow. I needed someone who was not there with me because of my congregation or job title, but because they cared about my loss as a human being.

Both of us believe that sitting with the grieving and hurting is an important and vital aspect of pastoral care. However, we also think that at the Presbytery level, providing pastoral care for pastors requires more than providing crisis responses. Providing pastoral care to spiritual care providers requires a multi-dimensional approach, one that, in addition to crisis care and response, also includes categories such as:

- Spiritual Care
- Financial Stability
- Mental Health
- Physical Health
- Professional Development
- Social/Community Participation

When these six dimensions of care are being tended well, we believe a pastor or CRE will be fully equipped and made ready to serve their congregation with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love. Conversely, when pastoral burnout occurs, it often is the result of a combination of a few of the above dimensions, and, given its severity, may manifest in a perceived inability by the spiritual care provider to continue in their current congregation. Worse yet, the burned out pastor can begin harboring deep resentment toward their congregation for, in their estimation, failing to do or help enough. Such resentment can boil over and permanently scar both pastor and congregation for years to come.

For me (Joseph), serving a smaller congregation for four years opened my eyes to the importance of a wide-angle view of pastoral care. The church I served was lovely and beautiful and filled with eagerness and joy, yet due to personal financial instability, lack of physical fitness, and prolonged isolation from colleagues or partners in ministry, I found myself languishing. Left unchecked, such a reality nearly always will lead to pastoral burnout.

Additionally, I (Brenna), can remember my time serving as an associate pastor where it felt like all the resources of the presbytery and the church were only focused on the head of staff. The sense that only some kinds of pastors were able to access help or support leads to burnout for associates and CRE's at a faster rate. We see the value and importance of making sure that everyone in the Lake Huron presbytery who is serving in a pastoral role has the same level of access to support and burnout prevention from the presbytery; whether they are solo, head of staff, part-time, designated, or CREs.

Commenting on the recent Barna report about the rising rates of burnout among younger pastors, Anglican priest and writer Tish Harrison Warren writes "Ministry in America is not sustainable if nearly half of younger pastors feel burned out and are considering leaving their jobs. To move forward and heal, pastors need rest. They need support. They likely need access to therapy. And like all of us, they need kindness and grace."¹

Pastoral care is multi-dimensional and the role of mid-council bodies such as the Presbytery is first to recognize this reality and then, secondly, to do whatever it can to resource its pastors in holistic ways. Hiring two Pastors to the Presbytery is an excellent way to begin this process, and as the inaugural candidates here in the Lake Huron Presbytery, we believe that the only way we can be successful is if we begin working in a comprehensive way to establish holistic pastoral care across these six areas.

Our vision for this position is to help transform the Lake Huron Presbytery into a place of personal and pastoral flourishing, where pastors—both Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Commissioned Ruling Elders—operate with joy, imagination, and love as they exercise their call to ministry. We believe this can be possible through designing and curating opportunities and resources to address the holistic needs of contemporary ministry.

¹See Tish Harrison Warren's opinion piece entitled, "Why Pastors are Burning Out" published August 2022 in *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/28/opinion/pastor-burnout-pandemic.html>. For the data behind this opinion article, see Barna Group's 2022 report: "Pastors Share Top Reasons They've Considered Quitting Ministry in the Past Year" (<https://www.barna.com/research/pastors-quitting-ministry/>).

Our vision for this position is to help transform the Lake Huron Presbytery into a place of personal and pastoral flourishing, where pastors . . . operate with joy, imagination, and love as they exercise their call to ministry.

Will this be easy? Will it be straightforward? Will the ideas and resources be acceptable to every pastor in every call? A resounding ‘no!’ is in order for several reasons.

First, many pastors in our presbytery have been in ministry for nearly a decade or more; they have seen and witnessed much in our Presbytery that would lead them to be suspicious or skeptical of new ideas for development. Secondly, other pastors, like myself (Joseph) have only labored here in Lake Huron and as such we lack the wider vision of what other presbyteries are doing and how creative ideas might be implemented here. Finally, many pastors have become so rigid in their imaginations about what pastoring means that the idea of changing or growing or developing feels impossible. Providing pastoral care for such pastors may be challenging.

And yet, the need still stands no matter how many challenges we may face. Having served in multiple presbyteries across the country I (Brenna), know that this need for pastors and CRE’s to be cared for as human beings first and pastors second is not an isolated issue. Our friends and colleagues around the country are struggling with the same kinds of issues we are here in Lake Huron Presbytery. We are pastoring and living in challenging times and the reality is that something has to change before it breaks.

We are pastoring and living in challenging times and the reality is that something has to change before it breaks.

We all know that we follow a God who does big things, who is up to the challenges and the pain that life presents to us. We believe that no matter what challenges might lay ahead for this new role, that it is worth it to face them, the benefits of trying something new far outweigh the risks.

We know that good things, that change takes time, and we don’t expect everyone to be on board over night, but it is our hope and goal that over the next year we will be able to connect with you a person, as a friend; that we will be able to listen and hear your feedback, needs,

hopes, dreams for what it would look like for you to feel like your supported as a child of God, as a human being in your the midst of our call and work. I (Brenna), am personally so excited about the possibilities that this opportunity opens up for our presbytery. We are grateful for a chance to be proactive about seeking the welfare of our colleagues, to grow relationships and support, indeed, to make sure no one has to feel as alone and unseen as we have in the midst of our personal pain and loss as pastors ever again.

We are committed to serving this presbytery, and you as our colleagues, to the best of our ability, so that those who serve here know they are seen, valued, and cared for as the valuable children of God you are are, no matter the congregation you serve, the title you carry, or the work you do.

3. Dimensions of Pastoral Care

As we have suggested, we believe that caring for pastors includes, but also eclipses, care in times of crisis or emergency. To become a presbytery that actually cares for the *whole* pastor means creating resources or systems of care in several areas. What follows is a cursory list of possibilities, not presumptions. These are our “throw it on the wall” list of ideas which may become realities. We provide them to illustrate our wide-angle vision for pastoral care and to spark the imaginations within the presbytery.

Crisis Care

- Initially the PTTP position will be set up to receive intake calls from pastors who may require immediate or urgent pastoral care. Google Voice numbers will be set up to receive calls so those serving in this role will be able to prioritize and respond to pastors in crisis situations.
- Following an initial call, the PTTPs will assess if and when an in-person visit is required.
- The PTTP will also coordinate with COMMP and other regional pastors to be sure the pastor in crisis is networked in with local support systems.

Spiritual Care

- *Presbytery Meetings:* The PTTPs will be responsible for planning all services of worship at the Lake Huron Presbytery and sharing the responsibility for preaching at all Presbytery meetings. We would like to work to make Presbytery worship less of a performance *for* pastors and participation *by* pastors. Creative liturgical orders, globally-derived music, flexible seating arrangements, and shared liturgical leadership should characterize Presbytery worship.
- *Spiritual Care Resources:* The PTTPs will work to curate seasonal spiritual care resources and opportunities for pastors to participate in exercises, rituals, and routines which may help connect them to God.

Financial Stability

- *Tax Filing Grants:* The PTTPs could work with the Presbytery to establish a partnership with regional CPA or tax-return agencies fluent in clergy taxes to provide a low-cost opportunity for pastors to have someone handle their tax return each year.
- *Church Budget 101:* The PTTPs could work with the Presbytery to establish an annual seminar (Zoom? On Demand) that covers the basics of small or mid-size church budgets.
- *Personal Budgeting + Investments:* The PTTPs could work with the Presbytery to provide an opportunity for pastors to consult with a financial planner to help ensure they are managing their income and investments wisely.

Mental Health

- *Mental Health Partnerships:* The PTTs could work with existing agencies and organizations such as the Gerholz Christian Counseling Center (Flint-First)

Physical Health

- *Fitness Incentive Grants:* The PTTs could work with the Presbytery to establish a partnership program between the LHP and local congregations to cover the costs associated with maintaining a fitness membership for all pastors and CREs in the Presbytery.
- *Annual Fitness Challenges:* Using apps such as Strava, we could create and incentivize fitness goals for pastors and CREs, whether through direct competition or through collective goal-setting. These efforts may assist in increasing the physical health and fitness of all participants. *See the wild success of Flint-First's "PandEpic Fitness Challenge" conducted from May-June of 2020 for the staff of Flint-First which saw a collective 2100 miles walked, run, or cycled.*

Professional Development

- *Annual Conferences:* The PTT position could work with Presbytery Council and COMMP to sponsor participation in an annual pastoral retreat/conference Lake Huron Presbytery pastors can attend together for support and fellowship.

Social/Community Participation

- *Pastoral Networks:* Over the course of the first 18 months, the PTTs could work with pastors to create pastoral networks in each of our four regions. These networks will meet at least monthly for fellowship, food, support, and more. The recent success of the Region 3 "Pastors + Coffee" group may prove helpful to our efforts.
- *Administrative Commission for Installation:* The PTTs could function as the chairpersons of every necessary Administrative Commission to install new pastors to service in the Presbytery. This would especially be a welcome overture for pastors new to the area who do not know who to call to help in this way.

4. Target Milestones for 2023

The following target milestones were created by us to help us prioritize our work in the coming twelve months. For one reason or another we suspect that not all of these milestones may be reached in the first year, nevertheless we found it helpful to develop this list.

→ February-March 2023

- ◆ Prepare an introductory video about ourselves to be included in the Presbytery of Lake Huron's Zoom meeting on March 4.
- ◆ Begin acquiring necessary technology to enable Brenna and Joseph to stay connected and available;
- ◆ Acquire license for Notebird (internal pastoral care database) and enroll all pastors, CRE, Presbytery staff member for milestone tracking and pastoral followups.
- ◆ Establish meeting schedule for Brenna and Joseph to touch base about pastoral care situations developing in the presbytery.

→ March-May 2023

- ◆ Make direct contact with every pastor + CRE (phone, Zoom, in-person)
- ◆ Contact select Presbyteries across the country to assess current pastoral care strategies being implemented elsewhere
- ◆ Begin drafting an annual plan to comprehensively address the six areas of holistic pastoral care
- ◆ Contact mental health resource centers and establish potential pathways for clergy mental health
- ◆ Begin considering what a operating budget for pastoral care and development resources might require for future LHP budget cycles
- ◆ Secure initial year 1-2 funding for pastoral care endeavors from larger churches or request a portion of shared mission grant funds from the Presbytery.

→ May-September 2023...

- ◆ Make direct contact with every pastor + CRE (phone, Zoom, in-person)
- ◆ Hold Regional Town Hall lunch gatherings to explore felt needs in churches and pastoral needs.

→ September-December 2023...

- ◆ Make direct contact with every pastor + CRE (phone, Zoom, in-person)
- ◆ Promote and attend local pastoral retreat and conference (e.g. Western Seminary's 'Doxology' Conference; Calvin University's 'Worship Symposium') and provide opportunities for fellowship, feedback, and deep thinking.