

# **HANDBOOK OF REPORTS**

**for the**

**SPECIAL MEETING**

**of the**

**SHENANDOAH PRESBYTERY**

**Tuesday, December 8, 2015**

**10:00 a.m.**

**Place:**

**Cooks Creek Presbyterian Church  
Harrisonburg, Virginia**

**Shenandoah Presbytery is a covenant body where:**

- ~congregations are empowered to be centers for mission,**
- ~people of God are equipped to be Disciples of Christ in a  
challenging world,**
- ~church professionals are nurtured and strengthened for  
service,**
- ~open communication and information are used constructively  
and creatively to keep us connected.**

MEMO TO: Pastors and Commissioners to Presbytery  
FROM: Kerry Foster, Stated Clerk  
RE: DECEMBER 8 MEETING OF PRESBYTERY

The Presbytery of Shenandoah will meet in SPECIAL session at Cooks Creek Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg, Virginia, on Tuesday, December 8, 2015, beginning at 10:00 a.m. A nursery will NOT be provided and the meeting will adjourn before lunch. The purpose of the special session is to hear and act upon the report from the Administrative Commission to Harrisonburg First Presbyterian Church.

## **DIRECTIONS**

From North and South Interstate 81: Take **exit 247B, Route 33 West, Harrisonburg**. (You will remain on Route 33 West) passing through 5 traffic lights, until you come to the 6th traffic light at Court Square (Main). At this light, turn right, then immediate left, then right again, **remaining on Rt. 33 West**. Pass through another light, go over RR Tracks, come to another light and continue straight on **Route 33 West**. You will then pass 4 traffic lights and then at Dove's Campers on right, Rt. 33 will turn into 2 lanes. You will pass a cemetery on your right, and then, at Weaver's Mennonite Church, you will **come to Route 726 Weavers Rd on your right - turn right**. Follow Weavers Rd. 1.6 miles to Cooks Creek Church.

## INFORMATION PERTAINING TO MEETINGS OF PRESBYTERY

**Number of Meetings** – Our *Book of Order* (G-3.0304) requires presbytery to hold stated meetings at least twice each year. At this time, there will be four **STATED** meetings for 2015: February 14, May 12, August 25, and November 10. (See Manual, 7.1.1)

**Kind of Meetings** – Besides stated meetings there are adjourned meetings and special meetings.

**Adjourned Meetings** – Held to conclude unfinished business of preceding stated meeting. New Business may be placed on docket.

**Special Meetings** – The moderator shall call a special meeting at the request of, or with the concurrence of, two ministers and two elders being of different churches. Should the moderator be unable to act, the stated clerk shall, under the same conditions, issue the call. If both moderator and stated clerk are unable to act, any three ministers and three elders, the elders being of different churches, may call a special meeting. The Synod may direct the Presbytery to convene a special meeting for the transaction of designated business. Notice of a special meeting shall be sent not less than ten (10) days in advance to each minister and to the session of every church. The notice shall set out the purpose of the meeting and no other business than that listed in the notice shall be transacted. (Manual, 7.1.4)

**Who Determines Type of Meetings?** – The presbytery itself. If the business at a stated meeting is not completed in the time allowed on the docket, then the presbytery votes to extend the time on that day or votes to schedule an **adjourned** meeting later. **Special** meetings may be called in conformity with presbytery's policy, expressed in its manual (7.1.4).

**Docket Preparation** – The Presbytery Meeting Planning Committee composes the docket. Time periods for committee reports are arranged in consultation with chairs and others responsible for reports.

**Docket Problems** – The times listed for the presentation of reports are only general orders, and not orders of the day, unless specifically noted (see Procedural Rule A). Frequently, debate bogs down over procedural matters, and controversial issues create considerable discussion. Presbytery can always limit debate. Candidates and transferring ministers of necessity may require special considerations for their examinations because of such things as travel schedules and seminary schedules. The docket may be amended at any time during the meeting. Commissioners should be aware of possible extension of time needed for such amendments and the possible delay in adjournment.

## PROCEDURAL RULES

- A. A report of any agency of presbytery requiring more than 10 minutes of presbytery time shall be made an Order of the Day with an allotted time period. Any committee requiring more than the allotted time shall conclude its report following new business.
- B. Reports having been provided in advance, the committee chair will not read the report except to make reference to a few highlights of the report and to recommendations by numbers, moving their adoption.

Any report not so circulated shall not be received by the presbytery except by permission of two-thirds present and voting. If a group wishes to submit such a report, a person shall summarize its content and purpose before the vote is taken.

- C. On matters where there may be deep concern, possible controversy or lack of information, the division or committee making the report shall provide critical background information, so that the presbytery may expeditiously make wise and considered decisions.
- D. Debate shall be free and open, with equal time being given to proponents and opponents insofar as possible.
- E. Any member of the presbytery desiring to speak must stand, identify themselves by name and church, be recognized by the moderator, and go to a microphone, if available.
- F. A member of the presbytery may speak twice on any particular motion, and not for more than a total of five minutes, but the second time may only be granted after all who have not yet spoken have had an opportunity to do so. The maker of the motion is entitled to speak first, if desired.
- G. Lengthy motions must be written out and presented to the Stated Clerk.
- H. References to the following procedures from Robert's Rules of Order may prove useful:
  - 1. A division or committee recommendation does not require a second to be on the floor. (Section 7, p. 69)
  - 2. Other motions require a second prior to discussion or action. (Section 4, p. 28-30)

When there is no apparent disagreement or objection to a motion, the moderator may declare it is adopted by common or general consent.

- I. No flash photography will be allowed during the worship service at meetings of presbytery.
- J. When presbytery meets in a location where seating is limited, priority shall be given to voting members for seating within the meeting area. If it is necessary to use other rooms for overflow seating, visitors and other non-voting members shall use these areas.

**QUORUM:** "A quorum of the Presbytery shall be any ten teaching elders and ten ruling elders from at least ten different churches and three mission communities." (Manual, 7.5.12)

*Seeking to be Faithful Together:*

**Guidelines for Presbyterians During Times of Disagreement**

In a spirit of trust and love, we promise we will . . .

<p><b>Give them a hearing . . . listen before we answer</b> <i>John 7:51 and Proverbs 18:13</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Treat each other respectfully so as to build trust, believing that we all desire to be faithful to Jesus the Christ;</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· we will keep our conversations and communications open for candid and forthright exchange,</li> <li>· we will not ask questions or make statements in a way which will intimidate or judge others.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. <b>Learn about various positions on the topic of disagreement.</b></li> <li>3. <b>State what we think we heard and ask for clarification before responding, in an effort to be sure we understand each other.</b></li> </ol>
<p><b>Speak the truth in love</b> <i>Ephesians 4:15</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. <b>Share our concerns directly with individuals or groups with whom we have disagreements in a spirit of love and respect in keeping with Jesus' teaching.</b></li> <li>5. <b>Focus on ideas and suggestions instead of questioning people's motives, intelligence or integrity;</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· we will not engage in name-calling or labeling of others prior to, during, or following the discussion.</li> </ul> </li> <li>6. <b>Share our personal experiences about the subject of disagreement so that others may more fully understand our concerns.</b></li> </ol>
<p><b>Maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace</b> <i>Ephesians 4:3</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. <b>Indicate where we agree with those of other viewpoints as well as where we disagree.</b></li> <li>8. <b>Seek to stay in community with each other though the discussion may be vigorous and full of tension;</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· we will be ready to forgive and be forgiven.</li> </ul> </li> <li>9. <b>Follow these additional Guidelines when we meet in decision-making bodies:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· urge persons of various points of view to speak and promise to listen to these positions seriously;</li> <li>· seek conclusions informed by our points of agreement;</li> <li>· be sensitive to the feelings and concerns of those who do not agree with the majority and respect their rights of conscience;</li> <li>· abide by the decision of the majority, and if we disagree with it and wish to change it, work for that change in ways which are consistent with the Guidelines.</li> </ul> </li> <li>10. <b>Include our disagreements in our prayers, not praying for the triumph of our viewpoints, but seeking God's grace to listen attentively, to speak clearly, and to remain open to the vision God holds for us all.</b></li> </ol>

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

IF YOU ARE A FIRST TIME ELDER, BE SURE AND PICK UP YOUR  
SPECIAL BADGE AT THE NAME TAG TABLE

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### VOTING MEMBERS OF SHENANDOAH PRESBYTERY

All ministers enrolled in Shenandoah Presbytery

Ruling elders commissioned to churches

Ruling elders from each church session

0-400 members = 1 ruling elder

401-800 members = 2 ruling elders

801-1200 members = 3 ruling elders

1201+ = 4 ruling elders

Ruling Elders who serve in the following capacities shall be enrolled as members of Presbytery for the term of their service:

- moderator or vice moderator of Presbytery
- chair or vice chair of Leadership Team
  - member of Leadership Team
- chairperson or moderator of a committee or commission
- exempt employees of the Presbytery (on at least a half-time basis)
- Commissioned Ruling Elders providing particular pastoral services, as authorized by presbytery
- Certified Christian Educators who are serving in an educational ministry under the jurisdiction of the presbytery

Such service does not count towards the number of ruling elders a congregation is entitled to send.

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### ACRONYMS YOU MAY HEAR AT TODAY'S MEETING

AC – Administrative Commission

ARE – Authorized Ruling Elder

CIT – Churches in Transition

CPM – Committee on Preparation for Ministry

CPT – Committee on Pastoral Transition

CRE – Commissioned Ruling Elder

CRM – Committee on Relational Ministry

DRT – Disaster Response Team

ECO – A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians

EECMY - Ethiopian Evangelical Church

Mekane Yesus

GA – General Assembly

IC – Investigating Committee

KCC – Key Church Communicator

LRT – Listening Response Team

O & P – Office and Personnel

PAM – Presbyterian Association of Musicians

PCA – Presbyterian Church in America

PCUS – Presbyterian Church in the United States

PCUSA – Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

PDA – Presbyterian Disaster Assistance

PJC – Permanent Judicial Commission

PLT – Presbytery Leadership Team

PNC – Pastor Nominating Committee

SPYCE – Shenandoah Presbytery Youth Council Extraordinaire

TPR – Temporary Pastor Relationship

WWM – World Wide Ministries

## **DOCKET**

**(Members of Presbytery are urged to be registered and seated by 10:00a.m.)**

- 9:00 a.m.        REGISTRATION BEGINS
- 10:00 a.m.        Call to Order and Opening Devotion
- 10:15 a.m.        Purpose of Special Session - The purpose of today's special session is to hear and act upon the report from the Administrative Commission to Harrisonburg First Presbyterian Church
- Determining a Quorum  
                          Procedural Rules  
                          Seating corresponding members  
                          Adoption of the Docket
- 10:25 a.m.        Report of the Administrative Commission to Harrisonburg First Presbyterian Church

## **FINAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION FOR FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HARRISONBURG**

Following the recommendation of the Listening Response Team (LRT) for First Presbyterian Church at the May 12, 2015 meeting of Shenandoah Presbytery, the formation of an Administrative Commission (AC) was approved. Members of this Commission are:

### Teaching Elders

Jonathan Bunker, Chair	Berryville
David Witt	Opequon

### Ruling Elders

Linda Bradley	Trinity
Thom Jennings	Covenant
Berlin Zirk	Mossy Creek

Using the Presbytery's "Policy Toward Reconciliation or Gracious Separation" as our guideline, the Commission attended a training session at the Presbytery office, sent a letter of process explanation to the entire congregation, and developed a punch list of actions needed to complete our work.

We requested and were promptly supplied church year-end financial summaries for the years 2010-2014, a summary of the financial position for the current year-to-date, and listings of all designated funds. Additionally, we reviewed appraisals of all associated real estate. On August 25, 2015, we met with the Session and also with their selected Negotiating Team. At the same time, we continued in our efforts to hear the thoughts and concerns of the membership of the congregation and particularly those uncomfortable with the Session's request for dismissal. We received a few emails and other contacts and, as in the LRT phase, an overwhelming majority of them expressed agreement with the Session's request for dismissal from the Presbyterian Church (USA) to ECO.

Following a month of correspondence and discussion of offers and counter offers between the Commission and the Negotiating Team, we held a congregational hearing on October 10, 2015, following a worship service in which members of the AC participated. After a time of open questions and discussion, a straw poll was taken asking each voting member present to express either support for the Session's request for dismissal or objection to the Session's request for dismissal. Of the 237 ballots filled out, 220 supported the Session's request for dismissal. In addition to those ballots, communications were received prior to the congregational hearing from those who reported that they would not be able to attend. 21 such communications were received and all of them supported the Session's request for dismissal.

Further negotiations and discussions with the Negotiating Team continued until an agreement was reached in late October.

We have been diligent in our efforts to closely follow the Presbytery's Gracious Separation Policy. It must be said that this process has worked well. Both sides have walked the delicate tightrope of graciousness and adhered to the statement in the policy which says "the whole Church belongs to our one Lord, Jesus Christ, though it is possible, and at times even desirable, that we may differ from one another..." In both the LRT and AC phases of our work, it has become evident and clear that a significant majority of the members of First Presbyterian Church

of Harrisonburg feel called to seek gracious dismissal from the Presbyterian Church (USA). We have encountered a few who express a desire for the Congregation to remain affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (USA) but not in numbers that would comprise a viable congregation. And so we present to Shenandoah Presbytery the following report and recommendations concerning the Congregation of First Presbyterian of Harrisonburg.

We humbly pray that God's will be done.

Jonathan Bunker, Chair  
Linda Bradley  
Thom Jennings  
David Witt  
Berlin Zirk

## First Presbyterian Church of Harrisonburg Asset Summary

### Liquid Assets

Unrestricted Funds	
Treasurer Funds (Session and contingency funds and earned interest)	\$ 250,000
Trustee Funds (Various Endowments)	254,000
Humphries Estate	87,000
 Sub Total	 \$ 591,000

### Restricted Assets

Treasurer Funds (28 specifically defined accounts)	\$ 412,000
Trustee Funds (18 specifically defined bequests)	648,000
 Subtotal	 \$ 1,060,000

### Non-Liquid Assets

Court Square Church Property (as is appraised value)	\$ 5,500,000
(Liquidation appraised value*)	1,952,000
9 Court Square Property	343,000
Mabel Memorial Chapel Property	460,000
Personal Property (Insured Replacement Cost)	1,549,000

\*Liquidation Appraisal addresses the value of the property given its unique use and the unlikelihood that it could be used for any other purpose.

### Stated Liabilities:

Deferred Maintenance	\$ 127,500
Necessary Capital Projects	\$ 2,368,677

### Income and Expense Review

Year	Pledge Income	Actual Income	Budgeted Expenses	Actual Expenses
2010	1,052,136	1,055,615	1,171,793	1,110,760
2011	988,786	974,207	1,098,003	1,056,326
2012	900,122	873,507	1,040,820	1,027,453
2013	791,287	799,514	1,041,418	1,011,962
2014	830,172	804,033	1,118,476	1,048,252
2015	746,984	513,038++	1,108,923	789,798+

+From Pledges

++As of 9/31/2015

**Administrative Commission**  
**First Presbyterian Church of Harrisonburg, Virginia**  
**Recommendations and Rationale**

The Administrative Commission elected by Shenandoah Presbytery for First Presbyterian Church of Harrisonburg makes the following recommendations:

**A: Concerning First Presbyterian Church of Harrisonburg**

1. That upon finalization of this agreement, Shenandoah Presbytery dismiss the First Presbyterian Church of Harrisonburg to the Presbytery of the East Central of ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians.
2. That First Presbyterian Church of Harrisonburg, as a financial settlement, make payment to Shenandoah Presbytery in the amount of \$350,000 according to the following payment schedule: \$140,000 lump sum payment upon the finalization of the dismissal agreement and the amount of \$42,000 a year for five years to be paid in quarterly installments. Should the First Presbyterian Church of Harrisonburg fail to meet these terms, the Shenandoah Presbytery will not be deemed to have waived the right to assert its property rights against the First Presbyterian Church of Harrisonburg's property.
3. That First Presbyterian Church of Harrisonburg transfer all original Session Minutes and other official records related to the church's life in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and its predecessor denominations to Shenandoah Presbytery.
4. That First Presbyterian Church of Harrisonburg retains rights to the name of First Presbyterian Church of Harrisonburg.
5. That Shenandoah Presbytery, on behalf of the Presbyterian Church (USA), transfer by Quitclaim Deed all right, title and interest to First Presbyterian Church of Harrisonburg. Furthermore, that Shenandoah Presbytery, on behalf of the Presbyterian Church (USA), release and discharge the property and church from any trust, coverage and obligations, expressed or implied, pursuant to Section G-4.0203 ("Church Property Held in Trust") of the Book of Order, Part II of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA).
6. That Shenandoah Presbytery dismiss the Reverend Jon Heeringa to continue his ministry within the Presbytery of the East Central Eco: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians upon finalization of this agreement.
7. That a pastoral letter be sent from the Stated Clerk of Shenandoah Presbytery to all members of First Presbyterian Church of Harrisonburg, informing them of these actions and offering assistance to any member wishing to maintain membership in a Presbyterian Church (USA) congregation.
8. That First Presbyterian Church of Harrisonburg, upon request of member(s) who wish to remain in the Presbytery Church (USA) and who have not transferred to another Presbyterian Church (USA) congregation, commend those member(s) to the pastoral care of the Shenandoah Presbytery.

9. That a worship service of Endings and Beginnings be held at First Presbyterian Church of Harrisonburg, at a date convenient for those involved, including representatives from Shenandoah Presbytery, the Presbytery of the East Central of ECO and First Presbyterian Church of Harrisonburg
10. That upon report to Shenandoah Presbytery of finalization of the agreement between First Presbyterian Church of Harrisonburg and Shenandoah Presbytery and completion of the worship service of Beginnings and Endings, the Administrative Commission be dismissed.

## **B. Concerning Shenandoah Presbytery's Use of the Above Financial Settlement**

That Shenandoah Presbytery direct the Presbytery Leadership Team (or its successor body) to use the funds obtained in the settlement in accord with the following guidelines: of the \$350,000 financial settlement, a sum of \$155,000 be used to further the current mission and ministry of the Presbytery (this amount equals five years' worth of First Presbyterian Church of Harrisonburg's current yearly support of the Presbytery) and that the remaining \$195,000 be used to encourage the development of either New Church Plants or other Worshiping Communities in the Presbytery. It is our hope that some of these funds would be used to develop a Presbyterian Church (USA) presence in the downtown Harrisonburg area.

### **Rationale for the Financial Settlement:**

Throughout our negotiations, the Administrative Commission has sought to balance our focus between the assets held by First Presbyterian Church of Harrisonburg and for what purpose or end a financial settlement might be used. We came to a conclusion in our early discussions that we would like to see the funds that would be received used in part to maintain the current mission and ministries of the Presbytery and at the same time support the development of a continued PC (USA) presence within the downtown Harrisonburg area, recognizing that Trinity Presbyterian Church, Massanutten Presbyterian Church and Cooks Creek Presbyterian Church are engaged in fruitful and faithful ministry in the Harrisonburg area. With this being the case, we structured our proposals to the First Presbyterian Church Negotiating Team around these two points of focus, talking about continuation of current mission and ministry and the development of new ones. For the first, we used the Congregation's current level of support of the Presbytery and for the second, we used the median salary of teaching elders within the Denomination as reported by the Board of Pensions (\$55,000) as a means to discuss the startup cost of a new ministry in the downtown Harrisonburg area.

As we considered the assets held by First Presbyterian Church of Harrisonburg, we recognized a significant downward trend in membership and pledged income. Over the past five years, membership in the Congregation has shrunk by over a third. These membership losses are attributed in part to a long overdue cleansing of the roll and in part to the loss of members uncomfortable with the Congregation's movement towards seeking dismissal from the PC (USA). This membership loss has resulted in a decrease in pledged income of the church with a reduction in pledges of \$305,152. The Congregation has also experienced a reduction in average worship attendance over this same period of time. These trends have resulted in an expressed anxiety concerning the future from both the Congregation and its leadership, though they remain hopeful that conditions can improve once their long process of discernment and dismissal is completed.

Considering the Congregation's assets themselves, the Congregation holds \$1,651,000 in liquid assets. A total of 41% of these assets (\$648,000) are restricted bequests. Another 25% (\$412,000) are held in funds restricted by act of the Session for the use of particular ministries and programs of the church. This leaves 44% which represent unrestricted assets (\$591,000). The agreed upon settlement of \$350,000 represents 21% of their total liquid assets both restricted and unrestricted. The Congregation does hold significant property, assessed between \$2,755,000 and \$6,303,000. The difference is based on an as is assessment of the main church building and a lower liquidation assessment based on the effect its specialized use would have on a potential sale. The agreed upon settlement represents between 6% - 13% of the property value, depending upon the particular value of assessment accepted.

We submit these figures and statistics for your consideration as they guided our consideration, but our main focus throughout our engagement with the Congregation was to seek a result that serves the mission and ministry goals of both the Presbytery and the Congregation. It has been our experience that the Session and Negotiating Team have joined us in this pursuit. In the midst of the serious and sometimes difficult conversations we have shared, there have been moments of prayer and table fellowship through which the significant theological differences that divide us have been set aside in light of a common commitment to love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ. It is in that Spirit that we humbly submit these recommendations to Shenandoah Presbytery

Grace, Mercy, and Peace,

Jonathan Bunker, Chair  
Linda Bradley  
Thom Jennings  
David Witt  
Berlin Zirk