

HANDBOOK OF REPORTS

for the

SPECIAL MEETING

of the

SHENANDOAH PRESBYTERY

Tuesday, February 23, 2016

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: February 23 MEETING OF PRESBYTERY

The Presbytery of Shenandoah will meet in SPECIAL session at Cooks Creek Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg, Virginia, on Tuesday, February 23, 2016, 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 Warm Springs 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 2016: February 13, May 10, August 27, and November 1. (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>Give them a hearing . . . listen before we answer <i>John 7:51 and Proverbs 18:13</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Treat each other respectfully so as to build trust, believing that we all desire to be faithful to Jesus the Christ; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · we will keep our conversations and communications open for candid and forthright exchange, · we will not ask questions or make statements in a way which will intimidate or judge others. 2. Learn about various positions on the topic of disagreement. 3. State what we think we heard and ask for clarification before responding, in an effort to be sure we understand each other.
<p>Speak the truth in love <i>Ephesians 4:15</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. 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. 5. Focus on ideas and suggestions instead of questioning people's motives, intelligence or integrity; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · we will not engage in name-calling or labeling of others prior to, during, or following the discussion. 6. Share our personal experiences about the subject of disagreement so that others may more fully understand our concerns.
<p>Maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace <i>Ephesians 4:3</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Indicate where we agree with those of other viewpoints as well as where we disagree. 8. Seek to stay in community with each other though the discussion may be vigorous and full of tension; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · we will be ready to forgive and be forgiven. 9. Follow these additional Guidelines when we meet in decision-making bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · urge persons of various points of view to speak and promise to listen to these positions seriously; · seek conclusions informed by our points of agreement; · be sensitive to the feelings and concerns of those who do not agree with the majority and respect their rights of conscience; · 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. 10. 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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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 Coordinating and Planning Commission
 - chair of a committee
- 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.

ACRONYMS YOU MAY HEAR AT TODAY'S MEETING

AC – Administrative Commission
ARE – Authorized Ruling Elder
CIT – Churches in Transition
CPA – Committee on Presbytery Administration
CPC – Coordinating and Planning Commission
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
MIF – Ministry Information Form
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 Warm Springs Presbyterian Church
- Determining a Quorum
 Procedural Rules
 Seating corresponding members
 Adoption of the Docket
- 10:25 a.m. Report of the Administrative Commission to Warm Springs Presbyterian Church

Report of Administrative Commission for Warm Springs Presbyterian Church

Regarding Teaching Elder Charles Reed

Prior to being constituted as an Administrative Commission, Commission members served as the LRT (Listening Response Team) to Warm Springs Presbyterian Church and Rev. Charles Reed, the teaching elder called to serve the Warm Springs congregation.

While acting as an LRT, the AC members herein met with Rev. Reed alone and as moderator of Session, with Session, and with some members and others interested in the life and work of the congregation on several different occasions.

During these meetings, it emerged relative to Rev. Reed that:

1. Rev. Reed desires to be dismissed from the PC(USA) to the EPC (Evangelical Presbyterian Church).
2. Rev. Reed's desire to be dismissed from the PC(USA) to the EPC is constant whether the congregation at Warm Springs is dismissed or not.
3. Rev. Reed was informed in detail regarding the likely impact on employment benefits and ordination status by members of the then LRT during the LRT phase, during which he indicated a complete awareness of and comfort with any changes in those regards.
4. Rev. Reed, in response to questions from congregants during a worship service in October of 2014, when departing the PC(USA) was discussed and a straw vote taken, responded that regardless of whether the congregation sought dismissal or not, he (Rev. Reed) was seeking to be dismissed and would not remain with the PC(USA) whether the congregation did or not.
5. Rev. Reed's informing the local worshipping community of his own intentions occurred prior to the invocation of the *Gracious Dismissal Policy* or direct involvement by Presbytery with the local congregation.
6. Rev. Reed reported to the LRT that he has had informal conversations with representatives of the EPC and believes that that denomination will receive him upon dismissal from the PC(USA). No formal request from the EPC as the proposed receiving denomination has, as yet, been sought or received.

The Administrative Commission concludes from the above that Rev. Reed's desire to be dismissed from the PC(USA) to the EPC is (a) constant; (b) long-standing; (c) unlikely to change in the foreseeable future; (d) arises from what Rev. Reed perceives as conflicts which cannot be resolved with the PC(USA); and (e) is independent of the outcome of proceedings involving the Warm Springs Church.

Thus, the Administrative Commission recommends that Rev. Reed be dismissed from the PC(USA) to the EPC immediately upon formal request from the EPC and under the terms and conditions and for the reasons set forth more fully below.

Excerpt of Applicable Policy

*Policy for Discernment toward Reconciliation or Gracious Separation
of Congregations in Shenandoah Presbytery
Approved by the Presbytery on August 23, 2014*

II.C. *Discernment Phase: Administrative Commission*

1. . . . The following powers are granted to an AC dealing with a congregation considering dismissal to another Reformed body:
 - a. . . .
 - vi. to propose to the presbytery any recommendation for resolution of the issues within the congregation, including the dissolution or dismissal of the church, the disposition of property held by or for the church, ***the status or transfer of any teaching elders related to the congregation seeking dismissal***, [emphasis added] and the transfer of members wishing to remain in the PCUSA after the dismissal of the congregation.

II.D. *Resolution Phase: Recommendations of the Administrative Commission*

2. . . .
 - c. Status of the Teaching Elder

As a congregation decides on its future, ***the teaching elder(s) serving that congregation must decide if they will remain with the PCUSA or separate from the denomination to another denomination***. [emphasis added] The AC shall work with the teaching elder(s) in reaching a decision, recognizing that dismissal of a congregation to another Reformed body terminates the call of the pastor(s) of that congregation within the PCUSA.

- i. ***In the case of a teaching elder serving in any installed position within a congregation which requests dismissal, the teaching elder's relationship with that congregation shall be dissolved at a time to be negotiated and specified in the plan of separation***. [emphasis added] Teachings elders who decide to stay in the PCUSA shall be provided, by the departing congregation, a severance package that is in accord with the presbytery's policy.
- ii. ***Teaching elders who request dismissal from the PCUSA shall be dismissed to the receiving denomination upon request from the receiving denomination***. [emphasis added]

Facts and Observations from the Administrative Commission

1. Rev. Reed has, as a sincere matter of conscience, effectively withdrawn from his ordination as a teaching elder of the PC(USA) in all but name for more than a year.
 - a. Rev. Reed has voiced a number of genuine and heartfelt concerns, the issue of gay marriage merely constituting what was, for him, a tipping point from which there was no going back.

- b. From the moment the PC(USA) through its General Assembly voted to allow for the possibility of same-sex marriage, Rev. Reed ceased being a teaching elder of the PC(USA) from his own point of view.
- c. Prior to the passage of the same-sex marriage provision, Rev. Reed had grave theological concerns that brought him into conflict with the PC(USA), which concerns were likely to result in his departure even without the same-sex marriage issue. Those concerns have not been resolved in a fashion Rev. Reed can be reconciled to and are not likely to be in the foreseeable future.
- d. While he was perhaps put in a bit of a box by a question from a congregant during a discussion period during worship in October of 2014 when those present were asked to participate in a survey (what has been variously characterized as a straw poll or vote) on the matter of departing the denomination, Rev. Reed was asked at that time if he would stay if the congregation stayed and he told them at the time either that he would or could not (stay), the point being that this has been, as Rev. Reed has told the then-LRT on a number of occasions, an issue of long-standing for him.
- e. This is a matter of conscience for Rev. Reed and the AC has no doubt that it is genuine. Thus, Rev. Reed has been unable to receive communion from any PC(USA) minister since at least the General Assembly vote on same-sex marriage.
- f. Rev. Reed is unable to rely upon guidance or counsel from any PC(USA) pastor who does not reject the GA vote on same-sex marriage.

From the above, the Administrative Commission concludes that:

1. Rev. Reed stopped being a teaching elder of the PC(USA) the moment General Assembly voted to allow for the possibility of same-sex marriage, both spiritually and practically:
 - a. spiritually, Rev. Reed finds that he cannot be in full communion with his fellow teaching elders of the PC(USA), so that he may not receive communion from their hands.
 - b. While it may well be a matter of conscience (the AC fully believes that for Rev. Reed, it is), to remain outside communion with fellow Christians is not to be in fellowship within a denomination, a fact which Rev. Reed himself recognizes, by his seeking dismissal from the PC(USA) to a body more consonant with his understanding of the fundamental tenets of the faith (how Rev. Reed himself characterizes the impasse in which he finds himself).
 - c. as a practical matter, Rev. Reed has withdrawn from any Presbytery activities save presbytery meetings themselves (he was formerly quite active in presbytery affairs).
2. None of this is offered as indictment, but rather as observation: Rev. Reed desires to be dismissed and the AC agrees with him that he should be.

3. In terms of the particular denomination (EPC), the AC recognizes that this presbytery previously established a group to recommend to presbytery as a whole which Reformed denominations would, as a matter of policy, be recognized by Shenandoah Presbytery to receive those seeking dismissal from the PC(USA) and that group has yet to make its report and recommendations. The AC herein believes Rev. Reed's request should be granted to the EPC as he has requested, regardless of what the ultimate action of presbytery may be as to the EPC, because:
 - a. The AC makes a distinction between teaching elders and congregations/local worshiping communities when it comes to the matter of what Reformed denominations we will recognize;
 - b. Rev. Reed's desired dismissal should not be delayed while presbytery comes up with a policy;
 - c. this is not precedent; rather, this is making a case-by-case decision pending the development of a policy not yet in place; and
 - d. the EPC is a Reformed denomination. The AC would be of a different mind entirely regarding the congregation; but when it comes to the individual choice of a single teaching elder, whether we agree or not, it seemed best to acquiesce in Rev. Reed's own sense of call – Rev. Reed identified to the then-LRT his vision and sense of call being to serve in the leadership of the EPC.

Therefore, the Administrative Commission of the Shenandoah Presbytery

Recommends

1. That Teaching Elder Charles Reed, pursuant to his own request, be dismissed to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC), immediately upon receipt from the EPC of a request to receive Rev. Reed to that denomination, but in any event, whether received by the EPC or not, that Rev. Reed be dismissed from the PC(USA) not later than February 28, 2016.
2. That Rev. Reed receive a severance package from Warm Springs Presbyterian Church consisting of up to six (6) months salary and benefits at levels current as of January 1, 2016, commencing with the date of his dismissal and in any event, commencing not later than March 1, 2016 and continuing for a period of six (6) months or until such time as Rev. Reed obtains gainful employment, whichever soonest occurs.
3. That in addition, Rev. Reed and his family have the right of continued occupancy of the manse they currently live in for a period of up to three (3) months following the date of dismissal or until such time as they vacate the manse, whichever soonest occurs.
4. That Charles Reed shall not labor within the geographic boundaries of the Shenandoah Presbytery in any capacity with any denomination, church or worshiping community for a period of five (5) years from the date of this agreement.

I have received a copy of this report and its recommendations and they have been reviewed with me.

Dated this _____ day of January, 2016.

Charles Reed, Teaching Elder

Findings as to the Worshiping Community at Warm Springs

The Administrative Commission bases its findings below upon its work as a Listening Response Team with Warm Springs.

It is the conclusion of the Administrative Commission that whether ‘they’ (whoever ‘they’ may end up being) stay or go to EPC (or any other denomination, for that matter), there is no current viable worshiping community at Warm Springs without this pastor, absent intervention or assistance from some outside source. This conclusion is based upon a number of factors, including (in no particular order of importance), but not necessarily limited to:

1. Session records are a shambles, with numerous gaps, inaccuracies, and incompletions, making it difficult if not impossible for an insider, let alone an outsider, to determine such things as membership; active and inactive status; and the composition of Session itself, to name but a few.
2. Ruling elders are all disengaged from and inactive in presbytery and have been for some time.
3. Only one member of the current session has e-mail or electronic means of communication. The result has been that virtually all communication has been channeled through the pastor and all information sought by the then-LRT was channeled through the pastor and his informal notes and records (all records requests were answered not by the Clerk or the Treasurer but by the pastor).
4. Session members and virtually all of those present in congregational meetings had no understanding of PC(USA) polity in general or of presbytery procedures regarding the disposition of property in the event of a dismissal.
5. Session members displayed a passive role, both in person and in their records, ceding all leadership to the pastor and exhibiting virtually no leadership themselves.
6. The vast majority of current members actively participating in LRT events have joined since the current pastor came to the church and virtually all of them come from other than Reformed denominations. Their articulated polity seems most closely to resemble that of the Baptists/Congregationalists.
7. Session members, in describing what they valued about this particular worshiping community, all said they valued the pastor. Some spoke of the worshiping space/the church building. None spoke of the worshiping community.
8. Formerly vibrant ministries, such as Presbyterian Women, no longer exist and no one can explain why.
9. In meetings aimed at the congregation as a whole, two women (the only ordained women to attend meetings with the then-LRT) and all the men and women present, ordained or otherwise, indicated a complete willingness to surrender the women’s ordination as ruling elders in order to go from the PC(USA) to the EPC (which allows its presbyteries to determine whether they will allow for the ordination of women). No one objected or even asked what it might mean theologically or practically or spiritually to be stripped of one’s ordination.

10. Organized meetings by the then LRT to meet one-on-one with folks not in attendance at group meetings resulted in not a single person attending.
11. At meetings, when the issue of pastoral care for those who might not wish to go was raised, those saying anything at all voiced total indifference to downright hostility, saying “that’s their problem; not ours.”
12. At least part of Session was surprised to learn that whether to conduct same-sex marriage ceremonies or not was left to the individual conscience and decision of the local worshipping community.
13. There are members who have left since this process began. It appears that other than what the pastor may have done, no efforts were made by anyone else to reconcile with or provide pastorally for those folks.

Based on these and numerous other observations, the Administrative Commission has concluded relative to the people worshipping at Warm Springs Presbyterian Church that during this particular season in their life and work, the worshipping community has ceded all its authority and responsibility to the pastor. Session acts as a rubber stamp, if at all.

Remove the pastor and the session would appear to have absolutely no idea how to proceed in the life and work of the church. Remove the pastor and the congregation, likewise, has no leadership to come forward.

Thus, the Administrative Commission finds itself in the position of being unable to make a recommendation to grant dismissal, while recognizing that there are members who do wish to leave the PC(USA), but also that a significant number of members have remained entirely silent on the matter.

Further, the Administrative Commission concludes that whether in the PC(USA), the EPC or anywhere else, without this pastor, this worshipping community has no leadership at all, having allowed themselves to become entirely dependent upon his leading. Thus, when and if Rev. Reed were to depart, this community as currently constituted will, absent the active intervention of some external source, cease to exist.

Because they have substantial financial resources, they may be able to find such help; but the AC cannot envision who would even be in charge within the congregation of such an effort.

Thus it can well be seen as an act of cruelty to separate Warm Springs from its pastor rather than deal with them together (as has been the case in the cases of the two previous departing congregations this presbytery has dealt with in recent years), because there is the very real risk that in the absence of Rev. Reed, Warm Springs will simply dissolve as (we speculate) some leave with him, some go to other churches and some simply stop attending church entirely.

In good conscience, however, whatever we may think of dismissal or retention, this Administrative Commission has concluded that we cannot send this congregation as it currently exists off to another denomination any more than we can recommend that it continue as is within the PC(USA).

Thus, recognizing Rev. Reed's strongly expressed desire and sense of call to leave the denomination, this Commission has recommended that:

1. His request be granted;
2. In order to avoid increased conflict and dysfunction, that his request be granted quickly so as not to allow the matter to fester and create even more resentment and anger;
3. Rev. Reed's request be considered separate and apart from the request of the congregation;
4. The congregation's request be denied; and
5. That the congregation be dealt with according to the terms and conditions set forth below.

Recommendations Regarding Warm Springs Presbyterian Church:

1. That CRM and CPT of the Shenandoah Presbytery work together to provide as quickly as possible an interim pastor skilled in conflict resolution and transitional ministry.
2. That the matter of dismissal be set aside for a period of not less than five (5) years, during which it is anticipated that Presbytery will work with members and others in Warm Springs to reestablish a viable worshiping community.
3. That any requests to transfer membership from Warm Springs to any other church be handled in accordance with the Book of Order and with all due dispatch.
4. That until such time as an Interim is appointed, the AC or one of its number act as Moderator of Session at Warm Springs and determine whether the current Session is willing and able to continue in that capacity or whether the AC must act as Session as well as Moderator.

Respectfully submitted this _____ day of January, 2016.

Elizabeth A. Pyles Phil Sieck

Ken Campbell Faye Bottenfield

It is noted that copies of this report were provided for each member of the Session of Warm Springs Presbyterian Church at a meeting between Session and the Administrative Commission on Wednesday, January 27, 2016 held at Augusta Stone Presbyterian Church in Fort Defiance, Virginia, within the bounds of the Shenandoah Presbytery, on whose behalf said Administrative Commission is acting, and as indicated by their signatures below:

Rev. Charles Reed, Moderator Scott Robertson, Clerk of Session

Ruling Elder _____ (print name) Ruling Elder _____

Ruling Elder _____ Ruling Elder _____

Statement of Desire to Be Dismissed from the PC(USA)

I, Charles Reed, teaching elder ordained and installed by the PC(USA) to serve the congregation of the Warm Springs Presbyterian Church, do hereby state:

As a matter of conscience, it is my desire to be dismissed from the PC(USA).

It is my intention and desire to be dismissed to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC), a Reformed denomination.

Dated this _____ day of January, 2016.

Charles Reed, Teaching Elder

ADDENDUM TO REPORT

Your Administrative Commission met with Rev. Reed individually and with Session as a whole in the evening of January 27, 2016 at Augusta Stone Presbyterian Church, who receives our thanks for their ongoing gracious hospitality. The purpose of the meeting was to review the AC's proposed report to presbytery and seek input from all parties.

During the meeting with Rev. Reed, a statement seeking dismissal from the PCUSA (page 10 of the report) was first reviewed with him.

Rev. Reed received the form for further reflection and consideration. No deadline was imposed regarding the form.

Next pages 1-5 of the report were reviewed with Rev. Reed, with some discussion. Rev. Reed was then given time to further review the report with the agreement that he would make any responses, particularly regarding any factual inaccuracies, via e-mail the following day (January 28).

Rev. Reed signed this section of the report as indicated, reflecting that he had been provided with a copy of the report.

The meeting with Rev. Reed began at 5:00 p.m. and concluded at approximately 6:15 p.m., with roughly half that time given over to Rev. Reed's private review of the portion of the report provided to him at that time (AC having noted to him that the report as to Warm Springs would be reviewed with Session as a whole).

The AC met with Session as a whole starting at 6:30 p.m.

The AC reviewed the general process that would govern the AC report and recommendations.

The AC then reviewed pages 6-9 of the report with Session, having indicated that there was another section pertaining to Rev. Reed alone which would be reviewed with them following the discussion of the section pertaining to Warm Springs' request for dismissal.

Following this review, Session received a 25-minute recess to further review the section of the report among themselves, at which time the parties were to reconvene for further information, discussion and action.

Throughout the evening, Session requested and received additional times for their private discussion, for a total of roughly 1.5 hours, at which time, Rev. Reed came to the room where the AC had retired to, stating that Session members had left and that there was a letter from Session in the meeting room.

Session requested of the AC in the letter that a copy of it be provided to Presbytery.

The letter reads as follows:

January 27, 2016

To the Administrative Commission,

With all due respect, the Session of Warm Springs Presbyterian Church finds the contents and direction of tonight's meeting with the AC of Shenandoah Presbytery to be harsh, grievous, and disappointing. We believe their recommendations go beyond their granted authority.

The manner in which their recommendations were presented to our pastor, and then Session, was piecemeal and disingenuous. There were several misrepresentations of the congregation, session, and pastor in the documents presented tonight.

As a Session representing WSPC, we decline to sign the documents presented by the AC or assign any merit to them. We sincerely doubt that the Presbytery could successfully seek civil court enforcement of the AC recommendations.*

(1 of 2)

It is our heartfelt prayer that a truly gracious dismissal can be achieved. We request that you share this document with the Presbytery and will continue in prayer for each of you.

Ruling Elders:

<i>Jan Dray</i>	<i>[signed]</i>	<i>J. R. Dray</i>
<i>Tim Tuning</i>	<i>[signed]</i>	<i>Tim Tuning</i>
<i>Tim Blake</i>	<i>[signed]</i>	<i>Timothy Blake</i>
<i>Joe Tuning</i>	<i>[signed]</i>	<i>Joseph Tuning</i>
<i>Scott Robertson</i>	<i>[signed]</i>	<i>Scott Robertson</i>
<i>Wayne Hiner</i>	<i>[signed]</i>	<i>Wayne Hiner</i>
<i>Bill Fields</i>	<i>[signed]</i>	<i>William A. Fields</i>
<i>Rev. Charles K. Reed</i>	<i>[signed]</i>	<i>Rev. Charles K. Reed</i>

Teaching Elder &
Moderator

(2 of 2)

*As with Rev. Reed, Session members were asked to sign indicating that they had received a copy of the report.

The AC was unable to review with Session the portion of the report dealing with Rev. Reed's request for dismissal, although it is referenced in summary fashion in the portion of the report provided to Session.

The AC has received no further communication from either Rev. Reed individually or from Session as a whole as of the time of the submission of this report (Friday, January 29, 2016 at 12:36 p.m.).

AC has sent a letter to the households of the congregation advising them of AC's recommendations, the upcoming Presbytery meeting and the link where they might find a copy of the complete report.

Finally, regardless of the future direction of AC's recommendations, AC finds that it could use further assistance and to that end, requests that Presbytery's leadership appoint at least two other persons to its number to assist with its duties.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth A. Pyles, Teaching Elder
Phil Seick, Teaching Elder
Faye Bottenfeld, Ruling Elder
Ken Campbell, Ruling Elder



Warm Springs Presbyterian Church

February 7, 2016

To All Concerned,

On Wednesday, 1/27/16, the Session of Warm Springs Presbyterian Church (WSPC) met with an Administrative Commission (AC) from Shenandoah Presbytery at the Augusta Stone Presbyterian Church in Verona, VA. We, the Session, came with hopes of reaching a peaceable and mutually beneficial agreement for the transfer of WSPC from the PCUSA to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC). Unfortunately, we were met with a report from the AC containing several gross misrepresentations of our pastor, Session, and congregation. This report also included the AC's recommendations that shepherd and flock be separated, and that the AC itself be given authority to govern and direct the life of our congregation.

We found this report, and the manner in which it was presented, to be appalling. Together we authored a brief statement of dissent, respectfully thanked the AC for their time, and left the meeting.

Our congregation entered the dismissal process prayerfully, and with a commitment to honor our brothers and sisters in Shenandoah Presbytery by submitting to the requirements of the Presbytery's gracious dismissal policy. We have answered every question and every request from the LRT/AC. From the beginning of this process, we've made all of our records freely available to them and presented our documents in an organized fashion. Likewise, we are willing to share copies of our records with anyone in the presbytery who requests them, and to answer any questions as they arise.

Though we are a small church in a far corner of the Presbytery, WSPC is a strong worshipping community dedicated to the Lord Jesus Christ. We are known for excellent music, faithful preaching, a growing midweek discipleship program, our wonderful TOTS preschool, leadership of the local fuel fund, a great Vacation Bible School, and gifts of mercy to many of our neighbors in need. We have about 70 members on the roll, and average about 50 in worship each Sunday.

The AC's report portrays us an inept Session, with a hodgepodge of senseless members, all under the deceiving spell of an autocratic, pied-piper type of pastor. Our reality is quite the opposite. We are a congregation of accomplished leaders from many different backgrounds and vocations. Our Session is committed to Biblical faith and Presbyterian polity. We respect Rev. Reed and the Lord's gift to him for preaching, and we are also keenly aware of his flaws. It is a testament to the work of the Holy Spirit – not the pastor or any particular person or group – that we are united in faith and in our convictions.

You will please note that, unlike the reports of other LRT's and AC's to presbytery, this AC report contains no numbers or percentages of members wanting to remain in the PCUSA. The simple reason for this is that no one – not a single member or attender – has expressed a desire to us or the AC to remain in the PCUSA. Nor is it surprising that no one came for individual

meetings with AC during the “listening” phase of our process. We heard multiple comments from members at the preceding congregational hearings that the way in which the LRT/AC chair spoke to our congregation was caustic and demeaning. Further, we are disappointed but not surprised by the gulf between our self-understanding and the AC’s description of us in this report. Throughout the dismissal process, the LRT/AC did very little in the way of actual *listening*, and instead *talked* for 95% of our time together.

We find it regrettable, but necessary as a matter of principle, to break institutional bonds with the PCUSA. Though the AC report falsely indicates a fixation on the issue of same-sex marriage, we’ve repeatedly expressed concerns about the denomination’s positions on this and other issues including abortion, sanctions against Israel, and property rights. However, our core disagreements are not about any one social issue, but rather about our fundamental understandings of Biblical authority and the necessity of well-articulated confessional standards for ministry. It is to these ends – a common understanding of Scripture and essential tenets of faith - that we are pursuing affiliation with the EPC. As per the gracious dismissal policy, we intend to honor “the intentions of Presbyterians now dead” by teaching the Westminster Confession of Faith and requiring our pastors and elders to subscribe to its statements. We intend “to safeguard church life for Presbyterians not yet born” by our obedience to Scripture and its faithful exposition in Westminster, and by making a payment to Shenandoah Presbytery upon successful completion of the dismissal process.

Please know that, while we find ourselves at odds with the positions of the PCUSA, we are appreciative of our sister churches in Shenandoah Presbytery and deeply grateful for our PCUSA colleagues in ministry.

We sincerely and respectfully ask that Shenandoah Presbytery grant our request for transfer to the EPC in agreement with the Presbytery’s gracious dismissal policy, and that our pastor, Session, and congregation be dismissed together at the same time. At no point has our pastor requested personal, individual dismissal to the EPC. Why would Presbytery dismiss our pastor without the EPC’s request, when this plainly contradicts Section II.D.2.c.ii. of the gracious dismissal policy? Why try to separate our congregation from the pastor? Does the Presbytery really believe it should violate the United States Constitution and attempt to prohibit Rev. Reed from working “within the geographic bounds of Shenandoah Presbytery in any capacity with any denomination, church or worshiping community for a period of five years” as seen on p.5 of the AC report? Why deny WSPC’s unanimous request for transfer to the EPC when we are asking to do so in accord with the Presbytery’s own policy? Why entertain any of the AC’s recommendations when they are, in the words of the AC chair herself, “unprecedented”?

We humbly ask that the Presbytery leadership and, indeed the Presbytery itself, intervene in the dismissal process to prevent any further contention or disruption. It remains our heartfelt prayer that WSPC could be transferred to the EPC in a truly gracious manner that would bring blessings to both the Presbytery and our congregation, and that the resolution of this matter would glorify Jesus Christ by demonstrating God’s love to everyone watching these proceedings in our communities.

Sincerely,

Ruling Elders:
Tim Blake
Jan Dray
Bill Fields
Tim Tuning

Wayne Hiner
Joe Tuning

Teaching Elder: Rev. Charles K. Reed