

SUPPLEMENTAL
REPORTS
May 10, 2016

STATED CLERK RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. That Presbytery receive the minutes of the commission to install Teaching Elder Karen Allamon as found on page S-2.
- B. That Presbytery (with concurrence of the Committee on Relational Ministry as found on page S-19) appoint an Administrative Commission (AC) to seek resolution of issues facing the congregation of Buckton Church, with "powers granted the AC" as pursuant to *Policy II.C.a.i-ix*. Members of the AC will be:

Teaching Elders

Maren Sonstegard-Spray (Winchester 1st Church)
Lisa Webb, Chair (Woodstock Church)

Ruling Elders

Adrian Burt (Front Royal Church)
Eric Hulett (Tuscarora Church)
Donna Lanaghan (Burnt Church)

See pages S-3-13 for written report from the Listening Response Team

MINUTES OF COMMISSION TO INSTALL THE REV. KAREN H. ALLAMON, as pastor of the Staunton First Presbyterian Church. In accordance with the appointment, the commission convened at the First Church on April 24, 2016, at 3:00 p.m.

Commission members present: Teaching Elders: John Cushwa – Presbytery Moderator, Sarah Hill, and Evan Smith
Ruling Elders: Mary Meade of Staunton First Church, David Bottenfield of Augusta Stone Church, Harriet Thompson of Tinkling Spring Church, and Mary Lou McMillin of Trinity Church.

Teaching Elder Joshua Lee Bower from the Presbytery of Flint River was invited by the Presbytery to participate in the service.

A quorum was present.

John Cushwa, Convener, called the commission to order and led in prayer. The commission elected. John Cushwa, moderator and Mary Lou McMillin, clerk.

The congregation was called to worship. Joshua Bower preached the sermon on the subject "New Creation" from 2 Corinthians 5:14-6:2. John Cushwa asked the questions of the teaching elder. Mary Meade asked the questions of the congregation. These being answered in the affirmative and with prayer led by John Cushwa, the commission installed her as pastor of the Staunton First Church. The members of the Presbytery and others welcomed the newly installed pastor into their fellowship in the ministry. .

Sarah Hill delivered the charge to the congregation and Mary Lou McMillin delivered the charge to the pastor.

At the conclusion of the service the newly installed teaching elder made a brief statement and pronounced the benediction

After the installation service the officers and members of the church came forward to their pastor and gave her an appropriate expression of cordial reception and affectionate regard.

The commission then read and approved their minutes. The commission adjourned with prayer led by Karen Allamon.

John Cushwa, Moderator
Mary Lou McMillin, Clerk

Report of the Listening Response Team *for* Buckton Presbyterian Church

Presented to the May 10, 2016 meeting of The Presbytery of Shenandoah

Teaching Elder Lisa Webb, chair; Ruling Elders Donna Lanaghan and Eric Hulett

Background

Responding to calls of concern from eight members of Buckton Church following a presentation on October 18, 2015 by The Reverend John Sloop, the presbytery's *Policy for Discernment toward Reconciliation or Gracious Separation of Congregations in Shenandoah Presbytery* became engaged. Pursuant to *Policy 11.A*, a Listening Response Team (LRT) was established and so noted by the Stated Clerk of The Presbytery of Shenandoah at its February 13, 2016 meeting in Lexington, Virginia.

Following Presbytery policy, established a Listening Response Team to meet with Buckton Church to engage in discernment. The LRT consists of two Ruling Elders, Donna Lanaghan of Burnt Church and Eric Hulett of Tuscarora Church, joining Teaching Elders Lisa Webb of Woodstock Church and Kevin Hay of Opequon Church. The LRT has been trained and is in process with Buckton Church.

Due to work and scheduling constraints, Teaching Elder Kevin Hay resigned from the LRT before the Team met with the session and congregation. A replacement was not sought, as the remaining LRT members concluded that the listening work could be accomplished with three persons.

Meeting with Session

Policy II.B – The LRT met with the session on Thursday, January 28, 2016. Twelve persons were present: 8 active Ruling Elders, 2 Ruling Elders not currently serving on session, Clerk of session Greg Stiles, and Commissioned Ruling Elder James Boyette. (Note: Buckton session seats 12 Ruling Elders, though there are currently 2 vacancies.)

An overview of the LRT process was shared, with attention given to the need to hear from as many members as possible. It was noted that frequent guests would also be included in the listening process, but the recommendation from the LRT would be based solely on congregational membership, per the *Policy for Discernment I* (Preamble). The session members expressed their opinions and asked questions about the process.

Information Gathering

Policy I.C – Clerk Stiles provided the LRT with a spreadsheet of “Members and Frequent Attendees” as well as another entitled “Other Members” but noted that: *We have no “official” rolls of church membership (these were apparently lost during the late 90’s/early 2000’s). All we have is on Excel spreadsheet that the previous clerk and I used to reconstruct the rolls.* (Email to Lisa Webb, March 4) Buckton’s Church Report to the PCUSA for 2015 listed 93 active members. The combined spreadsheets totaled 105. On March 2, a letter introducing the LRT process, providing listening times, and contact information for the LRT members was mailed, using the addresses on the spreadsheets. Five letters were returned as “undeliverable.”

Clerk Stiles also provided the LRT with session minutes from the past 10 years, and was quick to reply to questions regarding other resources and information needed by the LRT.

Congregational Listening Opportunities

Policy II.B.1 – The LRT scheduled two congregational listening times for three hours each on consecutive Sundays of March 6 and March 13. The majority of those gathered desired to divide into three groups: those who wished to remain in the PCUSA, those who wished to be dismissed from the PCUSA, and those who wished to speak privately and not share their desire publicly. The vast majority of attendees chose to engage in the listening sessions as part of one of the two groups, with few attendees seeking a private session.

- On **March 6**, 18 members were present, 14 of whom expressed desire for Buckton Church to remain in the PCUSA, and 4 who expressed desire for Buckton Church to be dismissed from the PCUSA. Additionally, 3 non-members were present who wished to remain, and 1 non-member was present who wished to be dismissed.
- On **March 13**, 12 members were present, all of whom expressed desire for Buckton Church to be dismissed from the PCUSA. Additionally, 1 non-member was present who wished to be dismissed.

Membership Data

Following the congregational gatherings, the LRT diligently attempted to contact every person on the spreadsheets from whom the LRT had not yet heard. The LRT's hope was that "progress could be made toward reconciliation" by hearing from every active member (*Policy II.B.C*). Due to the response received, the LRT concludes that an active membership of between 64 and 70 persons is more accurate than 93. This is derived by the following calculation:

105	on the two spreadsheets provided
<u>-28</u>	who indicated they were not members
77	active members
- 6	who could not be contacted due to incorrect address/phone number
<u>- 7</u>	who could not be reached despite leaving multiple voice messages
64	MORE ACCURATE WORKING MEMBERSHIP NUMBER

Sustainability Meetings

Policy II.B.5 - In order to become better informed about the sustainability of Buckton Church if the presbytery decides it will be dismissed or will remain PCUSA, the LRT held two additional meetings with members.

- On Tuesday, **March 29**, a meeting was held with members who had expressed a desire that Buckton Church remains with the PCUSA. Fourteen members attended and discussed their plans for sustainability, which included a draft budget, downsizing of session from 12 to 6, keeping and maintaining the church building and grounds, and reinstating financial commitment to Shenandoah Presbytery's Shared Mission Support.
- On Sunday, **April 3**, a meeting was held with members who had expressed a desire that Buckton Church be dismissed from the PCUSA. Sixteen persons attended. At this time, it was noted that, should they not be able to keep the church building (which they would like to do), research had taken place about alternative meeting sites for Sunday School and worship. It was also stated that this particular group does the majority of the work of the church.

Through congregational gatherings, telephone calls, emails, social media, and postal mail, the LRT heard from 29 members whose desire is that Buckton Church remains in the PCUSA and 4 members who preferred to not offer an opinion but who would seriously consider returning to active worship participation if the congregational leadership were different (thus totaling 33). The LRT heard from 28 members whose desire is that Buckton Church be dismissed from the PCUSA.

Review of Buckton Church Session Minutes

A thorough review of the past 10 years of session minutes indicates that conversation about the actions of the PCUSA and The Presbytery of Shenandoah have been taking place, most especially since 2014, but as early as March 2012, when the *Gracious Separation Policy* was presented and acted upon by Shenandoah Presbytery. Listed below is a sample of session minutes, with notations of appendices.

- **July 9, 2014** Stated Session mtg: report entitled *Perspectives to Remember as We Respond to the 221st General Assembly's Actions* and resolution that was passed unanimously: "We unanimously repudiate these unbiblical actions and call for those who took such actions to repent and reform." (Appendix 1)
- **August 24, 2014** Congregational Assembly: discuss the deviations of the PCUSA from Scripture and Book of Order, followed by straw vote (Appendix 2)
- **September 2014** Stated Session mtg: congregation did not want to vote on leaving the PCUSA (Appendix 3)
- **September 9, 2015** Stated Session mtg: John Heeringa, Pastor at First Church in Harrisonburg, suggested inviting Dr. John Sloop, who agreed to speak after worship. (Appendix 4)
- **October 14, 2015** Stated Session mtg: the decisions the church must take regarding the PCUSA are weighing heavily on the hearts of church members (Appendix 5)
- **December 9, 2015** Stated Session mtg: heard session is trying to brainwash the congregation ... Scripture stands and has stood for centuries. It is, in fact, the PCUSA that is trying to brainwash its members (Appendix 6)
- **November/December 2015** Letter from session to congregation, though not distributed because the LRT was being formed: "...We fervently believe, in obedience to Jesus Christ and under the authority of Scripture, it is in the very best interest of our congregation that Buckton Presbyterian Church seek to be dismissed from the PCUSA to another Presbyterian denomination whose beliefs more accurately reflect the beliefs and mission of our church." (Appendix 7)
- **Note:** Though not included in session minutes, a Congregational Assembly was reportedly held in July of 2015 to show the video, "The Argument to Stay in the PC(USA)" by The Reverend Jack Harberer.

Final Assessment and Recommendation of the Listening Response Team

Policy II.B.Final Paragraph - After careful analysis of all data, and prayerful consideration of the information learned during the listening process, the LRT concludes that the congregation of Buckton Presbyterian Church is divided almost equally between those who wish to remain in the PCUSA and those who wish to be dismissed from the PCUSA.

The membership division is represented by

- 1) Commissioned Ruling Elder James Boyette, Clerk of session Greg Stiles, 10 active Ruling Elders, 1 Trustee not on session, 3 support staff (including treasurer, nursery attendant, and organist/choir director, all of whom are paid church members), and congregation members **Total = 28**
- 2) Congregation members, 2 of whom are active Trustees **Total = 33**

Note: Several families are divided on this matter, most notably among the elected and hired leadership.

In the matter of unity, the LRT discerned that the Session does not desire to reconcile with The Presbytery of Shenandoah or the PCUSA. However, the LRT discerned that the congregation at large desires to remain reconciled with The Presbytery of Shenandoah and the PCUSA.

Policy II.C - Therefore, the Listening Response Team's recommendation to The Presbytery of Shenandoah, with concurrence of the Committee on Relational Ministry (April 14, 2016) is that an Administrative Commission be appointed to seek resolution of issues facing the congregation of Buckton Church, with "powers granted the AC" as pursuant to *Policy II.C.a.i-ix*.

The Listening Response Team for Buckton Church is grateful to The Presbytery of Shenandoah for its trust in us as we have sought to serve with integrity and faithfulness to the *Policy for Discernment*.

What is the Biblical view of marriage?

"The Christian idea of marriage is based on Christ's words that a man and wife are to be regarded as a single organism - for that is what the words "one flesh" would be in modern English. And the Christians believe that when He said this He was not expressing a sentiment but stating a fact - just as one is stating a fact when one says that a lock and its key are one mechanism, or that a violin and a bow are one musical instrument. The inventor of the human machine was telling us that its two halves, the male and the female, were made to be combined together in pairs, not simply on a sexual level, but totally combined." (C. S. Lewis).

"Because this relationship is so central to creation and humanity, God's heart for marriage is woven throughout the Old and New Testaments. Marriage is the most important picture in Scripture of our own relationship with God. God is portrayed as a husband, and His wife is the nation of Israel. She is unfaithful, but still His own, and He lovingly pursues her. And the Church [in the New Testament] is the Bride of Christ, who sacrificed himself for her." (Focus on the Family).

What has happened in our culture?

"Throughout most of history, people didn't think about a "homosexual" as a type of person. They thought of men and women, and they might have thought about certain things people did sexually, or to whom they were attracted.... This historical understanding is actually closer to the biblical view: God sees a person, made in His image, male or female." (Jeff Johnston, Focus on the Family).

In the late 1800's, a journalist coined the term "homosexual" and it became regarded as a condition. With the advent of the gay activist movement in the 1970's, the movement spoke of "gay" and "lesbian" as a type of person, distinct and separate from "straight" or "heterosexuals." (Condensed from Jeff Johnston, Focus on the Family).

"Language has been an important weapon in the gay movement's very swift advance. In the old days, there was "sodomy": an act. In the late 19th century, the word "homosexual" was coined: a condition. A generation ago, the accepted term became gay: an identity. Each formulation raises the stakes: one can object to and even criminalize an act; one is obligated to be sympathetic toward a condition; but once it's a full fledged 24/7 identity, like being Hispanic or Inuit, anything less than wholehearted acceptance gets you marked down as a bigot." (Mark Steyn, Chicago Sun Times, July 13, 2003).

How should we respond?

"The eminent challenge is being Christ-like in an ungodly world. John, in his gospel, spoke of Jesus in this way as being "full of grace and truth." These two

phenomenal qualities of Christ's life may appear contradictory, but are really at their best when they coexist. On one hand, He was full of grace – full of love, mercy, gentleness and compassion. And on the other, He never compromised the truth” (Joe Dallas, Genesis Counseling.)

“When churches revise theology to embrace same-sex intimacy, they add to the confusion already prevalent in our world. Instead of offering healing and transformation, they compound the deception and dysfunction and promote false intimacy and sinful behavior. In attempting to meet a homosexual's deep hunger for God the Father, they discount biblical truth and reject historic Church teaching, which calls all of us to confession and repentance. They deny those struggling with same-sex attractions forgiveness, grace, healing and restoration. This false teaching should compel believers to reach out to those struggling with homosexuality with the compassion of Christ and the trust of God's Word.” (Focus on the Family)

“The church has always had the challenge of responding to the issues of its time. And when the church has failed at times in responding in a way that accurately represented God, God has traditionally done two things:

1. He called His people to repent.
2. He called His people to recommit.” (Joe Dallas, Genesis Counseling).

God calls us to defend what is right without attacking. We must declare the truth of the Bible. However, the church must be a place of redemption. (Condensed from Joe Dallas, Genesis Counseling).

“In taking a stand publically against homosexuality, a person does not have to become homophobic, bigoted or cruel. We are mandated to stand against it. Yet, how we oppose it is as important as opposing it. So Christians must repent of whatever hostility exists towards homosexual people and recommit ourselves to bold love.” (Joe Dallas, Genesis Counseling)

A pastor began visiting and praying for those with AIDS. He was invited to talk on a gay radio show. Soon, gay people started showing up at his church. The congregation got nervous and asked “what are we going to do?” The pastor answered, “Well, I guess they can take a seat next to the idolaters and the gossips and the fornicators and whoremongers. Make room.” All sinners are welcome to hear the Gospel. Then the pastor said from the pulpit, “When I teach on sexual ethics, I will teach that anything short of heterosexual, monogamous marriage is wrong. If you are openly homosexual and practicing that sin and unrepentant, you cannot hold a position in this church. I cannot legitimize your relationship in that sense. I will not spare when I am teaching Word of God, but if you're lesbian or gay and you came here, we're so glad to have you. Welcome. We want you to hear the Gospel, and we want to be your friend.” It was a testimony of bold love – service without compromise. (Condensed from Joe Dallas, Genesis Counseling).



Buckton Presbyterian Church
2315 Strasburg Road, Front Royal, Virginia 22630

**MINUTES OF THE CONGREGATIONAL ASSEMBLY
August 24, 2014, following the 11:00 a.m. Worship Service**

Pastor James Boyette, who served as Moderator, called the Congregational Assembly to order at 12:15 p.m. Greg Stiles, Clerk of Session, noted that a quorum was present. By general acclamation, it was agreed that Mr. Stiles would serve as Secretary.

Pastor Boyette opened the meeting with a verbal prayer.

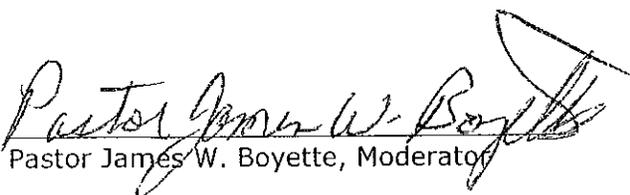
Pastor Boyette asked Mr. Stiles to review the purpose of the meeting, which was to discuss the deviations of the Presbyterian Church (USA) from Scripture and its own Book of Order, followed by a straw vote to determine if Buckton Church should continue to seek separation from the denomination.

Greg Stiles gave a PowerPoint illustrated presentation on the deviations of the Presbyterian Church (USA) from Scripture and its own Book of Order. He quoted passages from the Bible and the Book of Order regarding the authority of Scripture, salvation through Jesus Christ and the principles of grace alone and faith alone. He then listed numerous examples of how the PC(USA) has substantially deviated from what is written.

Discussion followed the presentation, with some members questioning the validity of the deviations and others noting that the church should obey God. It was suggested that the church have a more informal assembly with former Pastor Bruce Stevens in attendance. *Debby Seekford moved that the congregation recommend to the session that such a meeting should be scheduled. Ritchie Schaeffer seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

Ritchie Schaeffer made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Joy Stiles seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Pastor Boyette closed the meeting with a prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m.


Pastor James W. Boyette, Moderator


Gregory F. Stiles, Secretary

Meeting at Camp Paddy Run, Star Tannery, Virginia. The meeting considered changes to the Presbytery's dismissal policy as a follow up to the fact that the existing guidelines are not in compliance with to a recent General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission (GAPJC) decision. The new policy removes all references to congregational percentages and calls for Administrative Commissions to discern dismissal on a subjective basis. The rest of the meeting considered routine business.

Greg Stiles reported on the Congregational Assembly of August 24, 2014. He said that the congregation did not want to vote on leaving the Presbyterian Church (USA), but recommended that the Session hold an informal meeting with the congregation and former Pastor Bruce Stevens or another member of Presbytery. Pastor Boyette reported that he had spoken with Rev. Stevens and that he was not immediately available. Greg Stiles said that it was not his intention to tear apart the church and he would understand if the Session wanted to drop the matter. Billy Chapman said that the problems with the Presbyterian Church (USA) were serious and that the Session should continue to explore dismissal. The rest of the Session agreed by general acclamation. Pastor Boyette said that he would contact Transitional Presbyter Roy Martin about the matter.

The Minutes of the Stated Session Meeting of August 13, 2014 were distributed and reviewed. *Ron Rutherford moved that the Minutes be approved as submitted and Reta Hallman seconded the motion. The Motion passed unanimously.*

The Minutes of the Congregational Assembly of August 24, 2014 were distributed and reviewed. *Bobby Hallman moved that the Minutes be approved as submitted and Billy Chapman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

The Minutes of the Called Session Meeting of August 31, 2014 were distributed and reviewed. *Ron Rutherford moved that the Minutes be approved as submitted and Reta Hallman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

The Financial Report for the month of August, 2014 was distributed and reviewed. *Greg Stiles moved that the report be approved as submitted. Bobby Hallman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

Session Matters/ Committee Reports

Property Committee. Billy Chapman reported that the committee had purchased a new vacuum cleaner and it was now in service.

Ron Rutherford reported that he had obtained the landowner's permission and had cleared the obstructing vegetation from the advance information sign east of the church along State Highway 55. He said that he had obtained the property owner's permission for the sign west of the church and would remove the vegetation soon.

Personnel Committee. Greg Stiles reported that he had submitted the proposed contract, for Commissioned Ruling Elder (Lay Pastor) James Boyette for 2015, to the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry with a request that it be approved. In addition, he had submitted the annual CRE evaluation to the Presbytery's CRE Coordinator, with a request that Pastor Boyette be commissioned for another three-year term.

Finance Committee. Betty Chapman noted that the committee needed to meet to prepare the proposed budget for 2015.



Buckton Presbyterian Church

2315 Strasburg Road, Front Royal, Virginia 22630

MINUTES OF THE STATED SESSION MEETING September 9, 2015; 7:30 p.m.

The Stated Session Meeting was called to order in the church library at 7:30 p.m. by Moderator and Commissioned Ruling Elder (Lay Pastor) James Boyette. It was noted that Greg Stiles, Clerk of Session, had asked Roberta Lauder to take this meeting's minutes.

In attendance were Pastor Boyette, Betty Chapman, Bobby Hallman, Reta Hallman, Roberta Lauder, Sue Megee, Tammy Ricketts, Ritchie Schaeffer. Greg Stiles, Joy Stiles and Ronnie Rutherford were excused. A quorum was present.

Pastor Boyette opened the meeting with a silent prayer and a verbal Prayer of Blessing.

Pastor Boyette read Deuteronomy 29:29 and shared a brief devotion entitled "Secrets Aren't for Sharing" written by Dr. David Jeremiah. "God doesn't reveal everything we would like to know about the past, present, or future. Bridging that gap is what the Bible calls faith."

Session discussed the spiritual health of the congregation. Ritchie expressed his hope that the congregation is listening, understanding and taking to heart Pastor James' great sermons. It was noted that the Sunday before last some people applauded. Ritchie shared the passage, "We walk by faith, not by sight." Then, he stated, "If we do the right thing, we are in God's grace, and He won't fail us." Betty Chapman shared that Bradley (acolyte) was having difficulty getting the altar candles to light. He even went back a second time, and they barely flickered. Then, she stated, "As James preached, the candles' flames grew stronger."

Concerns, Receptions and Approvals

Pastor's Report. Pastor Boyette distributed his report for August (see attached report), which listed the numerous activities that he had completed. As part of his report, he shared some thoughts on "Shall we obey God's law or human law" by Matt Slick, President and Founder of the Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry.

Clerk of Session Concerns. Roberta Lauder read an email from Greg Stiles stating that as requested by the Session, he had contacted John Heeringa, the Senior Pastor at the First Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg. He declined speaking at this time but suggested inviting Dr. John Sloop, recently retired Senior Pastor at their church. Dr. Sloop is now the Interim Pastor Spring Hill Church in Augusta County - the first church in the Presbytery to leave the PC(USA). Dr. Sloop agreed to speak to our congregation and is available at 2 PM on Sunday, October 18. Greg Stiles suggested that we hold a church luncheon after worship as we await his arrival from Staunton. *Bobby Hallman moved that Greg's recommendation of a church luncheon and special congregational assembly to hear Dr. John Sloop on Sunday, October 18 be approved. Ritchie Schaeffer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.*



Buckton Presbyterian Church
2315 Strasburg Road, Front Royal, Virginia 22630

MINUTES OF THE STATED SESSION MEETING
October 14, 2015; 7:30 p.m.

The Stated Session Meeting was called to order in the church library at 7:30 p.m. by Moderator and Commissioned Ruling Elder (Lay Pastor) James Boyette.

In attendance were Pastor Boyette, Bobby Hallman, Reta Hallman, Sue Megee, Tammy Ricketts, Ronnie Rutherford, Greg Stiles and Joy Stiles. Betty Chapman, Roberta Lauder and Ritchie Schaeffer were excused. A quorum was present.

Pastor Boyette opened the meeting with a silent prayer and a verbal Prayer of Blessing.

Pastor Boyette read John 18:37 and led a brief devotion entitled "Truth Decay." Jesus said, "I am the truth and the life." Truth is discovered, not invented. Truth is unchanging and immune from shifting human opinions. Truth is absolute and comes from the absolutely true Supreme Creator — God. We should remember this as we approach our duties as members of Session.

Session. Discussed the spiritual health of the congregation. Ronnie Rutherford said that the decisions the church must make regarding the Presbyterian Church (USA) are weighing heavily on the hearts of church members. Yet, worship services are well attended and people are cordial. A discussion of the situation led to the conclusion, by general acclamation, that the Session would continue to try to lead the church to a good decision.

Concerns, Receptions and Approvals

Pastor's Report. Pastor Boyette distributed his report for September (see attached report), which listed the numerous activities that he had completed.

He reported that the Uplifted Living meetings continue to be well attended and are helping a number of church members.

Pastor Boyette stated that he had offering envelopes from the House of Hope homeless rehabilitation center. The Session decided to place the envelopes next to the House of Hope donation box in the Narthex.

Clerk of Session Concerns. Greg Stiles noted that the nominating committee needed to meet to nominate elders for the Class of 2018. He said that he would speak with committee chair Ritchie Schaeffer.

He also noted that the transfer, by letter, of the membership of William C. Hawley, from the Strasburg United Methodist Church to Buckton Presbyterian Church, had been received. Pastor Boyette stated that he would schedule a member reception during an upcoming worship service.



Buckton Presbyterian Church
2315 Strasburg Road, Front Royal, Virginia 22630

MINUTES OF THE STATED SESSION MEETING
December 9, 2015; 7:30 p.m.

The Stated Session Meeting was called to order in the church library at 7:30 p.m. by Moderator and Commissioned Ruling Elder (Lay Pastor) James Boyette.

In attendance were Pastor Boyette, Betty Chapman, Bobby Hallman, Roberta Lauder, Sue Megee, Tammy Ricketts, Ritchie Schaeffer, Greg Stiles and Joy Stiles. Reta Hallman and Ronnie Rutherford were excused. A quorum was present.

Pastor Boyette opened the meeting with a silent prayer and a verbal Prayer of Blessing.

Pastor Boyette read Matthew 1:20 and led a brief devotion entitled "Touch the World." This time of the year we hear the Christmas story. But, it's much more than just a story. It is the revelation of how close Jesus will come to you. God touched Mary. Jesus grew in her until He had to come out. Then, He came into the world and, in turn, into you! Thus, every place we live is a Bethlehem. And, every day that we live is a Christmas. Let us deliver Christ into the world.

Session discussed the spiritual health of the congregation. Ritchie Schaeffer said that he had heard someone say that we were trying to brainwash the congregation regarding leaving the Presbyterian Church (USA). Joy Stiles responded by saying that Scripture stands and has stood for centuries. It is, in fact, the Presbyterian Church (USA) that is trying to brainwash its members into going along with the world rather than following the Lord. She noted that standing by scripture goes against the world, so it may seem like brainwashing to some. She said that, no matter what the world says, we need to be obedient to God. The rest of the Session agreed by general acclamation.

Concerns, Receptions and Approvals

Pastor's Report. Pastor Boyette distributed his report for November (see attached report), which listed the numerous activities that he had completed.

Pastor Boyette requested vacation for the week of December 27, 2015. He noted that Rev. James Kilby from Front Royal, Virginia, may be available to preach. *Greg Stiles moved that the request be approved as made. Bobby Hallman seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

Clerk of Session Concerns. Greg Stiles stated that he had received a report from Debi Barnett regarding the Special Presbytery Meeting held on December 8, 2015, at the Cook's Creek Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg, Virginia. The subject of the meeting was the dismissal of the First Presbyterian Church of Harrisonburg from the denomination. The Presbytery's Administrative Commission had recommended separation with payment. After discussion, the Presbytery voted to approve the dismissal.

Appendix 7

To the Buckton Presbyterian Church family:

Our church's Mission Study shows the members of our congregation believe our church preaches the Bible as the Word of God and is a church which follows Christ's command to be a witness to the world while nurturing and supporting our church family. We are part of the larger *Presbyterian Church (USA)* [abbreviated PCUSA], where every church belongs to a *Presbytery* (a regional body designed to provide spiritual oversight and serve the local churches in its area). The *General Assembly* is a biennial national gathering of commissioners from all the presbyteries, where denomination-wide policies are created or modified by vote.

The Session of Buckton Presbyterian Church has been closely following the actions of the PCUSA for a number of years. We believe the PCUSA has been steadily deviating from a path of obedience to God. Until now, our decision was to disregard the actions of the larger PCUSA and focus on the mission and work of our church family.

In 2010, the General Assembly proposed changing the requirements for ordination to remove "the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman, or chastity in singleness." This proposal was subsequently ratified. As this is in direct conflict with the Bible's instructions about marriage, this began a time of questioning by the Session whether Buckton Presbyterian should remain part of the PCUSA.

In the past five years, the involvement of the PCUSA in theological arguments, broad social issues and political matters has overshadowed their work in basic areas of Christian life and missions. Our session has had many discussions over questionable actions by the PCUSA and the subsequent effects that have begun to reach individual congregations. In June 2014, the General Assembly approved both an Authoritative Interpretation of the Constitution and an amendment to the Book of Order to redefine marriage. This action was in direct conflict with what is stated in the Holy Bible, our church Confessions and our existing Book of Order [these two latter documents govern the PCUSA]. At the July 2014 Session meeting, Buckton's elders voted unanimously to "repudiate these unbiblical actions and call for those who took such actions to repent and reform." The Session also voted to explore leaving the PCUSA for another Presbyterian denomination.

The Buckton Session exists to lead and guide the congregation. The elder ordination vows include these questions:

- Will you fulfill your office in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and be continually guided by our confessions?
- Will you be a faithful elder, watching over the people, providing for their worship, nurture, and service?

As part of our duties, the elders have studied many sources in order to make educated, informed decisions to watch over our congregation and provide for their worship, nurture and service. We fervently believe, in obedience to Jesus Christ and under the authority of Scripture, it is in the very best interest of our congregation that Buckton Presbyterian Church seek to be dismissed from the PCUSA to another Presbyterian denomination whose beliefs more accurately reflect the beliefs and mission of our church.

Sincerely,
The Session of Buckton Presbyterian Church

COMMITTEE ON PASTORAL TRANSITION
Supplemental Report

ACTIONS TAKEN:

- A. Accepted the CAT report from Moorefield Church with thanks, and authorized the calling of a congregational meeting to elect a pastor nominating committee.
- B. Accepted the Conversation report from Elkton Church with thanks, and authorized the calling of a congregational meeting to elect a pastor nominating committee.
- C. Approved the following liaisons and moderators:
Circleville/Seneca Rocks – Mary Lou Cox as liaison
Falling Waters – Carl Howard as moderator for May 24
Timber Ridge – Martin Stokes
Winchester First – Carl Howard as liaison
Winchester First – Lisa Webb as moderator for May 17 if needed
- D. Renewed the interim contract between the Mossy Creek Session and Teaching Elder Glenn Coleman from May 1, 2016-April 30, 2017.
- E. Upon the request of Teaching Elder Barbara “Kitty” Hahn-Campanella, the CPT dismissed her to the Presbytery of Tampa Bay effective May 3, 2016
- F. Sustained the examination of Honorably Retired Teaching Elder Anne Ross (member of Shenandoah) for suitability for the position of supply pastor to the Beulah and Monterey churches.
- G. Approved the supply contract between the Beulah Session and Teaching Elder Anne Ross from June 1-August 31, 2016.
- H. Approved the supply contract between the Monterey Session and Teaching Elder Anne Ross from June 1-August 31, 2016.
- I. Sustained the examination of Teaching Elder Teresa Summers-Minette for transfer from John Calvin Presbytery to serve as the interim pastor at Staunton Third Church and received her as a member of Shenandoah Presbytery effective May 11, 2016 (See pages S-15-16 for bio and faith statement)
- J. Approved the interim contract between the Staunton Third Session and Teaching Elder Teresa Summers-Minette from May 11, 2016-May 11, 2017.
- K. Sustained the examination of Teaching Elder Harold M. Tongen for transfer from Missouri River Valley Presbytery to serve as the interim pastor at Moorefield Church and received him as a member of Shenandoah Presbytery effective May 4, 2016. (See pages S-17-18 for bio and faith statement)
- L. Approved the interim contract between the Moorefield Session and Teaching Elder Harold Tongen from May 4, 2016-May 4, 2017.
- M. Approved the Timber Ridge ministry information form and authorized Kim Stroupe to input the data onto the Church Leadership Connection web site

Teri Summers-Minette

Statement of Faith

I believe in God the Holy Three-in-One, the dynamic communion of Creator, Savior and Sustainer. I believe out of nothingness God who made all things seen and unseen. God intends that all creation should live to give praise to God's glory and to live joyfully in God. Yet we turn away from God. Loving us still, our sovereign God rules over all and is always faithful to us.

I believe in Jesus the Christ, fully human, fully God. Coming to be with us in human form, God in Christ is reveals to us that we might be reconciled to God. Jesus walked the earth: teaching and healing; calling for us sinners to repent, and giving us abundant life in the name of God. By his death on a cross, Jesus willingly accepted suffering, humiliation, and abandonment to be a living sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins. He was raised victorious over death. His life, death and resurrection free us from the tyranny of evil, and reconcile us to God. Loving us beyond measure, we receive salvation in Christ even though it is undeserved and without merit.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, God breathing in us, with us and through us. The Holy Spirit is the life-sustaining Advocate promised to us by Christ. The mystery of the Holy Spirit nourishes and nurtures us, transforming lives by grace through faith. The Spirit works powerfully in the world drawing people everywhere into relationship with God and each other, and giving gifts for the edification of the Body of Christ.

I believe the divinely-inspired Holy Scripture is the unique authoritative witness to God's covenant faithfulness and the true witness to Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word. Through the written Word and the Word proclaimed, God is being revealed that all may come to know and believe God's steadfast love which endures forever.

I believe God is revealed in the Word enacted in the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Ordained by Jesus Christ, Baptism and the Lord's Supper are visible signs of God's invisible grace acting in our community of faith and in our individual lives. By the waters of Baptism and the bread and cup at Table, our hearts are sealed with the assurance of God's promise in Christ.

I believe in one Church universal, the priesthood of all believers, the community of saints. With Christ as its Head, the community is the Body of Christ. God creates all people with gifts for the building of God's Kingdom. I believe all are called into communion with the triune God: into the unity of the Holy Spirit to witness God in Jesus Christ. It is our honor, duty and privilege to live in obedience to the Word of God by following the Word into the world: seeking justice for all; giving care and nurture to the least of God's children; sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ in worship, prayer, and fellowship with people everywhere.

TERI SUMMERS-MINETTE

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

My call to serve God was a Jonah narrative. I am originally from Knoxville, Tennessee where my family lived near my grandparents. My grandfather was particularly instrumental to my faith development. He was a minister who was heavily involved in social justice and the civil rights movements. This made a huge impression on me as a small child; and I learned God often calls us to do difficult things and go places we would not choose for ourselves.

Once my dad finished his doctorate, our family began moving about every 2-3 years while he worked as a sociology professor. In 7th grade, I attended confirmation class in Champaign, Illinois and loved it. I remember dreaming of the day when it would commonly be accepted for women to be ordained ministers. Then in high school I drifted away from the church.

While earning my undergraduate degree at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, I married my husband and gave birth to our oldest daughter a year later. Around that time I felt called to be a Minister of Word and Sacrament. I couldn't imagine I was hearing correctly for a couple of reasons. First, I wasn't attending a church; and secondly, I hate writing. I decided that perhaps God would be satisfied with me ministering in other ways, so I earned a Master of Social Work degree. I loved working as a family and group therapist in clinical psychiatry and forensic social work.

Like many younger families, we wanted our children to have a church home. So when we moved to The Woodlands, Texas in 1992, we were thrilled to find Woodlands Community Presbyterian Church. Known for its mission outreach and social justice work, I felt right home there. It was because of this faith community that I began my ministry as an AIDS hospice worker. Thus I was led into a truly amazing journey. I learned so much about God from my patients. Through these powerful experiences I came to discern that perhaps God was not satisfied with my ministry of compassionate care. After running and hiding for so long, God was telling me it was time to go where I had not gone before.

Before graduating from seminary, I completed one unit of CPE at MD Anderson in Houston. I already knew I had a gift for being a non-anxious presence in times of death. What I learned there was how sacred such experiences can be. After being asked if I would apply for their residency program, I prayerfully declined because I believed --and continue to believe-- that God calls me to parish ministry.

I felt a call to transitional ministry even before entering seminary. My skill set and spiritual gifts of administration, mercy and discernment lend themselves to this highly specialized ministry. In addition, I feel particularly blessed that I am not tethered to one location so I can go where I am called. Wherever God leads me, I enjoy learning from the people I serve, and delight in watching the Holy Spirit work in and through others. Like Jonah, I needed to learn that I could not run from God's plan, and now I look forward to every new day's adventure.

A Biographical Sketch

Harold Tongen

I was raised on a potato farm in northern North Dakota. The north end of the farm on which I was raised was the Canadian border. That community was a homogenous community and was considered a good environment in which to raise kids. The environment was tranquil and safe.

I was raised in a yoked parish (though that language would have been foreign to me then) of the Presbyterian Church. I am one of seven children and we all were involved in the life of those two little churches.

Graduation from high school found me abandoning church participation. That abandonment continued for 8 or 9 years. My abandonment was not the result of being angry with God or the church. It just seemed to be an accommodation of the culture of which I was a part (college) which then turned into a habit. I look back on that period with mixed emotions. Of course, I have regrets, but also I remember never having doubts that God loved me. Somehow I had come to the conclusion that I could continue to ignore God, or at least, God's church, but God would not ignore me.

These 8 or 9 years encompassed, not only college, but my return to this same community and my becoming a farmer. I enjoyed my time as a farmer. I seemed fitted for that life and its demands and privileges. As the years evolved, an emptiness crept into my life. I kept asking myself, "Is this all there is?" Over time those questions resulted in my deciding that I needed a change. That period of my life also resulted in my searching the Bible for answers. Unfortunately, I still did not return to the church, but sought to find answers on my own.

At some point I decided to quit farming. There were mitigating circumstances in my decision which are too numerous to mention here. I had dropped out of college and felt I needed to return to college and get a degree. I went to Jamestown College in Jamestown, North Dakota and there came under the influence of three professors, two of whom were Presbyterian ministers. All three had attended seminary and somehow I was intrigued by the educational process of a seminary. I headed off to Princeton Theological Seminary without too much thought to what garnering a seminary education might afford me.

One thing of which I was certain was that I was not going to be a pastor. I continued with that thinking through my Junior year and into the Middler year. My Middler year found me needing to accomplish a seminary requirement to be involved in a church through the school year. So off I went looking for a church who would hire a seminary student who was not planning to become a pastor. I found such a church in Englishtown, New Jersey though I am still puzzled as to why they would have given me a second look. That church was being served by an interim pastor who had been a professor at the seminary. I don't recall being much of an asset to this church. About midway through my time there, the interim pastor said that the session would like to visit with me at their next meeting. I couldn't imagine why they wanted to visit with me, unless, of course, they were going to fire me. At the meeting they visited with me about my decision not to enter the pastorate. They said they thought I ought to reconsider that decision. They thought I had skills and a temperament well suited for the pastorate. I can tell you that was a kick in the stomach for me. Still, I promised these good people that I would consider their counsel. That led me to a change of heart and a change of plans.

That story is only one facet of my story. For the oversight and care I have been given by the church has continued with me all along my journey. I am so beholden to Christ's church. In that church I have experienced strength when I am weak. I have experience wisdom when my own understanding has proved inadequate. In retrospect I feel like the church has passed me along from congregation to congregation as I need new and different insights and experiences. The faces and the names of congregants stay with me and people my sermons with illustrations. With that in mind, and with this presbytery's blessing, I look forward to the Moorefield congregation and its impact upon my faith and my life. God is good.

HAROLD TONGEN

STATEMENT OF FAITH

I believe in God Almighty who has made himself known to humankind through creation. He has also made himself known in Jesus Christ who is our redeemer. Thirdly, God has made himself known by the Holy Spirit who is the sustainer of life. These three persons work in harmony to give a full testimony of who God is and how God interacts with humankind.

I believe scripture, both the Old and New Testaments, serves as a tool wherein God articulates more fully God's intention for, and God's interaction with humankind. In scripture God uses a multitude of voices to articulate for us who God is and how God interacts with us.

I believe the sacraments of Baptism and The Lord's Supper are God's Word made visible. The sacraments are instituted by Jesus Christ and are for the benefit of Christ's Church which is also Christ's body. Baptism visibly proclaims God's claim on our lives. Even before we are able to understand or articulate, God is making himself and his claim upon us known to us. The Lord's Supper visibly proclaims God's readiness to sustain us in our life of faith. God, through Christ, feeds us as we serve in the kingdom.

I believe both scripture and the sacraments serve as a steadying influences for humankind and the Church each of which are subject to drifting off the mark. We do that by saying too much sometimes and being too focused on the wrong aspect of any given subject. Both scripture and the sacraments bring us back to a centralized understanding of who we are and whose we are.

I believe that the Church is the body of Jesus Christ brought into existence through Christ's calling. I have heard people say, "The Church is a volunteer organization." Such understanding differs from my understanding. I believe that we are called by Jesus Christ into the church. My being a part of the church is not a result of my superior understanding or the genius of my insight. Rather the church is entirely the product of Christ's design. Christ calls us into being his body. I believe that understanding the Church as being formed by Jesus Christ demands that we respect one another and that we ought to find unity rather than division as a priority.

Finally, I believe that it is God's design that we should never be separated from God. I believe that in God we find our purpose in life and our eternal happiness. I also believe that without God humankind is eternally lost. We are sinful beings and left to our own design, we will fail God and one another. But thanks be to God who gives us his only Son as expiation for our sins and thereby welcomes us into life with God eternally.

COMMITTEE ON RELATIONAL MINISTRY
Supplemental Report

I. ACTION TAKEN:

Concurred with the Buckton Listening Response Team that an Administrative Commission be appointed to seek resolution of the division that has split this 65 year old congregation, and that two additional members be appointed.

II. RECOMMENDATION:

That Presbytery approve the additional changes in terms of call as found on page S-22

COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS
Supplemental Report

RECOMMENDATION:

That Presbytery elect the following to serve:

Committee on Congregational Redevelopment (CCR):

Class of 2016: Karen Thatcher, RE, Tuscarora

Committee on Educational Resources (CER):

Class of 2016: Scott Conrad, TE, Supply Hot Springs

COORDINATING AND PLANNING COMMISSION
Supplemental Report

I. ACTIONS TAKEN:

- A. Approved the Trinity Church application for General Assembly restricted funds to fund a conference focusing on the spirituality of persons with intellectual disabilities. The conference will be held in conjunction with Pleasant View Inc, a faith-based, non-profit organization.
- B. Authorized the Associate General Presbyterian Search Committee to convene to begin work on the ministry information form.
- C. Appointed the following task force to look at the current dismissal policy for possible revisions requesting the task force report back to the CPC within six months:

TE Andy Sale (retired), TE George Evans (Cooks Creek), RE Bill Blair (Mossy Creek), and RE Betsy Hay (Massanutten).

II. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. That Presbytery approve reducing the membership of the Committee on Nominations from nine to six.
- B. At the request of the Pisgah Church, that Presbytery form an administrative commission to facilitate the closure of the Pisgah Church. Members of the commission are Teaching Elders Kevin Hand and Patrick Pettit. Ruling Elder to be named on May 10.

Church	Pastor	Year	Full Time	Cash Salary	IRS Housing	Utilities	Housing Equity	Bonus	Taxed SECA	Other	Dental	Manse	Nontax SECA	Medical/Pension	Auto	Cont Ed	Books	Other
Bethel	D. Shearer	2015	Yes	31200		Yes	1248				Yes	9735	3932	Yes	923	4803	641	186
Bethel	D. Shearer	2016	Yes	31512		Yes	1260				Yes	9735	2632	Yes	3500	4939	992	594