

FEBRUARY 27, 2024, PRESBYTERY MEETING

SUPPLEMENTAL REPORTS

COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS:

RECOMMENDATION:

That Presbytery approve the following to serve:

Committee on Relational Ministry (CRM)

Class of 2024: TE Patrick Pettit, Interim, Waynesboro First

COMMITTEE ON PASTORAL TRANSITION AND COMMITTEE ON RELATIONAL MINISTRY

ACTIONS TAKEN:

- A. Sustained the examination of Ruling Elder Melissa Avey who has received a contract to serve as commissioned ruling elder at Rocky Spring Church.
- B. Approved the commissioned ruling elder contract between the Rocky Spring Session and Ruling Elder Melissa Avey from March 1, 2024-February 28, 2025.
- C. Approved the recommendation below to be presented to the February 27 Presbytery Meeting as a first reading.

*Joint recommendation from the  
Committee on Pastoral Transition and the Committee on Relational Ministry  
First Reading*

**Summary of Recommendation.** That the members of Shenandoah Presbytery agree to the dissolution of the Committee on Pastoral Transition (CPT) and the Committee on Relational Ministry (CRM); and to the re-assignment of the responsibilities and commission authority of these 2 former committees to a new committee: the **Committee on Ministry (COM)**.

**Background Information.** Since 2015, Shenandoah Presbytery has been organized with two committees effectively taking the place of the previous Committee on Ministry. Two concerns significantly shaped this decision: a) the need to be more effective in helping churches plan and search for new pastoral leadership; and b) the need to provide both pastors and churches with better support and more resources to carry out their ministry.

Having lived into that model for more than seven years, it became clear to Presbytery leadership (including the chairs of both CPT and CRM) that there were significant issues to address regarding this division of labor. In discussions beginning in 2022, the General Presbyter, Associate General Presbyter and chairs of CPT and CRM concluded this arrangement did, to a certain extent, lead to increase effectiveness in helping churches seeking new pastoral leadership, but that the support and resources for pastors and churches available from the committees tended to be geared almost exclusively to transition. Additionally, it has been difficult to maintain consistency in procedures between the two committees where their responsibilities overlap; conversely, there are significant areas that have fallen in the grey area between committees.

This working group compiled lists of tasks and areas of responsibility, discussed both overlap and things left unaddressed; noted the discrepancy in committee workloads; and identified some of the barriers to useful communication.

Using these insights, in the summer of 2023, the working group drafted a committee structure for a possible new Committee on Ministry. At their August 2023 meetings each committee agreed to "practice" by utilizing the draft structure in joint meetings in September and October 2023, and January 2024, reviewing after each meeting and amending the draft as needed.

**Purpose of Proposed Committee.** The purpose of the new *Committee on Ministry* is to serve as pastor and counselor to the ministers, Certified Christian Educators and Commissioned Ruling Elders of the Presbytery; facilitate the relations between congregations, ministers, and Certified Christian Educators, and the Presbytery; exercise oversight and provide guidance to churches and pastors in the transition process; and to settle difficulties on behalf of Presbytery when possible and expedient.

**Organization of Proposed Committee.** The *Committee on Ministry* will be divided into three subcommittees: *Ministerial Relations*, *Pastoral Transition*, and *Administration*.

**Ministerial Relations (MR).** Will focus on pastoral care, crisis engagement and conflict management for and among the pastors, sessions and congregations of Shenandoah Presbytery. The Ministerial Relations subcommittee will be convened by the MR chair, who shall be appointed by the COM chair.

**Pastoral Transition (PT).** Will provide resources and oversight to congregations and pastors during times of pastoral transition. PT connects with a congregation when a pastor communicates their intention to leave a position and works with the session and congregation to determine their ministry needs and financial implications; walk them through the discernment process, assist in negotiation of terms of call or contract, as well as the installation of their new pastoral leadership. (Initial terms of call or contracts shall be approved by the full committee.) The Pastoral Transition subcommittee will be convened by the PT chair, who shall be appointed by the COM chair.

**Administration (Admin).** Will review and recommend revisions to current policies, procedures, forms, and documents; Review and recommend changes in terms of pastoral calls or renewal of contracts for pastoral services; and receive and respond to requests for exceptions to provisions of the Book of Order. The Administration subcommittee will be convened by the Admin chair, who shall be appointed by the COM chair.

Other organizations accountable to the Committee on Ministry are:

**Examinations,** which is comprised of members of the Committee on Ministry. Examinations Committee interviews and makes recommendations to the full committee in the following circumstances:

- Teaching Elders seeking to transfer membership to Shenandoah Presbytery as a Member at Large.
- Teaching Elders of other presbyteries called or contracted to serve within the bounds of Shenandoah Presbytery; Such exams shall consider suitability for the particular call and for membership in Shenandoah Presbytery.

- Teaching Elders members of Shenandoah Presbytery with a new call or contract within the Presbytery. Exam will be for the suitability for the particular call.
- Ruling Elders awaiting commission who has been offered a contract to serve a congregation within the Presbytery. Examination would be for suitability for particular position.
- Other parties who have been offered a contract to serve a congregation within the Presbytery. Examination would be for suitability for position, including understanding of presbyterian polity and Reformed Theology.

Examinations will also participate in examinations of candidates for Ordination, which are conducted by the Committee on the Preparation for Ministry. Ordinarily, the Chair of Examinations shall be a member of COM.

**Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) Oversight**, which organizes the training, discernment, placement, and annual review of Ruling Elders serving congregations as pastors. Its membership shall include, if possible:

- One member with experience on Committee on Ministry or its predecessor committees
- One Authorized Ruling Elder
- One serving Commissioned Ruling Elder
- One current or past CRE mentor

Balance will be attempted between ruling and teaching elders and male/female ratio. Ordinarily, the chair of CRE Oversight shall be a member of COM.

**Personnel of Proposed Committee**. The *Committee on Ministry* shall consist of eighteen members, in three classes of six. A chair shall be elected annually by the Presbytery. Both the General Presbyter/Stated Clerk and Associate General Presbyter shall serve as ex officio members of the COM.