

DRAFT

**MINUTES of the STATED MEETING
Presbytery of Lake Michigan
December 3, 2024,
9:30 a.m. Via Zoom**

The Presbytery of Lake Michigan forms and partners with faith communities to challenge, encourage, equip, and hold one another accountable as Christ's disciples.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE AND OPENING OF THE STATED MEETING

Rev. Gail Monsma (Paw Paw/Decatur), Moderator, called the meeting to order at 9:43 a.m. with the lighting of the Christ candle and opening prayer. A quorum was present.

APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY CLERK

A motion prevailed to appoint Rev. Kristin Stroble (East Lansing Eastminster) as a temporary clerk.

SEATING OF CORRESPONDING MEMBERS

A motion prevailed to seat Rev. Chip Hardwick (Miami Valley) as a corresponding member.

APPROVAL OF THE DOCKET

A motion prevailed to approve the docket as presented.

**INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME OF FIRST-TIME RULING ELDERS AND
CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS**

Rev. Gail Monsma welcomed first-time elder commissioners and Christian educators.

WELCOME TO GUESTS AND VISITORS

Rev. Gail Monsma welcomed guests and visitors.

GREETINGS FROM FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GRAND HAVEN

Rev. Gail Monsma expressed gratitude to the staff and volunteers of First Presbyterian Church of Grand Haven and recognized Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser-Brydon (Grand Haven First) to greet the Presbytery on behalf of the congregation. Rev. Hauser-Brydon expressed disappointment that the weather prevented the presbytery from meeting in person at the church. He assured members that the food for the stated meeting would not be wasted but would be shared with volunteers and those at the local school.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

A motion prevailed to approve the Consent Agenda with the following items:

**PRESBYTERY OF LAKE MICHIGAN
CONSENT AGENDA of the STATED MEETING
December 3, 2024**

1. **To excuse** these members and elder commissioners at their request and to add those who will continue to request an excused absence up to the actual meeting: Katherine Culpepper, Janet Duggins, Karen Fitz La Barge, Jessica Hauser Brydon, Annemarie Kidder, Kyle Kooyers, Nick Marlatt, Christopher Mergener, Susan Reichenberg, David Schell, Barb Scheur, Lynette Sparks, Patricia Weatherwax,
2. **To approve** the Minutes of the Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan, September 14, 2024, Online only.
3. **To file** the approved Minutes of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan Leadership Team on September 2, 2024, and October 3, 2024. Online only.
4. **To grant** the status of **Retired** to **Rev. Mark Jennings**, effective December 1, 2024.
5. **To grant** the status of **Retired** to **Rev. Laurie Hartzell**, effective June 1, 2024.
6. **To receive** the Report of the Stated Clerk for today, as follows:

REPORT OF THE STATED CLERK

**Rev. Fran
Lane-Lawrence
December 3, 2024**

1. **FOR CLERKS OF SESSION - 2024 ANNUAL STATISTICAL REPORTS:** The PCUSA 2024 Annual Statistical Reporting System will be open for entry on January 2, 2025. The system can be accessed online in the Clerk's Portal on the tab marked Statistics using the user login and password you have been assigned. Clerks of Session are advised to begin collection of the data for the report now so that when the system is opened, information can be input. A reminder that reports must be approved by session before the information is submitted. The deadline for the submission of statistical reports is February 15, 2025. If you have any questions about the statistical report, please contact Rev. Annamarie Groenenboom, Associate Clerk or Rev. Dr. Fran Lane-Lawrence, Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk.
2. **BOUNDARY AND ETHICS TRAINING:** The PCUSA Constitution in the *Book of Order* mandates all councils (this includes sessions) adopt and implement sexual misconduct policies "which shall include requirements for training which includes the topic of sexual misconduct and child sexual abuse prevention . . . at least every 36 months." (G-3.0106) The Presbytery of Lake Michigan mandates sexual misconduct/boundary training every 36 months for teaching elders, including retired ministers, commissioned ruling elders, ruling elders, and Christian educators who are active in the ministry of the Presbytery. If members of your session have not yet completed Boundary Training, please contact Rev. Annamarie Groenenboom, Associate Clerk or Rev. Dr. Fran Lane-Lawrence, Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk, for information about how to complete the training.

3. **REQUEST FOR EXCUSED ABSENCES FOR PRESBYTERY MEETINGS:** The Stated Clerk asks that all requests for excused absences be made through the online system available on the Presbytery website or by using this link: <https://lakemichiganpresbytery.breezechms.com/form/6ce58f>. *Requests for excused absences not requested through the online system may not be recorded correctly.*
4. **DATES FOR STATED MEETINGS IN 2024:** The dates for stated meetings of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan for 2024 are as follows:
 - a. Saturday, March 8, 2025 – *E LANSING EASTMINSTER*
 - b. Tuesday, June 10, 2025 – *CADILLAC FIRST*
 - c. Saturday, September 13, 2025 – *BATTLE CREEK FIRST*
 - d. Tuesday, December 2, 2025 – *TBD*

Thank you to these congregations for generously hosting a meeting of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan.

5. **REPORTS OF INSTALLATION COMMISSIONS:**

An Administrative Commission appointed by the Presbytery of Lake Michigan met at 2:30 p.m. on November 17, 2024, at the First Presbyterian Church of Jackson, MI, to install the Rev. David Schell as Solo Pastor for an Indefinite period. With a quorum being present, the meeting was called to order with prayer by the moderator, Rev. Gail Monsma. Present were Teaching Elders Karen Kelley (Retired) and Gail Monsma (Paw Paw/Decatur), and Ruling Elders Marlene Smith (Fairplain) and John Williams (Jackson First). Seated as a Corresponding Member was Rev. Ruth Harrington (Presbytery of Detroit). The Rev. Fran Lane-Lawrence was appointed to serve as Clerk of the Commission. The Commission proceeded to the service. The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m. with the benediction by the newly installed Rev. Schell at the close of the service. The report was signed by Rev. Fran Lane-Lawrence, Clerk, and submitted to the Presbytery of Lake Michigan.
6. **REPORTS OF ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSIONS:**

Eastminster Presbyterian Church of Grand Rapids, MI

Lake Michigan Presbytery
Report of the Administrative Commission for
Eastminster Presbyterian Church of Grand Rapids, MI
December 3, 2024

This report is provided to the Presbytery of Lake Michigan as an update on the progress of the Administrative Commission for Eastminster Presbyterian Church Grand Rapids.

On June 28, 2024, a letter of Intent to Dissolve was submitted by the Eastminster Chair of the Corporation, Katie Madison, to the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA). This was in response to the motion made at the May 14, 2024, meeting of the Administrative Commission and the Session.

There are still a few administrative details to complete by the Administrative Commission, so we cherish your continued prayers for wisdom and grace in these final steps.

In Christ,

Elder Ed Coke, Moderator (Grand Rapids Westminster)
Elder Judith Burnside, Recording Clerk (Spring Lake)
Elder Cal Bosman (Grand Haven)
Rev. Nick Marlatt (Hastings)

First Presbyterian Church of Marshall, MI
Presbytery of Lake Michigan
Report of the Administrative Commission for
First Presbyterian Church of Marshall, MI
December 3, 2024

The Members of the Administrative Commission (AC) continue to work diligently and pastorally with the session. In July, the AC completed interviews with session members, members and friends of the congregation, and previous pastors.

The AC met with the session on August 24th to share an update as well as discuss areas of disorder uncovered while conducting interviews and getting to know the session. A plan was put in place for moving forward and addressing any disorder. The AC also approved a Temporary Supply Pastor contract between the session and the Rev. Charlotte Ellison (HR).

On September 29, a representative of the AC met with and updated the congregation on the work of the AC and shared our plans and process moving forward.

On October 24, members of the session met with a representative of the AC to assist in completing their financial review. That same day, the session met with all the members of the AC with the purpose of building relationships and discussing continued next steps.

On November 10, a representative of the AC met with the session for a time of retreat and training on serving in ordered ministry and understanding the nature of being a confessional and connectional church. The session was also trained in PCUSA polity and procedure.

On November 11, a representative of the AC met with the session to share information and plan next steps to complete a mission study, which is to begin in early 2025.

The AC will continue to support the session in their ministry as they complete their mission study.

Nancy Toth

Brad Sparks

Amber Nettleton

First Presbyterian Church of Richland, MI

Presbytery of Lake Michigan

Report of the Administrative Commission for

First Presbyterian Church of Richland, MI

December 3, 2024

The Presbytery of Lake Michigan Administrative Commission (AC) for Richland Presbyterian Church has been meeting weekly by Zoom on Mondays beginning October 14, 2024. AC members are: Stuart Deming (Moderator), Rev. Dan Anderson, and Rev. David Milbourn. Presbytery staff Cal Bremer and Fran Lane-Lawrence assist the AC, as requested, to fulfil its role and authorized responsibilities.

AC members and Cal Bremer (staff) met face to face with the Richland Session Elders on November 6, 2024. We will be meeting again with the Session on December 11, 2024. Rev. Seth Weeldreyer is moderating the November and December Session meetings.

We can report that positive efforts are underway by the Session Elders to address areas within the church regarding practices, procedures, and Book of Order guidance and or requirements. We are also providing counsel to the Session's looking forward as the Richland church transitions from the 35 year pastoral leadership of the Rev. Mark Jennings , who is officially retiring on December 1, 2024.

The Session is securing Pulpit Supply until such time when an Interim Pastor candidate is recommended by the Presbytery through COM and the AC.

Stuart Deming

Dave Milbourn

Dan Anderson

Fairplain Presbyterian Church of Benton Harbor, MI

Presbytery of Lake Michigan

Report of the Administrative Commission for

Fairplain Presbyterian Church of Benton Harbor, MI

December 3, 2024

The Benton Harbor Fairplain Presbyterian Church has been engaged in discernment concerning its future for at least 3 years. They have utilized assistance from the Commission on Ministry, consulted with Presbytery staff members, and explored possible joint ministry with other congregations. These efforts culminated in the fall of 2024 as the congregation moved toward dissolution. The Presbytery appointed an Administrative Commission made up of the Rev. Helen Havlik, Moderator; the Rev. Linda Male, Secretary; Ruling Elder Marlene Smith, clerk of the Fairplain Session; and the Rev. Dr. Cal Bremer, liaison to Presbytery.

The congregation of the Fairplain Presbyterian Church of Benton Harbor assembled in God's name on Sunday, November 17, 2024, at 10:45am in the Courtyard Room of the church located at 210 W. Napier Ave., Benton Harbor, MI. Upon motion and support, the congregation considered the motion to request Presbytery to dissolve the congregation and corporation. The congregation engaged in discussion and questions. The congregation members present in person and on Zoom then voted unanimously (28 votes, which represent 82% of the current active membership of 34) to approve the motion. The final worship service for the congregation is scheduled for Sunday December 29, 2024. The minutes of the congregational meeting have been approved by the AC.

The recommendation from the Administrative Commission is that:

1. The dissolution of the congregation, when the way be clear, but not later than September 30, 2025. Note: The "when the way be clear" language is used to provide flexibility in dealing with the numerous details related to church employees, finances, and contracts with various entities.
2. Extending the term of the following elders and trustees for one year: Pete Wendel, J. Michael Hall, Leslie Gilreath & Marlene Smith.
Note: These terms will end when the dissolution is effectuated.
3. Conveying to the Presbytery of Lake Michigan all real property held by Fairplain Presbyterian Church of Benton Harbor, Michigan.

Further information:

- The Session informed some church employees that their services would no longer be needed, and it has worked with two other employees to keep them informed of anticipated changes in their employment during this fluid environment. We are grateful for the flexibility and commitment of these employees to serving and helping wrap up the logistics of closing.
- The value of the endowments and investments of the church will be transferred to the designated recipients according to the directions specified in each case.

- The congregation is running out of money and will not be able to pay bills after the early part of 2025. The intent is that the Presbytery will pay these bills and then deduct the expenses when the building is sold. Steps have been taken to obtain an appraisal of the building. The Presbytery will engage Ron Lemmon/Patriot Realty who has served us so well in the past and is a recognized authority on the marketing and sales of special use buildings like churches.

The members of the AC request you to join us in giving thanks to God for the effective ministry of this congregation for 72 years since its founding in 1952. The Session members with the help of Presbytery are committed to helping find new church homes for the members.

The Rev. Helen Havlik (HR), Moderator
 The Rev. Linda Male (HR), Secretary
 Ruling Elder Marlene Smith, Clerk of Session-Fairplain

This concludes the reports of the Administrative Commissions.

This concludes the Clerk's Report

7. **To receive** the following report from the Commission on Ministry:

**REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON MINISTRY
 STATED MEETING of the PRESBYTERY of LAKE
 MICHIGAN
 December 3, 2024**

Since the last Presbytery meeting, the COM Plenary has met once (November 19, 2024), and the Northern, Eastern, and Southwestern Regions have met as needed. The following report deals with actions that the Commission has recommended to the Presbytery, actions taken by the Commission and its Regions on behalf of the Presbytery, and other matters of a general nature.

REPORT ON ACTIONS REGARDING CALLS, INSTALLATIONS, AND RELATED MATTERS:

1. **A motion prevailed** to approve the minutes of the COM Plenary meeting of August 27, 2024.
2. **A motion prevailed** to approve the minutes of the COM Regions since the August 27, 2024, Plenary meeting.
3. **A motion prevailed** to recommend to the Presbytery of Lake Michigan that the **Rev. Mark Jennings** be granted the status of **Retired**, effective **December 1, 2024**. This item will appear as part of the consent agenda for the stated meeting of the Presbytery on December 3, 2024.

4. **A motion prevailed** to recommend to the Presbytery of Lake Michigan that the **Rev. Laurie Hartzell** be granted the status of **Retired**, effective **June 1, 2024**. This item will appear as part of the consent agenda for the stated meeting of the Presbytery on December 3, 2024.
5. Battle Creek, Pennfield: **A motion prevailed** to dissolve the pastoral call between Rev. Annemarie Kidder and Pennfield Presbyterian Church of Battle Creek, MI, effective October 24, 2024.
A motion prevailed to appoint **Rev. Lorenzo Small** as moderator of the session, effective October 2024
6. Battle Creek, Westlake: **A motion prevailed** to commission Elder Orman Trumblee for an additional year to serve communion effective November 20, 2024, through November 19, 2025.
7. Benton Harbor Fairplain: **A motion prevailed** to **dissolve** the pastoral relationship between **Rev. David Schell** and **Fairplain Presbyterian Church** of Benton Harbor, MI, effective **September 1, 2024**. **A motion prevailed** to appoint **Rev. Philomena Ofori-Nipaah** as **moderator of the session**, effective **September 2, 2024**.
8. Delta/Dimondale: **A motion prevailed** to approve \$1200 from the COM budget to pay for a coach for Rev. Ben Rumbaugh as he helps the two congregations navigate joint ministry.
9. Gregory/Unadilla: **A motion prevailed** to commission Elder Christine Berry and Elder Linda Hay to preside at the Lord's Supper effective June 28, 2024, through June 27, 2025.
10. Hesperia: **A motion prevailed** to approve the call of **Rev. Scott Paul Bonham** as Temporary Pastor effective February 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025, which will include pulpit supply two Sundays per month, including Easter and Christmas Eve. Compensation will include \$200 per Sunday and mileage reimbursement at the IRS rate. The call also includes pastoral care on a limited basis and may include phone calls, home visits, home communions, hospital visits, etc. Rev. Bonham will be compensated at \$25 per hour for services rendered. The congregation will be vouchered for this compensation. The agreement can be dissolved with 30 days' notice by either party with the approval of the Commission on Ministry.
A motion prevailed to approve the call of **Rev. Laurie Hartzell** as Temporary Pastor effective January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025, which will include pulpit supply one Sunday per month. Compensation will include \$200 per Sunday and mileage reimbursement at the IRS rate. Rev. Hartzell will also moderate the session. Rev. Hartzell will be compensated \$50 for each session meeting or congregational meeting she moderates. The agreement can be dissolved with 30 days notice by either party with the approval of the Commission on Ministry.

11. Jackson First: **A motion prevailed** to appoint the following to the **Installation Commission** to install **Rev. David Schell** to the First Presbyterian Church of Jackson, MI, as installed pastor for an undesignated term: Rev. Gail Monsama (Decatur/Paw Paw), Rev. Karen Kelley (Retired), Elder John Williams (Jackson First), and Elder Marlene Smith (Fairplain). The installation occurred **November 17, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church of Jackson, MI.**

A motion prevailed to recommend to the COM plenary that \$1200 from the COM Budget be approved to support clergy coaching for Rev. David Schell to develop skills for mission and outreach beyond the walls of the church.

12. Richland: **A motion prevailed** to appoint Rev. Kristin Stroble as the COM liaison. An administrative commission has been appointed by the presbytery. Updates will be provided to the Presbytery by the Administrative Commission. The Rev. Mark Jennings refused to meet with the Commission on Ministry for an exit review. Rev. Jennings does not wish his retirement to be recognized publicly at the stated meeting of the presbytery. **A motion prevailed** to dissolve the pastoral relationship between **Rev. Mark Jennings** and the First Presbyterian Church of Richland, MI, effective December 1, 2024. Rev. Jennings' last day in the pulpit was October 20, 2024, as Rev. Jennings is taking accumulated vacation and study leave. **A motion prevailed** to appoint the Rev. Seth Weeldreyer as moderator of the session through December 31, 2024.

13. Schoolcraft: **A motion prevailed** to approve their Mission Study.

14. Sturgis: **A motion prevailed** to appoint **Rev. Brian Madison** as the session moderator for September 2024.

A motion prevailed to appoint **Rev. Brenda Deily** as moderator of the session, beginning effective October 1, 2024.

After a time of careful discussion, **a motion prevailed** to commission **Ruling Elder Barry Gulliver** and **Ruling Elder Jo Schrader** to preside at the Lord's Supper on December 24, 2024 (Christmas Eve). Rev. Brenda Deily will provide training relative to the Reformed theology of the Lord's Supper, liturgy and prayers, and practical aspects of serving communion. A motion prevailed at COM Plenary to commission **Ruling Elder Barry Gulliver** and **Ruling Elder Jo Schrader** to preside at the Lord's Supper on December 24, 2024 (Christmas Eve).

This concludes the report of the Committee on Ministry.

This concludes the Consent Agenda

NOMINATING & REPRESENTATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Rev. Lisa Schrott (Okemos) presented the report from the Nominating and Representation Committee. Rev. Schrott recognized and presented the following slate of nominees for consideration:

Vice Moderator of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan

Elder Martha Gammill (RE - Schoolcraft First)

Synod of the Covenant Commissioners

Elder Andy Thorburn (Class of 2026; RE – Paw Paw First)

Rev. Charlotte Ellison (Class of 2025; TE – HR)

Commission on Preparation for Ministry

Rev. Paul VanKampen (Class of 2025; TE – Holland First)

Elder Eileen Best (Class of 2027; RE – Portage Westminster)

Rev. Mackenzie Jaeger (Class of 2027; TE – Muskegon First)

Leadership Team (At Large)

Elder Jeanette Holton, (Class of 2027; RE - Benton Harbor First)

Rev. Nick Marlatt, (Class of 2026; TE – Hastings First)

Commission on Ministry

East Region

Rev. Ben Rumbaugh (Class of 2027; TE –Delta/Dimondale)

North Region

Rev. Michael Horlocker (Class of 2025; TE –Cadillac First)

Rev. Gail Monsma opened the floor for nominations and there were none. **A motion prevailed** to close nominations from the floor. **A motion prevailed** to elect the presented slate of nominees.

LEADERSHIP TEAM NOMINATION TO THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Elder Paul Karsten (GR Westminster) recognized and presented the following slate of nominees to serve on the Nominating and Representation Committee for consideration:

- Elder Willye Bryan (Class of 2028; Lansing First)
- Elder Ben Boerkoel (Class of 2028; Portage Westminster)

Rev. Gail Monsma opened the floor for nominations and there were none. **A motion prevailed** to close nominations from the floor. **A motion prevailed** to elect the presented slate of nominees.

REPORT OF THE BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Elder Beth Dyer introduced the members of the Budget and Finance Committee and thanked them for their work and dedication. The proposed 2025 Budget for the Presbytery of Lake Michigan was presented for approval. After a time of questions and discussion, **a motion prevailed** to approve the 2025 Budget and the 2025 Budget Narrative.

REPORT OF THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Elder Paul Karsten reported that an annual review was completed for Rev. Fran Lane-Lawrence. **A motion prevailed** to approve the Terms of Call for Rev. Dr. Fran Lane-Lawrence as the full-time Executive Presbytery/Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan, effective January 1, 2025-December 31, 2025.

Cash Salary	\$36,954
Housing Allowance	\$60,000
Employing organization contributions to 403(b)	\$12,000
Total Effective Salary	\$108,954
Medical Coverage and Medical/Prescription Reim	\$20,000
Board of Pensions (10%)	\$10,900
SECA Offset	\$ 5,000
Vouchered Expenses	
Professional Development	\$ 4,500
Mileage Reimbursement	IRS Rate
Professional Expenses	\$ 1,000
Spiritual Development/Retreat	\$1,000
Cell Phone	Reimburse portion of family plan
Vacation	40 days, including 6 Sundays
Personal Spiritual Renewal	14 days, including 2 Sundays (cumulative for 3 years)
Continuing Education	21 days, including 4 Sundays (cumulative for 3 years)

Rev. Lane-Lawrence informed the Presbytery of Rev. Chrissy Westbury's (Kalamazoo First) resignation from Associate Presbyter. The Presbytery will celebrate Rev. Westbury's ministry with thanks at the Stated Presbytery Meeting on March 8, 2025.

RECOGNITION OF OUTGOING MODERATOR

Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser-Brydon recognized and thanked Rev. Gail Monsma for her ministry and work as the 2024 Presbytery Moderator.

The presbytery recessed for a 10-minute break at 10:17 a.m. The meeting was reconvened at 10:27 a.m.

WORSHIP

A worship service was led by several members of the Presbytery. Rev. Dr. Fran Lane-Lawrence read Jeremiah 33:14-16 and Luke 21:25-36. She preached a sermon entitled: "Signs of the Times" During the sermon, Rev. Lane-Lawrence encouraged the Presbytery to open their eyes and hearts to truly understand their context. Their context includes vast poverty and is built on the oppression of the most vulnerable. She offered hope and encouragement through the Good News of the incarnation. Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser-Brydon was installed as the 2025 Presbytery of Lake Michigan Moderator. There was a time of celebration and remembrance of all Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders who have died in the past year. The offering was designated for the PC(USA) Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, and \$311.78 was received. The Presbytery celebrated the Lord's Supper with the Rev. Hauser-Brydon and Rev. Kristine Aragon-Bruce (Grand Haven First) presiding at the table.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion prevailed to adjourn the meeting, and Rev. Gail Monsma closed the meeting with prayer and the extinguishing of the Christ Candle at 11:13 a.m.

**The next Presbytery meeting is scheduled for Saturday, March 8, 2025
at Eastminster Presbyterian Church
1315 Abbot Road
East Lansing, Michigan 48823
517-337-0893**