

DRAFT

**MINUTES of the STATED MEETING
PRESBYTERY of LAKE MICHIGAN**

June 10, 2025 at 9:30 A.M.

First Presbyterian Church

221 E Harris Street

Cadillac, MI 49601

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. Dr. Troy Hauser-Brydon (Grand Haven First), Moderator, called the meeting to order at 9:33 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 Elder Scott Rumsey (Hesperia), Elder Judy Wood (Plainwell First), Rev. Timothy Chon (Lansing North Westminster), and Rev. Mackenzie Jager (Muskegon First) as temporary clerks.

SEATING OF CORRESPONDING MEMBERS

A motion prevailed to seat Rev. Ruth-Aimée Belonni-Rosario (New York City), Associate Executive for Racial Justice for the Synod of the Covenant.

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. Troy Hauser-Brydon welcomed first-time elder commissioners and Christian educators.

WELCOME TO GUESTS AND VISITORS

Rev. Troy Hauser-Brydon welcomed guests and visitors. Rev. Dr. Fran Lane-Lawrence welcomed and introduced Rev. Ruth-Aimée Belonni-Rosario, Associate for Racial Justice for the Synod of the Covenant.

GREETINGS FROM EASTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EAST LANSING

Rev. Michael Horlocker offered greetings and thanksgiving on behalf of First Presbyterian

Church of Cadillac, Michigan, giving thanks for the congregation's work with the local community. He described their Jack Foss Closet ministry and shared that the congregation provided 410 pairs of boots to children and adults this past winter.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

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

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: Mary Austin (VM), Joanna Bailey (VM), David Braak (VM), Elizabeth Hakken Candido (VM), Jessica Bratt Carle (VM), Katherine Culpepper (MAL), Karen Fitz LaBarge (Rockford North Kent), Jessica Hauser-Brydon (MAL), Sarah Juist (Jenison Parkwood), Karen Kelley (Retired), Hailey Malcolm (MAL), Nick Marlatt (Hastings), Calandra Nevenzel (Richland), Kyle Nolan (VM), Philomena Ofori-Nipaah (North Park), Jim Pollard (Forest Hills), Sarah Schmidt-Lee (VM), Barb Schruer (VM), Kristin Stroble (East Lansing Eastminster), Paul Van Kempen (Holland), Chrissy Westbury (Kalamazoo First), Jon Won (East Lansing Korean)
2. **To approve** the Minutes of the Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan, March 08, 2025, Online only.
3. **To file** the approved Minutes of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan Leadership Team on March 6, 2025; April 3, 2025; and May 1, 2025. Online only.
4. **To receive** the 2025 Terms of Call Report. Online only.
5. **To receive** the June 10, 2025, Budget and Finance Report. Online only.
6. **To approve** the following recommendation of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan Commission on Ministry that Rev. Brenda Deily be granted the status of Retired effective June 10, 2025. The Presbytery will celebrate her ministry at the stated meeting on September 13, 2025.
7. **To approve** the following recommendation of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan Commission on Ministry that Rev. Christine Barnes (MAL) be granted the status of Retired effective September 13, 2025.
8. **To approve** the following recommendation from the Presbytery of Lake Michigan Commission on Ministry that Elder Jodi McCoy, Elder Christine Berry, Elder Gary Hay,

and Elder Linda Hay from Unadilla Presbyterian Church, Gregory, MI, be granted an exception to Ruling Elder Terms of Service (G-2.0404) for 1 year.

9. **To receive** the Report of the Stated Clerk for today, as follows:

REPORT OF THE STATED CLERK

Rev. Dr. Fran Lane-Lawrence

June 10, 2025

1. **FOR CLERKS OF SESSION - REVIEW OF 2024 SESSION MINUTES:** The review of the 2024 session minutes is in process. A report of the review will be provided at the meeting scheduled for September 13, 2025. There are two more session review clusters scheduled. If you were unable to attend your scheduled minute review cluster, you may attend one of the final two clusters. Clerks may also contact Rev. Annamarie Groenenboom, Associate Clerk, to make an appointment to bring the congregation's minutes and register books to the presbytery office for review.

The 2024 Minute Review Checklist is posted on the Presbytery website. Please contact Rev. Annamarie Groenenboom with any questions you might have about the 2024 session minutes reviews.

Cluster 1 – June 10, 2025 at 1 p.m. – Cathy Smart/Annamarie Groenenboom
Location: First Presbyterian Church, 221 East Harris Street, Cadillac, MI
Big Rapids, Cadillac First, Hesperia, Lake City

Cluster 4 – June 14, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. – Annamarie Groenenboom
Location: Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1515 Helen Avenue, Portage, MI
Allegan, Gobles, Hastings, Kalamazoo First, Kalamazoo North, Paw Paw,
Plainwell, Portage Westminster, Richland, Schoolcraft, Three Rivers

2. **BOUNDARY AND ETHICS TRAINING:** The PCUSA Constitution in the *Book of Order* mandates all councils (this includes sessions) to 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 also 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 schedule or complete boundary training..

Upcoming Dates:

- September 13, 2025, at Battle Creek First - Ruling Elder Boundary Training
- September 20, 2025, at TBD - Teaching Elder Boundary Training
- October 11, 2025, at GR Forest Hills - Teaching Elder Boundary Training

*Training will be led by Rev. Dr. Fran Lane-Lawrence and Rev. Annamarie Groenenboom.

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 2025: The dates for stated meetings of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan for 2025 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 - *JENISON PARKWOOD*

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

5. PROPERTY SALES:

First United Presbyterian Church of Dimondale, MI

On April 18, 2025, First Presbyterian Church of Concord, MI sold 301 Hanover St, Concord, MI 49237 for the sum of \$140,000.00.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: BEG AT THE INTERSECTION OF THE S LN OF HANOVER ST WITH THE E LN OF CONCORD ST TH N 89DEG 33'30"E ALG THE S LN OF HANOVER ST 68.64 FT TH S 1DEG 18'E 165 FT TH S 89DEG 33'30"W 68.64 FT TO THE E LN OF CONCORD ST TH N 1DEG 18'E ALG THE E LN OF CONCORD ST 165 FT TO BEG. BEING PART OF LOT 162 ASSESSOR'S PLAT OF VILLAGE OF CONCORD, UNRECORDED. SEC 27 T3S R3W

6. REPORTS OF ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSIONS:

First Presbyterian Church of Marshall, MI

Presbytery of Lake Michigan

Administrative Commission for First Presbyterian Church of Marshall, MI

June 10, 2025

The Members of the Administrative Commission (AC) continue to work diligently and pastorally with the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Marshall.

Members of the AC continue to attend all Session Meetings of the Marshall Church, either in-person or virtually, to provide support and clarity of communication.

The Mission Study Committee continues to work on a Mission Study with support from AC member Elder Nancy Toth. The Session is currently making suggested additions and changes to their first draft of their Mission Study.

The Session is finding it challenging to replace their Clerk of Session, who resigned effective April 3, 2025.

A Session representative will be attending the Annual Minute Review on May 31, 2025, at Jackson First.

On June 15, 2025, the 90-day contract of the Stated Supply Pastor, Rev. Charlotte Ellison, will be renewed upon agreement of the AC, the Session, and Rev. Ellison. The AC will continue to support the session in their ministry as they chart a path forward.

Respectfully Submitted by
The AC for Marshall First Presbyterian Church

Amber Nettleton (MAL)
Nancy Toth (Jackson First)
Brad Sparks (Grand Rapids Westminster)

First Presbyterian Church of Richland, MI

Presbytery of Lake Michigan

Administrative Commission for First Presbyterian Church of Richland, MI

June 10, 2025

The Richland Administrative Commission continues its work. Since the last Stated Meeting in March 2025, the AC representatives met with the Richland Session on March

12, 2025, on April 15, 2025, and will attend the May 21, 2025, meeting. Rev. Seth Weeldreyer continues to serve as moderator for these meetings. The Richland AC normally meets weekly by Zoom to discuss progress, issues to address, and guidance to provide to the Richland Session and other congregational leaders. Rev. Calvin Bremer (Assistant to Executive Presbyter) and Rev. Fran Lane-Lawrence (Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk) offer instructive and beneficial guidance to the AC.

Rev. Kristin Stroble consulted with and coordinated her work with the AC, until she left for a three-month sabbatical on April 28. She represented the Presbytery as Presbytery Staff liaison to COM-related issues with special emphasis on the process of seeking, interviewing, and hiring an Interim Pastor. The Richland Session appointed an Interim Search Committee, reviewed several Ministry of Discernment Profiles (MDP), and selected a candidate to interview with Rev. Stroble's input and approval. The AC interviewed the Candidate and approved moving forward with agreed-upon Covenant Agreement. The candidate Rev. Calandra R. Nevenzel (United Church of Christ) has accepted the invitation to become Interim Pastor. She begins her work (part-time) on May 17, 2025. Beginning July 1, 2025, she will be full-time.

Officer training for Elders and Deacons was coordinated by the Richland church and Presbytery staff. Rev. Kristin Stroble and Presbytery Stated Clerk, Rev. Fran Lane-Lawrence, provided the training on April 26, 2025.

The Richland Session has made significant progress in reviewing, updating, and clarifying its church policies and procedures related to committees, staff, and Finances.

The AC members are grateful for the cooperative spirit that characterizes the relationship between the AC and the Richland Session and congregation. We also request your continued prayers for all those involved.

Elder Stuart Deming (Kalamazoo First), Rev. David Milbourn (HR), and Rev. Dan Anderson (Spring Lake).

Fairplain Presbyterian Church of Benton Harbor, MI

Presbytery of Lake Michigan

Administrative Commission for Fairplain Presbyterian Church of Benton Harbor, MI

June 10, 2025

The Benton Harbor Fairplain Presbyterian Church engaged in discernment concerning its future for over 3 years. They 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. The Rev. Dr. Cal Bremer, Presbytery staff member, served as resource advisor to the Commission.

The congregation of the Fairplain Presbyterian Church of Benton Harbor assembled in God's name on Sunday, November 17, 2024, at 10:45 am in the Courtyard Room of the church located at 210 W. Napier Ave., Benton Harbor, MI. Upon motion and support, the congregation considered a motion to request the Presbytery to dissolve the congregation and corporation. Following 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 Presbytery approved the following recommendations from the Administrative Commission at its December 03, 2024, Stated Meeting:

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. 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.

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 final worship service was held on December 29, 2024, in the sanctuary. Worship included a celebration of the Lord's Supper and was led by Rev. Laurie Hartzell (preacher), Rev. David Schell (former pastor), and church liturgists and musicians. Following the service, over 100 worshippers enjoyed a catered lunch.

Two part-time employees continued with the activities necessary to provide required records to the Presbytery and for stability in the church building until the building was sold. Their final work dates were the end of April. Rev. Scott Paul-Bonham agreed to provide limited pastoral care until the dissolution is completed.

The church building was listed by Patriot Realty in January, 2025, for \$595,900. The listing generated multiple inquiries. The building was viewed by twelve different parties who envisioned a variety of uses for the building. Currently there are more than 55 former church and school buildings for sale in Michigan. Most that sold did so at a price discounted from the original listed price.

The AC meeting on Monday, February 17, 2025, reviewed an offer of \$555,000 from the Central Wesleyan Church of Holland dba Overflow Church. The AC decided to proceed with recommending acceptance of this offer to the March 08, 2025, Stated Meeting. The AC celebrated the potential for another worshipping community to use this building for ministry.

The compressed time frame of fewer than three weeks meant that some of the conditions could not be met by the time of the Stated Meeting. However, delaying decisions until the June Stated Meeting was not prudent for either the PLM or for Central Wesleyan Church of Holland. There are continuing utility costs associated with the building, and we recognized that vacant buildings can become targets for vandalism.

The Presbytery of Lake Michigan at its Stated Meeting on March 08, 2025, approved the following:

1. The Presbytery of Lake Michigan approves the sale of properties described below for the sum of \$555,000 to Central Wesleyan Church of Holland, MI, dba Overflow Church.
2. The Presbytery of Lake Michigan authorizes the Fairplain Administrative Commission to make such adjustments in price and conditions of the sale as the Commission deems appropriate to consummate the sale.
3. The Presbytery of Lake Michigan authorizes the Stated Clerk, the Rev. Dr. Fran Lane-Lawrence; the Treasurer, Kirk Truesdell; or the President of the Corporation, Beth Dyer, jointly or individually, to execute all documents necessary to implement the sale to Central Wesleyan church of Holland dba Overflow Church.

April 30, 2025, the building was sold to Central Wesleyan Church of Holland, dba Overflow Church for \$555,000. The charges and adjustments involved in the sale amounted to \$34,741.69 leaving the PLM with a net on this sale of \$520,258.31. The AC takes note that Ron Lemmon/Patriot Realty reduced his commission to 2.5 % compared with the buyer's commission of 3.0%.

The AC approved the dissolution date of May 30, 2025, and approved transfer of that balance in the Fairplain bank account to the Presbytery prior to that date. The AC continues to work with the Fairplain elders to encourage the remaining members of the congregation to identify and affiliate with a new church home.

The AC believes that it has completed the tasks assigned to it and respectfully recommends to the Presbytery of Lake Michigan that the Fairplain Administrative Commission be dismissed effective June 11, 2025.

The Rev. Helen Havlik, Moderator

The Rev. Linda Male, Secretary

Ruling Elder Marlene Smith, Clerk of Fairplain Session

This concludes the reports of the Administrative Commissions.

This concludes the Clerk's Report

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

**REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON MINISTRY STATED MEETING
of the PRESBYTERY of LAKE MICHIGAN
June 10, 2025**

Since the last Presbytery meeting, the COM Plenary has met once (May 27, 2025), 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 February 25, 2025.

2. **A motion prevailed** to approve the minutes of the COM Regions since the February 25, 2025, Plenary meeting.
3. **A motion prevailed** to allow Rev. Chad Herring (Heartland Presbytery) to labor within the bounds of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan.
4. **A motion prevailed** to add Rev. Jake Kaufman (HR) and Rev. Annemarie Kidder (Retired) to the pulpit supply list.
5. **A motion prevailed** to approve \$250 from the COM 2025 budget for the Validated Ministers Luncheon.
6. **A motion prevailed** to approve the 2025 Terms of Call and Covenant Agreement Report.
7. Allegan: **A motion prevailed** to schedule a congregational town hall meeting with Rev. Lorenzo Small (Battle Creek First) and Rev. Amber Nettleton (MAL).
8. Battle Creek Westlake: **A motion prevailed** to authorize Elder Kerri Comai to administer communion for one year, April 10, 2025, through April 9, 2026. **A motion prevailed** to recommend to the Presbytery of Lake Michigan the appointment of an Administrative Commission.
9. Brooklyn: **A motion prevailed** to approve the mission study. **A motion prevailed** to allow Brooklyn to form a Pastor Nominating Committee on March 19, 2025.
10. East Lansing Eastminster: Rev. Kristin Stroble is on sabbatical from April 28, 2025, through July 28, 2025. **A motion prevailed** to appoint Rev. Jeff O'Neill (HR) as moderator from April 28, 2025, through July 28, 2025. **A motion prevailed** to appoint Rev. Dr. Fran Lane-Lawrence as the moderator for their congregational meeting on June 29, 2025.
11. Decatur First/Paw Paw First: **A motion prevailed** to extend Rev. Gail Monsma's current covenant agreement through May 31, 2025.
12. Edwardsburg: Rev. Scott Scheel's 2025 Terms of Call are under the minimum salary requirement. He was informed that adjustments would need to be made to raise his Total Effective Salary to the minimum salary requirement.

13. Grand Rapids North Park: Rev. Philomena Ofori-Nipaah's house was damaged during the recent storms. She has been connected with the Board of Pensions and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.
14. Gregory Unadilla: **A motion prevailed** to recommend to the Presbytery that Elder Jodi McCoy, Elder Christine Berry, Elder Gary Hay, and Elder Linda Hay be granted an exception to G-2.0404 and be allowed to extend their terms as active elders on session for 1 year.
15. Jackson Westminster: **A motion prevailed** to appoint Rev. Ben Rumbaugh as moderator from April 28, 2025, through July 28, 2025. **A motion prevailed** to appoint Rev. John Best (HR) as the moderator for their congregational meeting on June 15, 2025. Rev. Annamarie Groenenboom provided Clerk of Session training on May 19, 2025. **A motion prevailed** to approve a covenant agreement between Westminster Presbyterian Church and Rev. Judy Goodrow (UCC) as full-time stated supply pastor effective January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2025.

Salary	\$47,370
Housing	\$15,000
Education & Meetings	\$2,000
Pension (UCC, 14%)	\$10,153
Vacation	4 weeks, including 4 Sundays
Professional Development	2 weeks, including 4 Sundays
Sick Time	2 weeks

*Westminster pays 50% of the compensation package

16. Jonesville First: Rev. Lynne Fry has accepted a new call. Her last Sunday in the pulpit will be June 15, 2025. Following that, she will lead a congregational trip to Scotland, using her accumulated vacation time. Rev. Fry's last date of employment will be July 15, 2025. The congregation's annual corporate report has not been filed for the past 4 years, and the congregation has become unincorporated. The COM will work with the PLM Trustees to correct the congregation's corporate status.
17. Kalamazoo First: Rev. Amber Nettleton resigned from her position as Temporary Stated Supply Pastor effective April 4, 2025. Rev. Chrissy Westbury is on sabbatical.
18. Kalamazoo North: **A motion prevailed** to approve the covenant agreement between CRE Charles Moerdyk and North Presbyterian Church as part-time (10 hours) pastor effective January 1, 2025- December 31, 2025.

Salary:	\$5,100
Housing Allowance:	\$5,100
Expenses:	\$ 500 (including mileage at IRS rate)
Books/Continuing Education:	\$500
Continuing Education Time:	2 weeks, including 2 Sundays
Vacation Time:	4 weeks including 4 Sundays

19. Plainwell: **A motion prevailed** to approve the covenant agreement between First Presbyterian church of Plainwell, MI, and Elder Nathan Martens as part-time (20 hours) pastoral intern effective March 23, 2025-May 31, 2025. Elder Martins will receive a rate of \$15 per hour.
20. Schoolcraft: Rev. Jerry Duggins (Portage Westminster) was appointed to serve as the congregation's transition counselor. **A motion prevailed** to approve the covenant agreement between First Presbyterian Church of Schoolcraft, MI, and Rev. Tom Kragt (RCA) as part-time (25 hours) temporary supply pastor effective April 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025.

Cash Salary	\$13,564.06
Free Use of Manse with Utilities	\$6,793.50
Retirement Contribution	\$1,050 (175/month)
Total Effective Salary	\$21,407.56
Travel	IRS Rate
Books/Professional Expenses	\$300
Professional Development	\$800
Vacation	2 weeks, including 2 Sundays
Study Leave	1 week, including 1 Sunday

21. Three Rivers/Centreville First: **A motion prevailed** to grant Rev. Brenda Deily the status of Pastor Emerita. **A motion prevailed** to appoint Rev. Amber Nettleton as moderator of the session until an interim pastor is identified. Rev. Mark Pawlowski was informed that he is unable to lead worship or administer communion for the congregation per the terms of his Covenant of Closure.

This concludes the report of the Commission on Ministry.

**PRESBYTERY OF LAKE MICHIGAN
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THE PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY
March 8, 2025**

The Commission met three times since the last Stated Meeting of the Presbytery—Regular stated meetings on March 25, 2025, April 22, 2025, and May 27, 2025. The following report deals with the actions that the Commission has recommended to the Presbytery, actions taken by the Commission on behalf of the Presbytery, and other matters of a general nature.

1. **A motion prevailed** to approve the minutes of the Commission on the Preparation for Ministry of February 25, 2025, March 25, 2025, and April 22, 2025.

2. **A motion prevailed** to approve the Covenant Agreement between First Presbyterian Church of Plainwell, MI and Elder Nathan Martens as pastoral intern, effective March 30, 2025-May 30, 2025. See COM Report for Covenant Agreement Details.

This concludes the report of the Committee on the Preparation for Ministry.

This concludes the Consent Agenda.

WORSHIP

Rev. Ruth-Aimée Belonni-Rosario (New York City), along with several members of the Presbytery, led the service of worship. Rev. Belonni-Rosario read Acts 2:1-21. During the sermon, she described how the invitation of Pentecost is to dig deeper to experience God through other people. Pentecost is an opportunity to be fully ourselves. She highlighted how often we encounter people and choose to only see one aspect of the individual instead of the whole person. She encouraged the members of the Presbytery to look for new ways to hear and understand one another and people different from them. After the sermon, the Presbytery recognized and offered praise for the ministry of Fairplain Presbyterian Church of Benton Harbor, MI. The offering was designated for the PC(USA) Immigration Services, and \$812.50 was received. The Presbytery celebrated the Lord's Supper with the Rev. Michael Horlocker (Cadillac) and Rev. Dr. Janice Jasperse (Lake City First) presiding at the table.

The Presbytery recessed for a 17-minute break at 10:58 a.m. The meeting was reconvened at 11:15 a.m.

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

Rev. Ruth-Aimée Belonni-Rosario described her role as Associate Executive for Racial Justice and explained how she plans to resource Presbyteries and churches on matters of racial justice. A small group discussion focused on the experiences of race. Rev. Belonni-Rosario emphasized ways members of the Presbytery are responsible for both those we see and those we do not see.

She described the hard and emotional work of racial justice and encouraged the Presbytery to be disruptors in the church and in society.

NOMINATING & REPRESENTATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Rev. Lisa Schrott (Okemos) presented the report from the Nominating and Representation Committee. Rev. Schrott reported the following resignation:

Commission on Ministry (COM) (Southwest)

Rev. Dr. Philomina Ofori-Nipaah (GR North Park), COM (Southwest), Class of 2025

Rev. Schrott recognized and presented the following slate of nominees for consideration:

Commission on Ministry (COM) (North)

Rev. Douglas Brouwer (HR), Class of 2027

Commission on Ministry (COM) (East)

Rev. Steve Kaszar, (Homer & Concord), Class of 2027

Commission on Ministry (COM) (East)

Rev. Dr. Rob Carlson, (HR), Class of 2027

Committee for Preparation for Ministry (CPM)

Rev. David Schell (Jackson First), Class of 2027

Rev. Troy Hauser-Brydon, moderator, opened the floor for nominations, and there were none. **A motion prevailed** to close nominations from the floor. **A motion prevailed** to elect the slate of nominees as presented.

Rev. Schrott encouraged members of the Presbytery to submit applications to serve as commissioners to the 227th General Assembly, June 22-July 2, 2026, in Milwaukee, WI. The names of those nominated will be presented for election at the stated meeting of the Presbytery scheduled for September 13, 2025. Rev. Schrott also highlighted resources focusing on anti-racism, immigration, and LGBTQIA+.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE PRESBYTER

Rev. Fran Lane-Lawrence offered thanks to the Presbytery and described how the Presbytery is disrupting the sins of racism, poverty, and hunger. Rev. Lane-Lawrence introduced the PC(USA) Sanctuary and Accompaniment Church document and described how, as a Matthew 25 Presbytery, the Presbytery is doing the work of the Gospel. She encouraged the Presbytery to

consider adopting the document and to embrace becoming a sanctuary and accompaniment Presbytery as part of its identity. The Presbytery will consider this at the September 13, 2025, stated meeting. Rev. Lane-Lawrence also reminded commissioners and pastors of Presbytery grant opportunities.

COMMISSION ON MINISTRY REPORT

Rev. Ben Rumbaugh (Lansing Delta/Dimondale) presented the report of the Commission on Ministry (COM). Rev. Rumbaugh presented background information related to Westlake Presbyterian Church in Battle Creek, MI. The session of Westlake Presbyterian requested an Administrative Commission to assist with discerning the future of their ministry. After a time of discussion, **a motion prevailed** to approve the recommendation of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan Commission on Ministry to appoint an administrative commission of three to five members to the Westlake Presbyterian Church of Battle Creek, MI at the request of the session.

Recommendation: The Presbytery of Lake Michigan Commission on Ministry (COM) recommends that the Presbytery appoint an administrative commission of three to five members to the Westlake Presbyterian Church of Battle Creek, MI at the request of the session.

Rationale: The recommendation, made at the request of the session, comes with full awareness of the congregation's historical apprehension regarding the involvement of both administrative commissions and the Presbytery. COM approaches this matter with deep respect for the ministry partnership the Presbytery has shared with Westlake.

The proposed administrative commission will support the session and congregation during this challenging period of decision-making and transition. The primary goal is to support the congregation in concluding its ministry and mission with care and integrity, and provide guidance and resolution to any issues of disorder it encounters. The commission will aim to provide stability, guidance, and pastoral sensitivity as the congregation plans and concludes its particular ministry.

Background

In 2021, Westlake sold two parcels of land in response to financial challenges, hoping to sustain its ministries. By June 2023, COM had learned that the session had not met for approximately two years, contrary to the requirements of the PCUSA Book of Order, which stipulates that the session meet quarterly (G-3.0203). During that time, ruling elders had also not been elected, despite the Book of Order's directive that the session govern the congregation and guide its witness (G-3.0201).

Recognizing the complexity of the situation, COM partnered with the congregation to restore

governance by assisting in the election of elders, providing training for church officers, and helping to reestablish Presbyterian polity in decision-making. These steps were taken collaboratively.

More recently, concerns have been raised regarding leadership, the congregation's connection to its Presbyterian identity, and the ongoing involvement of a non-ordained leader from the Seventh-day Adventist tradition. The session has not pursued an installed or supply pastor within the PC(USA) or Formula of Agreement denomination in nearly a decade. Meanwhile, the congregation's financial instability persists.

Acknowledging these realities and after discussion with COM, the session has now formally requested the Presbytery's support in appointing an administrative commission to assist in the process of concluding their ministry.

Purpose

In response to the session's request, the Commission on Ministry recommends to the Presbytery of Lake Michigan that an Administrative Commission of three to five members be appointed by the Moderator of the Presbytery, in consultation with the Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk, for the following purpose:

1. To provide pastoral care and support during this time of transition and conclusion of Westlake's ministry and dissolution of the congregation.
2. To assist members of the congregation in identifying other Presbyterian congregations to which to transfer their membership.
3. To collaborate with the session and members of the congregation in concluding its ministry and mission.
4. To partner with the Presbytery of Lake Michigan Trustees in the legal and property-related aspects of the church dissolution process.

Scope of Authorities

1. This Administrative Commission has the authority of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan, except where limited by provisions of the PC(USA) Book of Order, to
 - a. To work with the session/congregation to discern and implement necessary steps to conclude the ministry of Westlake Presbyterian Church and to dissolve the congregation at a date to be determined by the Administrative Commission. The Administrative Commission may partner with the Commission on Ministry and Presbytery staff to support their work in this area as needed.
 - b. To implement appropriate plans and steps relevant to the pastoral support of members of the congregation during the dissolution process. The Administrative Commission may

partner with the Commission on Ministry and Presbytery staff to support their work in this area as needed.

c. To effectuate the dissolution of the Michigan corporation and the sale of the property. The Administrative Commission shall partner with the Presbytery Trustees and Presbytery staff to support their work in this area as needed.

d. To assume original jurisdiction to effectuate dissolution of the congregation and sale of property, if the Administrative Commission determines it is necessary, adhering to provisions of the PCUSA Constitution found in the Book of Order.

Financial Responsibility:

The Westlake Presbyterian Church of Battle Creek, MI, will be responsible for any costs associated with the dissolution of the congregation and the sale of the property.

Presbytery Authorities Granted by the PCUSA Constitution in the Book of Order that may apply

G-3.0109b – Administrative Commissions are designated to consider and conclude matters not involving ecclesiastical judicial process, except that in the discharge of their assigned responsibility, they may discover and report to the designating council matters that may require judicial action by the Council.

(5) by presbyteries visiting particular congregations over which they have immediate jurisdiction reported to be affected with disorder, and inquiring into and settling difficulties therein, except that no commission of presbytery shall be empowered to dissolve a pastoral relationship without the specific authorization by the designating body. (G-2.0901)

G-3.0303 Relations with Sessions

Presbytery, being composed of the ministers of the Word and Sacrament and commissioners elected by the session of congregations within its district, has a particular responsibility to coordinate, guide, encourage, support, and resource the work of its congregations for the most effective witness to the broader community. In order to accomplish this responsibility, the presbytery has the authority to:

- a. develop strategy for the mission of the church in its district;
- b. control the location of new congregations and of congregations desiring to move, as well as to divide, dismiss, or dissolve congregations in consultation with their members;
- c. counsel with a session concerning reported difficulties within a congregation, including:

- (1.) advising the session as to appropriate actions to be taken to resolve the reported difficulties,
 - (2.) offering to help as a mediator, and
 - (3.) acting to correct the difficulties if requested to do so by the session or if the session is unable or unwilling to do so, following the procedural safeguards of the Church Discipline;
- d. assume original jurisdiction in any situation in which it determines that a session cannot exercise its authority. After a thorough investigation, and after full opportunity to be heard has been accorded to the session, the presbytery may conclude that the session of a congregation is unable or unwilling to manage wisely its affairs, and may appoint an administrative commission with the full power of session. This commission shall assume original jurisdiction of the existing session, if any, which shall cease to act until such time as the presbytery shall otherwise direct.

LEADERSHIP TEAM REPORT

Rev. Dr. Lynnette Sparks provided information about the work of the Presbytery Staffing Taskforce. The task force determined that the current staffing structure of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan meets the needs of and supports the values of the Presbytery. After a time of discussion, **a motion prevailed** to leave the position of Associate Presbyter vacant.

Rev. Fran Lane-Lawrence presented several recommendations from the Leadership Team regarding the designation of funds from the sale of properties. The designated funds will provide educational opportunities and resources to congregations within the Presbytery, assist congregations in times of transition, and provide funding for mediation training. After a time of discussion, **a motion prevailed** to designate \$5,000 (funds from the sale of properties) for the educational gathering of “small” churches (100 members or less). **A motion prevailed** to designate \$5,000 (funds from the sale of properties) for the educational gathering of “large” churches (300 members or more). **A motion prevailed** to designate \$10,000 for Alternative Transitional Minister Initiative - Transitional Ministry Pathways - (funds from the sale of properties). **A motion prevailed** to designate \$20,000 for mediation training with Lombard Peace Center (10 people).

REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES OF PAW PAW AND DECATUR, MI

Rev. Cathy Caldwell Hoop (Holland First) presented a report on behalf of the Administrative Commission (AC). Rev. Caldwell Hoop described the work of the AC and the discernment process with First Presbyterian Churches of Paw Paw, MI, and Decatur, MI. Through the discernment process and congregational votes on May 4, 2025, the congregations have discerned

that they should merge into one new congregation. After a time of discussion, **a motion prevailed to**

1. Receive the document titled "Plan for Union and Merger" from the Sessions of First Presbyterian of Decatur, MI, and First Presbyterian of Paw Paw, MI, dated May 20, 2025, and acknowledge with appreciation the investment of time, energy, love, and imagination with which it was created, and;
2. Approve the work of the Administrative Commission and its recommendations listed below. (With subpoints A-C of 1,2)
 1. The Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Paw Paw, MI needs to call a congregational meeting to approve the following recommendations:
 - A. The dissolution of the congregation "when the way be clear," but not later than March 15, 2026.

Note: This is to provide flexibility since we cannot predict with certainty how long certain processes will take.
 - B. Extending the terms of the currently serving elders for up to one year
Note: These terms will terminate upon dissolution of the congregation.
 - C. Conveying to the Presbytery of Lake Michigan the real property held by First Presbyterian Church of Paw Paw, MI.

Note: This property will be granted to the new congregation when the legal and ecclesiastical requirements for its formation are met.
 2. The Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Decatur, MI needs to call a congregational meeting to approve the following recommendations
 - A. The dissolution of the congregation "when the way be clear", but not later than March 15, 2026.

Note: This is to provide flexibility since we cannot predict with certainty how long certain processes will take.
 - B. Extending the terms of the currently serving elders for up to one year
Note: These terms will terminate upon dissolution of the congregation.
 - C. Conveying to the Presbytery of Lake Michigan the real property held by First Presbyterian Church of Decatur.

Note: This is consistent with the provisions of the Book of Order G-4.02

3. Authorize the AC in conjunction with the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan to take appropriate actions to implement the above recommendations.
4. Acknowledge that the timelines found in the “Plan for Union and Merger” are aspirational and may be impacted by unforeseen delays or new information regarding necessary steps to be taken.
5. Continue in prayer for these congregations and those involved in this undertaking.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:38 p.m. Rev. Dr. Troy Hauser-Brydon closed the meeting with prayer and the extinguishing of the Christ Candle.

**The next Presbytery meeting is scheduled for Saturday, September 13, 2025
at First Presbyterian Church
111 Capital Ave NE
Battle Creek, MI 49017**