

DRAFT

**MINUTES of the STATED MEETING
Presbytery of Lake Michigan
March 8, 2025 - 9:30 a.m.
First Presbyterian Church
162 Bridge Street
Dimondale, Michigan 48821**

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

Elder Ben Boerkoel (GR Westminster), Moderator, called the meeting to order at 9:36 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 Deb Flietstra (GR Westminster), Elder Paul Hershberger (Coldwater), Rev. Patricia Weatherwax (HR), and Rev. Dr. Clint Cozier (Three Rivers/Centreville First) as temporary clerks.

SEATING OF CORRESPONDING MEMBERS

A motion prevailed to seat Dr. Stephen Keizer (PC(USA) Foundation), Rev. Luke Choi (Board of Pensions), and Rev. Viktoria Berlik (Genesee Valley Presbytery) as corresponding members.

APPROVAL OF THE DOCKET

A motion prevailed to approve the docket as presented.

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

Elder Ben Boerkoel welcomed first-time elder commissioners and Christian educators.

WELCOME TO GUESTS AND VISITORS

Elder Ben Boerkoel welcomed guests and visitors.

GREETINGS FROM FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF DIMONDALE, MI

Rev. Ben Rumbaugh offered greetings and thanksgiving on behalf of the First Presbyterian Church of Dimondale, MI,, giving thanks for their work with the community, including providing a food pantry and providing space for an Alcoholics Anonymous group. He highlighted the unique and exciting relationship between the First Presbyterian Church of Dimondale, MI and Delta Presbyterian Church of Lansing, MI as they explore possibilities for joint ministries. . First Presbyterian Church of Dimondale, MI recently celebrated its 150th anniversary.

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
March 14, 2026

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), Elizabeth Hakken Candido (VM), Cal Bremer (VM), Timothy Chon (VM), Katherine Culpepper (MAL), Janet Duggins (Portage Westminster), Karen Fitz LaBarge (Rockford North Kent), Laurie Hartzel (Retired), Kirk Miller (Holt First), Philomena Ofori-Nipaah (GR North Park), Jim Pollard (GR Forest Hills), Kathleen Robertson King (MAL), Barb Schruer (MAL), David Stubbs (VM), Paul Van Kempen (Holland First)
2. **To approve** the Minutes of the Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan, December 02, 2025, Online only.
3. **To file** the approved Minutes of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan Leadership Team on December 4, 2025, and February 5, 2026. Online only.
4. **To grant** Rev. David Edwin Braak (VM, Faith Hospice) the status of Retired effective March 14, 2026.
5. **To approve** the recommendation of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan Trustees as follows:

Background:

June 10, 2025, a motion prevailed to receive a “Plan for Union and Merger” from the Sessions of First Presbyterian of Decatur, MI, and First Presbyterian of Paw Paw, MI. The plan outlined specific actions to be taken by the congregations as well as assumptions regarding the buildings of each congregation. The merged congregation would use the Paw Paw building. The Decatur building, which is much older and evidenced deferred maintenance, was to be sold.

The property was listed on September 05, 2025, for \$199,900 by Patriot Realty. It generated an offer for \$80,000. There were eight other viewings in the first weeks with no viable offers. Some wished for seller financing, others are concerned with possible leaks or issues with mold. In the weeks that followed, the price was dropped multiple times. With each price drop there would be a flurry of interest/viewings. But the consistent feedback was that viewers decided that the maintenance issues and perceived costs for repair were greater than they wished to face.

In the end, the Trustees were faced with a choice between an offer of \$80,000, but with several conditions, or the cash offer for \$76,000 with no conditions.

The Presbytery Trustees recommend:

1) That the Presbytery of Lake Michigan approve the sale of the properties described below to Fred Reeder for Seventy-Six Thousand dollars (\$76,000), if the way be clear, of land situated in Decatur, Van Buren County, Michigan, and described as follows:

688 20-4-14 * Lot 4 Block B Original Plat of Decatur + 667 20-4-14
*Lot 3 also W 1/2 of Lot 2 Block B Original Plat of Decatur

Tax codes 80-43-040-254-00 & 80-43-040-255-00

If provided above, any address and tax parcel number are solely for informational purposes, without warranty as to accuracy or completeness. If inconsistent in any way with the legal description above, the legal description shall control.

2) That 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 this decision.

3) That the Presbytery of Lake Michigan join with the First Presbyterian Church of Decatur and give thanks for the way in which God has provided a timely buyer for this property.

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

**REPORT OF THE STATED CLERK
Rev. Dr. Fran Lane-Lawrence
March 14, 2026**

1. **BALANCING OF THE PRESBYTERY ROLLS:** The policy of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan is to balance teaching elders and ruling elders for voting. For purposes of balancing, only those Honorably Retired/Retired members who are active in ministry within the Presbytery are counted. In order to balance the number of teaching elders and ruling elders, the Presbytery will continue with the Roll of Balancing Ruling Elders in 2026, giving voice and vote to ruling elders who are on the Presbytery staff, the Commission on Ministry, the Commission on the Preparation for Ministry, the Leadership Team, the Nominating & Representation Committee, the Budget & Finance Committee, the Permanent Judicial Commission and ruling elders who are GA Commissioners, past Moderators, Christian Educators, and Commissioned Ruling Elders (CREs).
2. **ASSIGNED RULING ELDER COMMISSIONERS:** The assignment for 2026 is as follows: Grand Rapids Westminster and Grand Haven First with four (4) ruling elder commissioners; Grand Rapids Forest Hills, Holland First, Kalamazoo First, and Okemos with three (3) ruling elder commissioners; and Battle Creek First, Brooklyn, Holt First, Lansing First, Niles First, and Spring Lake First with two (2) ruling elder

commissioners to have voice and vote at stated meetings of the presbytery. All other congregations have one (1) ruling elder commissioner.

3. **ANNUAL STATISTICAL REPORTING OF CONGREGATIONS:** The online statistical reporting system for the PC(USA) 2025 Session Annual Statistical Report became available on January 1, 2026. The Session Annual Statistical Report for each congregation was to be approved by the session prior to submission. The deadline for submission of the Session Annual Statistical Report was February 13, 2026. The Associate Clerk helped several congregations with corrections and submission of statistical data prior to and after the February 13, 2026, deadline. All fifty-six (56) congregations of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan submitted their statistical information.
4. **FOR CLERKS OF SESSION - REVIEW OF 2025 SESSION MINUTES:** Planning for the review of 2025 Session Minutes continues. Please find below the schedule for the review of 2025 minutes for each Cluster. Please know that if your schedule does not allow you to attend the minute review in your own cluster, you may attend a minute review in another cluster. 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 2025 Minute Review Checklist is posted on the Presbytery website. Please contact Rev. Annamarie Groenenboom, Associate Clerk, with any questions you might have about the 2025 session minutes reviews.

Cluster 1 – June 9, 2026 at 1 p.m. – Vic Prowant/Annamarie Groenenboom
Location: First Presbyterian Church, 2577 Wickham Drive, Muskegon, MI 49441
Big Rapids United, Cadillac First, Hesperia, Lake City First, Muskegon First

Cluster 2 – May 16, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. – Lynne Ploeg/Annamarie Groenenboom
Location: Parkwood Presbyterian Church, 7998 28th Avenue, Jenison, MI 49428
Grand Haven First, GR Forest Hills, GR North Park, GR Westminster, Holland First, Ionia First, Jenison Parkwood, Rockford North Kent, Spring Lake

Cluster 3 – April 11, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. – Linda Freeze/Annamarie Groenenboom
Location: First Presbyterian Church, 13 South 4th Street, Niles, MI 49120
Buchanan First, Cassopolis United, Decatur First, Edwardsburg, Niles First, Sturgis First

Cluster 4 – June 13, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. – Annamarie Groenenboom
Location: Presbytery Office, 1511 Helen Avenue, Portage, MI 49002
Allegan First, Benton Harbor First, Gobles Bethany, Hastings First, Kalamazoo First, Kalamazoo North, Lyons-Muir Federated, Paw Paw First, Plainwell First, Portage Westminster, Richland First, Schoolcraft First, Three Rivers/Centreville First

Cluster 5 –April 18, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. - Bruce Archer/Annamarie Groenenboom
Location: First Presbyterian Church, 313 East Maple, Mason, Michigan 48854
East Lansing Eastminster, East Lansing Peoples, Holt First, Lansing Delta, Lansing
First, Lansing North Westminster, Mason First, Okemos, Stockbridge First, Gregory
Unadilla

Cluster 6 – May 30, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. – Russell Jacobson/Annamarie Groenenboom
Location: First Presbyterian Church, 743 W Michigan Ave, Jackson, MI 49201
Battle Creek First, Battle Creek Pennfield, Battle Creek Westlake, Brooklyn,
Coldwater First, Concord First, Dimondale First, Homer First, Jackson First, Jackson
Westminster, Jonesville First, Marshall First

5. **BOUNDARY AND ETHICS TRAINING:** The PC(USA) Constitution in the *Book of Order* mandates that 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 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. Dr. Fran Lane-Lawrence, Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk or Mx. Emily Franson, Communications and Technology Manager, for information about how to complete the training.

Upcoming Dates:

March 21, 2026 - 10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.
April 13, 2026 - 4:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.
May 17, 2026 - 1:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.
June 5, 2026 - 10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.
October 21, 2026 - 4:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M.
November 2, 2026 - 10:00 A.M. - 2:00 P.M.
December 5, 2026 - 9:30 A.M. - 1:30 P.M.

The Boundary Trainings are all via Zoom and led by Rev. Dr. Fran Lane-Lawrence. They are for both Ruling Elders and Teaching Elders and include the topic of sexual misconduct and child sexual abuse prevention training so satisfy the requirements of the PCUSA Book of Order in G-3.0106.

6. **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.***
7. **DATES FOR STATED MEETINGS IN 2026:** The dates for stated meetings of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan for 2026 are as follows:

- a. Saturday, March 14, 2026 – *DIMONDALE FIRST*
- b. Tuesday, June 9, 2026 – *MUSKEGON FIRST*
- c. Saturday, September 12, 2026 -*RICHLAND FIRST*
- d. Tuesday, November 17, 2026 - *HASTINGS FIRST*

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

8. REPORTS OF ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSIONS FOR ORDINATION/ INSTALLATION:

An Administrative Commission appointed by the Presbytery of Lake Michigan met at 2:51 p.m. on January 18, 2026, at First Presbyterian Church of Sturgis, MI, to ordain and install the Rev. Craig Kunkle as Solo Pastor for an Indefinite period. With a quorum being present, the meeting was called to order with prayer by the moderator, Elder Ben Boerkoel (GR Westminster). Present were Teaching Elders Rev. Brenda Deily (Retired), Rev. Annamarie Groenenboom (VM), and Rev. Dr. David Weber (Brooklyn), and Ruling Elders Pattie Bender (Three Rivers/Centreville First) and Eileen Best (Portage Westminster). Seated as Corresponding Members were Rev. John Best (HR), Deacon Norman Hollabaugh (Baptist General Association of Virginia), Rev. Roderik P. Frohman (HR, Genesee Valley Presbytery), Rev. Abraham D. Allende (Northeastern Ohio Synod, ELCA), Rev. Dr. Kris Veldheer (Episcopal Diocese of Michigan), and Rev. Susan Babb (Michigan Conference, UMC). Rev. Annamarie Groenenboom was appointed to serve as Clerk of the Commission. The Commission proceeded to the service. The meeting adjourned at 4:18 p.m. with the benediction by the newly ordained and installed Rev. Craig Kunkle at the close of the service.

9. REPORTS OF ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSIONS:

**Presbytery of Lake Michigan
Administrative Commission for First Presbyterian Church of Decatur, MI
and First Presbyterian Church of Paw Paw, MI
March 14, 2026**

The Administrative Commission (AC) met via Zoom on Thursday, February 19, 2026, at 4:00 PM.

Members present: Elder Shannon Allen (Decatur First), Rev. Scott Scheel (Edwardsburg), Rev. Cathy Hoop (Holland First)

PLM Staff members present: Rev. Dr. Fran Lane-Lawrence (Stated Clerk/Executive Presbyter), Rev. Dr. Cal Bremer (Assistant to the Executive Presbyter)

The meeting was opened with prayer by Rev. Fran Lane-Lawrence.

Actions:

1. The AC concurred with the PLM Trustees regarding the sale of the FPC Decatur property.
2. A unanimous motion prevailed to approve the by-laws for Pine Street Presbyterian Church (online only).
3. A unanimous motion prevailed to approve the Addendum to the Plan of Merger, adopted May 2025.

Rev. Lane-Lawrence reviewed the next steps of the process.

Recommendation to Presbytery:

The Administrative Commission for Paw Paw First/Decatur First recommends the following:

That the Presbytery of Lake Michigan

1. Approve the Addendum to the Plan of Merger (online only)
2. Amendment of the date of dissolution for each congregation from March 15, 2026, to September 30, 2026, to provide flexibility in the process as needed. The change in the specific merger step is as follows:

The Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Paw Paw, MI needs to call a congregational meeting to approve the dissolution of the congregation “when the way be clear,” but not later than September 30, 2026.

The Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Decatur, MI needs to call a congregational meeting to approve the dissolution of the congregation “when the way be clear,” but not later than September 30, 2026.

The meeting was closed in prayer by Rev. Scott Scheel at 4:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

The Administrative Commission of Paw Paw First and Decatur First

Rev. Cathy Hoop (Holland First)

Rev. Scott Scheel (Edwardsburg)

Elder Shannon Allen (Decatur First)

Presbytery of Lake Michigan
Administrative Commission for Delta Presbyterian Church of Lansing, MI
and First Presbyterian Church of Dimondale, MI
March 14, 2026

The Administrative Commission (AC) for Delta Presbyterian Church of Lansing, MI, and the First Presbyterian Church of Dimondale, MI, has been working with both Sessions and congregations as they contemplate a possible consolidation of the two congregations, which are the only two PC(USA) churches in Eaton County. Both congregations are currently worshipping together, and rotating their worship services between the two church buildings on an approximately monthly basis. Members of the AC have been in attendance at separate Session meetings for each congregation, and at joint Session meetings for both congregations. A member of the AC also gave a brief presentation in worship about the purpose of the AC and emphasized that the AC's role is not to determine the futures of the congregations, but rather to help both congregations in a process that will hopefully discern the best possible outcome for all parties.

In January, Rev. Jeff O'Neill (HR) resigned from the AC due to personal reasons. Ruling Elder Tom Schaberg (Okemos) was appointed to the AC.

The AC conducted a Town Hall meeting on Sunday, February 8, 2026, engaging members of both congregations and allowing every member an opportunity to ask questions, make comments, or raise concerns. These were recorded. On Sunday, February 15, 2026, at a joint Session meeting, the AC and the Sessions processed the feedback, created four task forces, and developed a timeline for the process of discernment.

The task forces will address, hypothetically, if the two congregations were to consolidate, what would need to happen regarding (1) church finances, (2) church administration (including review of the Bylaws, policies, and organizational structures of both congregations), (3) property (including accessibility, technology, and possible sale of one building), and (4) community connections (including building usage by outside groups and the possible impact that a consolidation might have on the surrounding communities). Each task force will include a representative from both Sessions and at least one additional member from each congregation.

The task forces will have approximately three months to conduct their work. Their findings will be presented to both congregations at the end of May 2026. Members of the congregations will have an opportunity to prayerfully consider the matter over the summer. A Town Hall meeting for both congregations will be held in September 2026 for further discussion. Congregational meetings are planned for October 2026 to vote on the possible consolidation.

We would invite your prayers for these congregations and their leaders as they wrestle with difficult questions and consider significant changes to their important and life-giving ministries.

Respectfully Submitted by

The AC for Delta Presbyterian Church of Lansing, MI, and the First Presbyterian Church of Dimondale, MI

Rev. Bill Pinches (Mason First)
Ruling Elder Heather Myer (East Lansing Eastminster)
Ruling Elder Tom Schaberg (Okemos)

**Presbytery of Lake Michigan
Administrative Commission for First Presbyterian Church of Marshall, MI
March 14, 2026**

The Administrative Commission for First Presbyterian Church of Marshall, MI, has observed and celebrated significant strides toward health and order by the session of Marshall First. A Nominating Committee was restored this fall, and a slate of elders with staggered class terms was elected at the Annual Congregational Meeting on January 25, 2026. The session has been demonstrating appropriate leadership in scheduling pulpit supply and communion, providing opportunities for communion visits with the Deacons, and preparing session agendas. They are moving forward with plans for better communication with staff, resuming annual staff reviews, examining the budget, and clarifying spending limits above which the session must approve spending. Policies have been reviewed and updated or created as needed. The Ministry Discernment Profile for Marshall First has been approved by the session and COM and the Session is actively searching for a part-time interim pastor.

The AC appointed a moderator for the Annual Congregational Meeting who was prevented by inclement weather from attending. The session took action together to reach out to their appointed Session Moderator, Rev. Steve Kaszar (Concord First/Homer First), who was available and willing to moderate. While this was not strictly in order, the AC agreed that the session acted in good faith and took appropriate action in a difficult situation.

The AC members have been especially encouraged to observe the session take leadership for problem-solving, vision-casting, mission discernment, and conflict resolution. At this stage, the AC is focused on helping the Marshall Session maintain ordered functions until they have found the interim pastoral leadership they need.

Official Actions that have been taken by the AC:

- The AC met on 12/18/25, 01/07/26, 01/14/26, 01/28/26, 02/04/26, and 02/18/26
- 12/15/2025: Elder Nancy Toth and Rev. Sarah Schmidt-Lee attended the Marshall, First Session meeting.
- 12/18/2026: The AC appointed Rev. Dr. Fran Lane-Lawrence (Stated Clerk/Executive Presbyter) to serve as moderator of the Annual Congregational Meeting on January 25,

2026.

- 01/12/2026: Rev. Kristin Stroble (COM Support Staff) and Rev. Sarah Schmidt-Lee attended the Marshall Session meeting in person and Elder Nancy Toth attended by zoom. They shared Presbyterian Foundation Resources for assessing church finances and discerning future pathways. Rev. Stroble and Rev. Schmidt-Lee also met with Elder Jeff Karns who resigned in the summer of 2025, but expressed willingness to accept a nomination to serve on session again in 2026. In this meeting, they confirmed that this nomination would be in order and would be consistent with the AC's goals.
- 02/18/2026: Trustee Brad Sparks and Rev. Sarah Schmidt-Lee attended the Marshall Session meeting in person; Elder Nancy Toth attended by zoom. Minutes from the Annual Congregational Meeting were reviewed to ensure that in the absence of the appointed moderator, the meeting was moderated appropriately and business was conducted in order.

Please join us in praying for God's blessing on this congregation and Session as they search for their interim pastor.

Respectfully Submitted by

The AC for First Presbyterian Church of Marshall, MI

Rev. Sarah Schmidt-Lee (Validated Ministry, First Congregational Church UCC Kalamazoo)

Elder Nancy Toth (Jackson First)

Trustee Brad Sparks (GR Westminster)

First Presbyterian Church of Richland, MI
Presbytery of Lake Michigan
Administrative Commission for First Presbyterian Church of Richland, MI
March 14, 2026

The Administrative Commission continues its work. Since the last Stated Meeting on December 02, 2025, the AC representatives met with the Richland Session on December 10, 2025, January 14, 2026, and February 11, 2026, either in person or by Zoom.

The Richland AC normally meets weekly by Zoom to discuss progress, identify issues to address, and identify resources to provide to the Richland Session and other congregational leaders. Rev. Dr. Calvin Bremer (Assistant to Executive Presbyter) and Rev. Dr. Fran Lane-Lawrence (Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk), Rev. Kristin Stroble (COM Staff Support) often attend our weekly Zoom meetings. Interim Pastor at First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Calandra Nevenzel, meets once a month with the AC by Zoom.

Interim Pastor, Rev. Nevenzel, and the Session spend profitable time each month discussing the book "*Creating a Healthier Church*" by Ronald W. Richardson. This study and discussion have provided many helpful insights.

The AC reminds the Richland Session and congregation that time spent with an Interim Pastor is for working through difficult issues and understanding their church dynamics and history. The AC's work is vital in preparing the Richland Church for the eventual forming of a PNC, preparing a Mission Study, and the calling of a new installed Pastor.

The AC works closely with the Commission on Ministry (COM). Rev. Stroble was present at the January 14, 2026, Session meeting to outline the process and likely timelines in the search for a new pastor.

At the January 2026 Congregational Meeting, Elder Andy Sanford, Elder Jerrod Heck, and Elder Nicki Valentine were elected as elders.

The Richland Session continues to make additional progress in reviewing, updating, and clarifying their church policies and procedures as they relate to committees, staff, and finances. They are also working on developing a conflict of interest policy and encouraging maximal participation by members of the congregation. The Richland AC is prepared to work with the Session in crafting a policy that takes into consideration the realities of a smaller congregation.

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

Respectfully,
Elder Stuart Deming (Kalamazoo First)
Rev. David Milbourn (HR)
Rev. Dan Anderson (HR)

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
March 14, 2026**

Since the last Presbytery meeting, the COM Plenary has met once (February 3, 2026) for training and a meeting, and the East and West 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

November 18, 2025.

- 2. **A motion prevailed** to approve the February 2, 2026, Regional Action Report.
- 3. **A motion prevailed** to recommend to the Presbytery of Lake Michigan to grant Rev. David Braak (VM, Faith Hospice) the status of Retired, effective March 14, 2026.
- 4. **A motion prevailed** to add Rev. Pat Weatherwax (HR) to the Pulpit Supply List.
- 5. **A motion prevailed** to add Elder Jose Soto (Portage Westminster) to the Pulpit Supply List.
- 6. Battle Creek, Pennfield: **A motion prevailed** to approve the Covenant Agreement between Pennfield Presbyterian Church of Battle Creek, MI, and Rev. Bert Nelson as Part-Time (20 hours) Interim Pastor effective January 1, 2026- January 1, 2027.

Cash Salary	\$44,000
Vacation	1 week per quarter
Continuing Education	1 week every six months
Full cost of Interim Training	
<i>Professional Expenses are included in the cash salary</i>	

- 7. Brooklyn: **A motion prevailed** to approve their Mission Discernment Profile.
- 8. Buchanan: **A motion prevailed** to appoint Rev. Jan Van Leer (HR) as the moderator of Session effective November 19, 2025.
- 9. Coldwater First: Rev. Susan Reichenberg accepted a new call, and her last worship service was on February 18, 2026. **A motion prevailed** to dissolve the pastoral relationship between Rev. Susan Reichenberg and First Presbyterian Church of Coldwater, effective February 18, 2026.
- 10. **A motion prevailed** to appoint Rev. Steve Kaszar as moderator for the session meeting on February 19, 2026. Elder Mike Bryan will also attend the session meeting.
- 11. Decatur First/Paw Paw First: **A motion prevailed** to approve the covenant agreement between First.
- 12. Presbyterian Church of Paw Paw, MI, First Presbyterian Church of Decatur, MI, and Rev. Gail Monsma as full-time Interim Pastor effective January 1, 2026-December 31, 2026, with several revisions.

Cash Salary	\$49,193
Housing Allowance	\$30,000
Total Effective Salary	\$79,193
BOP	\$20,590

SECA	\$6,058
Professional Expenses	\$800
Professional Development	\$1,200
Phone Reimbursement	\$600
Mileage	\$1,500
Vacation	4 weeks ,including 4 Sundays
Professional Development	2 weeks, including 2 Sundays
Spiritual Renewal	1 week , including 1 Sunday

13. Grand Rapids North Park: **A motion prevailed** to appoint Rev. Ruth Lowry (MAL) as moderator during Rev. Philomena Ofori-Nipaah’s absence, effective December 1, 2025.

14. Kalamazoo First: Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldryer accepted another call. His final Sunday was March 1, 2026. **A motion prevailed** to dissolve the pastoral relationship between Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldryer and First Presbyterian Church of Kalamazoo, MI, effective April 12, 2026. **A motion prevailed** to approve the covenant agreement between First Presbyterian Church of Kalamazoo, MI, and Rev. Chrissy Westbury as full-time Associate Pastor (Temporary Stated Supply) effective January 1, 2026-December 31, 2026. Rev. Amber Nettleton and Elder Pam Zandt absented themselves from the discussion and abstained from the vote.

Cash Salary	\$55,400
Housing Allowance	\$20,000
Total Effective Salary	\$75,400

Professional Expenses	\$2,500
Professional Development	\$2,500
Mileage	\$2,000
Vacation	4 weeks ,including 4 Sundays
Professional Development	2 weeks, including 2 Sundays

15. Kalamazoo North: **A motion prevailed** to approve the Covenant Agreement between North Presbyterian Church of Kalamazoo, MI, and Elder Charles Moerdyk as part time (9-12 hours) Commissioned Ruling Elder effective January 1, 2026 - December 31, 2028. **A motion prevailed** to extend Elder Charles Moerdyk’s commission to serve North Presbyterian Church of Kalamazoo, MI, effective January 1, 2026 - December 31, 2028.

Salary:	\$5,100
Housing Allowance:	\$5,100
Expenses:	\$500 (including mileage at IRS rate)
Books/Continuing Education:	\$500
Two (2) weeks of continuing education	
Four (4) weeks of vacation	

16. Lansing First: Rev. Barbara Edema’s final Sunday was January 11, 2026. **A motion prevailed** to approve the MDP pending changing the position from “permanent pastor” to “installed pastor.” Rev. Dr. Fran Lane-Lawrence (Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk) and Rev. Kristin Stroble (COM Support Staff) will lead Officer Training on February 21, 2026.
17. Lansing North Westminster: Exit Interviews and the Covenant of Closure between North Westminster and Rev. Timothy Chon (VM) have been completed. Rev. Chon’s last Sunday was January 4, 2026. The Session will begin Project Regeneration with the Presbyterian Foundation in January 2026. Rev. Kristin Stroble provided officer training on January 10, 2026. **A motion prevailed** to ratify the action taken on the Covenant Agreement between North Westminster Presbyterian Church of Lansing, MI, and Rev. Laura Miller-Purrenhage as part-time (20 hours) Bridge Pastor effective January 1, 2026 - March 31, 2026.

Cash Salary:	\$2,942
Housing:	\$5,802
Pension Benefits:	\$1,161.25
Life & Disability Insurance:	\$124.50
SECA Allowance:	\$634.50
Mileage:	\$250
Professional Development:	\$250
Books/Prof. Expenses:	\$250
Medical Reimbursements:	\$625

One (1) week of paid vacation including one (1) Sunday
 One (1) week of Continuing Education including one (1) Sunday
 Follow PLM Policy of Family and Medical Leave
 Two (2) sick days

A motion prevailed to appoint Rev. Laura Miller-Purrenhage as moderator of their Annual meeting on February 1, 2026.

18. Marshall First: **A motion prevailed** to approve Mx. Shane Morgan to preach at Marshall First during the month of December 2025. **A motion prevailed** to approve Marshall First’s Ministry Discernment Profile for an interim pastor
19. Schoolcraft: The congregation’s MDP is now active on the CLC. **A motion prevailed** to approve the Covenant Agreement between First Presbyterian Church of Schoolcraft, MI, and Rev. Tom Kragt as Part-time (25 hours) Interim (Stated Supply) Pastor effective February 2, 2026 - July 31, 2026.

Salary:	\$15,273
Free Use of Manse and Payment of Actual Utilities	
Contributions to Retirement Account:	\$175/month

Mileage reimbursed at IRS rate
 Continuing Education: \$800
 Book Allowance: \$300
 Two (2) weeks of vacation, including two (2) Sundays
 One (1) week of professional development
 Follow PLM Family Leave Policy

20. Spring Lake: The church secretary, Mx. Ruth Sorenson, contacted the COM to inform them they had an individual attending the church who forged checks and signatures totalling \$8,000. They are working with the bank and the police to resolve the matter. They do not know how that individual got their bank information. The COM suggested that the church review their security and policies to make sure their financial information is secure. **A motion prevailed** to approve the Covenant Agreement between Spring Lake Presbyterian Church and Rev. Dan Griswold (RCA) as full-time Interim Pastor effective February 1, 2026 - January 26, 2027.

Salary: \$62,200
 Housing \$25,000
 Total Effective Salary \$75,400
 Pension \$9,600
 Medical Benefits \$26,260

SECA \$6,700
 Mileage \$1,000
 Professional Expenses \$2,500
 Professional Development \$2,100
 Vacation 4 weeks ,including 4 Sundays
 Professional Development 2 weeks, including 2 Sundays
 Follow PLM Family Leave Policy

A motion prevailed to approve Rev. Doug Brower as moderator of the congregation's session on December 15, 2025. **A motion prevailed** to approve Rev. Dale Swihart (HR Lake Huron Presbytery) to moderate the congregational meeting on December 21, 2025, and the annual meeting on February 2, 2026.

21. Sturgis First: Permission from the Presbytery of Genesee Valley for Rev. Viktoria Berlik to labor outside the bounds was granted. **A motion prevailed** to allow Rev. Viktoria Berlik to labor within the bounds of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan to serve communion at Sturgis on December 24, 2025. Rev. Craig Kunkle was ordained and installed on January 18, 2026. **A motion prevailed** to approve the Administrative Commission to ordain and install Mx. Kunkle at First Presbyterian Church of Sturgis, MI, on January 18, 2026, at 3pm.

Rev. Brenda Deily (HR)
 Elder Pattie Bender (Three Rivers/Centreville First)
 Rev. Dr. David Weber (Brooklyn)

Elder Eileen Best (Portage Westminster)
Elder Ben Boerkoel (GR Westminster)
Rev. Annamarie Groenenboom (VM)

This concludes the report of the Commission on Ministry.

**PRESBYTERY OF LAKE MICHIGAN
REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THE PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY
March 14, 2026**

The Commission met two times since the last Stated Meeting of the Presbytery. We had regular stated meetings on December 16, 2025, January 27, 2026, and February 24, 2026. The following report deals with 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. On December 16, 2025, a **motion prevailed** to approve the minutes of the Commission on the Preparation for Ministry from October and November of 2025.
2. On January 27, 2026, a **motion prevailed** to approve the minutes of the Commission on the Preparation for Ministry from December of 2025.
3. On February 24, 2026, a **motion prevailed** to approve the minutes of the Commission on the Preparation for Ministry from January of 2026.
4. On February 24, 2026, a **motion prevailed** to enthusiastically recommend to COM that Elder Jose Soto (Portage Westminster) is certified ready to serve as a Commissioned Ruling Elder pending completion of his Midwest Vocational Assessment and 6 months of membership at Westminster Portage.
5. On February 24, 2026, a **motion prevailed** to approve the CPM Commission Description with suggested revisions.

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

This concludes the Consent Agenda

WORSHIP

Dr. Stephen Keizer, along with several members of the Presbytery led the service of worship. Dr. Keizer read Judges 5:2-6, 12-13 and 1 Corinthians 9:22. He preached a sermon entitled: “Patient Leadership.” During the sermon, Dr. Keizer offered greetings on behalf of the PC(USA) Foundation. He described how leadership requires patience and adaptability. He used the Apostle Paul as an example and called members of the Presbytery to be leaders by adapting to contexts, listening well, being sensitive to cultural context, and humbling ourselves. He encouraged the members of the Presbytery to serve with compassion and respect. Dr. Keizer ended his sermon with a time of prayer for patient leadership. The offering was designated to support immigration ministries in Michigan, and \$1,019.47 was received. The Presbytery commissioned Rev. Kristin Stroble (East Lansing Eastminster), Rev. Steve Kaszar (Homer First/ Concord First), Elder Heather Myer (East Lansing Eastminster), and Elder Ben Boerkoel (GR Westminster) to be the commissioners to the 227th General Assembly. The Presbytery celebrated the Lord’s Supper with the Rev. Ben Rumbaugh presiding at the table.

The Presbytery recessed for a 16-minute break at 10:43 a.m. The meeting was reconvened at 10:59 a.m.

KEYNOTE SPEECH

Dr. Stephen Keizer presented a keynote speech. He offered thanks to Presbytery staff and those who led worship. He recognized Rev. Kyle Nolan (VM) and Rev. Gail Monsma (Decatur First/Paw Paw First) for their various roles within the PC(USA) Foundation. Dr. Keizer led a discussion on Adaptive Leadership and encouraged the Presbytery to consider how to view changes through a lens of theology and to meet people where they are in life. He encouraged those present to think differently, not just act differently.

Dr. Stephen Keizer led a workshop about church finances. He reviewed typical revenue streams for congregations and giving trends. He described generational differences in giving. He encouraged focus on relationships to bring about transformative giving. He discussed different philosophies regarding clergy knowledge about giving practices. He encouraged congregations to engage with experts and to develop a planned giving program. Dr. Keizer inspired church leaders to lean into God and God’s power so that congregations and leaders can be transformative.

NOMINATING & REPRESENTATION COMMITTEE REPORT

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

COM East Region

Rev. Dr. Rob Carlson (HR) effective January 13, 2026

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

PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION

Rev. Charlotte Ellison, HR, for 6 year term (Class of 2030)

COMMISSION ON MINISTRY EAST

RE Monte Shuck, Mason – First, for a 3 year term (Class of 2028)

COMMISSION ON MINISTRY WEST

RE Pam Zandt, Kalamazoo-First for a 3 year term (Class of 2028)

Elder Ben Boerkoel 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.

Rev. Lisa Schrott emphasized the need for Ruling Elders to serve on COM. She also described the resources available to congregations regarding immigration on the Presbytery website.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION FOR FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ALLEGAN, MI REPORT

The members of the Administrative Commission for First Presbyterian Church of Allegan, MI, Rev. Sheth LaRue (Benton Harbor First), Rev. Dr. John Best (HR), and Elder Jud Ross (GR Forest Hills) presented the following information as part of their report.

Recommendation:

After many meetings, conversations, and research, all surrounded by prayer and thoughtful discernment, **the Administrative Commission for the First Presbyterian Church of Allegan, Michigan, established by the Presbytery of Lake Michigan, recommends that the Presbytery of Lake Michigan dissolve the First Presbyterian Church of Allegan, Michigan, effective March 14, 2026.** The Book of Order (G-3.0303b) requires that this action be done in consultation with the church's members. The Administrative Commission has been in ongoing consultation with members of the congregation. We have discerned that the congregation no longer has the financial vitality or leadership capacity to sustain ongoing worship, mission, or ministry within Presbyterian order.

Rational:

The Administrative Commission in this recommendation seeks to honor and protect the stewardship of the Presbytery's time, energy, and the congregation's remaining resources. The congregation has a history of strained pastoral relations going back to the 1960's. Most pastorates have ended with a divided congregation. We are the third Administrative Commission appointed to the First Presbyterian Church of Allegan, Michigan since 2012. The most recent pastorate of Elder Sheri Harris, CRE, ended with pressure by the six or seven active members; several who are relatively new members and who have little understanding or inclination to abide by Presbyterian polity. COM liaisons and Presbytery staff have provided Presbyterian orientation and support. Cooperation for requested information has been difficult, elaborated more fully below. A former Administrative Commission acted with the help of the Presbytery's attorney to release endowed funds restricted for upkeep of the building for church general operations. This allowed the call of Rev. Kathy Nealand and then Elder Sheri Harris to grow the congregation. During which time it was difficult to find members willing to serve on the session, and outreach efforts were items of conflict. The congregation has been struggling with a lack of financial vitality and a lack of leadership capacity since approximately 2012. The Presbytery of Lake Michigan (PLM) has worked with the session and congregation off and on at their request during that time period, both directly through Administrative Commissions, and through the Commission on Ministry (COM). Presbytery and

COM records indicate that the Presbytery has worked regularly and diligently to strengthen the capacity and vitality of the congregation.

Background:

In January 2025, all members of the session of the First Presbyterian Church of Allegan, MI, resigned. This was the second time in the span of as many years that the First Presbyterian Church of Allegan, MI was unable to maintain numbers sufficient to form a session. Upon the resignation of the members of session, the Commission on Ministry (COM), which had been working with the session for many months, recommended that the PLM appoint an Administrative Commission (AC) for the purposes and scope that appear below.

Purpose:

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 assume original jurisdiction of the session so that all PCUSA constitutional and State of Michigan corporate requirements are fulfilled.
2. To determine if the congregation has the capacity to engage in future mission and ministry or to recommend dissolution of the congregation.
3. If it is determined that the congregation has the capacity to engage in future mission and ministry, to assist the congregation in determining that engagement.

Scope of Authorities

1. This Administrative Commission has the full authority of the Presbytery of Lake Michigan, except where limited by provisions of the PC(USA) Book of Order, as regards the correction of the reported disorder listed in items 1-3 under Purpose.
2. In the assumption of original jurisdiction, the Administrative Commission will act with the full power and authority of the session.
3. The First Presbyterian Church of Allegan, MI, will be responsible for all fees incurred should a consultant be required to help resolve any areas of disorder, and for all costs of dissolution and sale of the property in the event the congregation is dissolved.

The Work of the Administrative Commission

The Administrative Commission has been meeting most weeks since mid-October 2025, by Zoom, joined by Rev. Dr. Fran Lane-Lawrence (Stated Clerk/Executive Presbyter), Rev. Dr. Cal Bremer (Assistant to the Executive Presbyter), and Rev. Kristin Stroble (COM Support Staff) (on occasion). Members of the AC met in person with the church's three employees, and corresponded with all congregational members listed on the membership rolls by the U.S. Postal Service on November 23, 2025. The purpose of the communication was to invite each member to meet in person with the AC to provide feedback. The AC met individually with four members who responded to the AC's invitation. The AC used the feedback in its discernment process relative to the congregation's vitality and energy for future worship, mission, and ministry.

Research of **Session Records** found that the last Session minutes to be included in the Session Minutes Book was in 2022. The clerk of session for 2023-24 was in name only and knew little about the Session records. Rev. Sherri Harris took the Session minutes. Session minutes for 2023 and 2024

were later provided by Rev. Harris upon request. The Church registry had not been updated for three or four years. We found 11 members whose deaths had not been recorded. We identified 13 active members of which one has since died, four are homebound, two live elsewhere, one of whom financially gives two-thirds of the church's reported contributions, one member is neurodivergent, and the remaining six are senior citizens.

Worship: The church averages six at worship, occasionally with pulpit supply worship leaders. At other times they tune into the streamed services of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Grand Rapids, MI, and a church in Nashville, TN, they know about and like. Their long-tenured organist resigned midyear 2025 with so few attending. A guitarist from the Folk Festival leads music when they have a worship leader.

Mission/Building Use: The church is used for a variety of community services. A Folk Musical Group has held concerts in the sanctuary for years, but due to funding has been less active recently. "Friends on Wednesday," a lifelong learning program utilizes the fellowship hall weekly for educational gatherings. In January 2026, the church hosted a warming center while a permanent location was being prepared. A man experiencing homelessness is living in the manse without Administrative Commission approval.

Finances: 2025 Income: \$47,786, of which, \$34,115 were contributions. 2025 Expenses: \$136,585 of which \$67,387 was for steeple, roof, and manse repair, \$34,120 in payroll. Bank and Investment Balance December 31, 2025: \$207,737. Liabilities: \$6,353. Total Equity and Liability as of December 31, 2025: \$201,384.

Administration: One of the purposes for which the PLM appointed the AC was to assume original jurisdiction since no session exists. The PC(USA) *Book of Order* provides in G-4.0102, "*The ruling elders on the session of a congregation, who are eligible under the civil law, shall be the trustees of the corporation . . .*" The AC, acting as the session, sought to put in order State of Michigan corporate requirements to name the AC as the current officers/trustees. But in spite of multiple requests for the login username and password to the Michigan State Licensing and Regulatory Affairs website, this information has not been provided as of the date this report was written. The AC needs that information to address legal matters related to the corporation. The AC also requested keys to the church and manse, bank account information, usernames, and passwords for various online accounts. The church secretary, who is also a member, contacted members of the congregation and responded with an email of outrage with church members' names attached. Some information has subsequently been shared, but access to office computers and keys to the manse have yet to be shared. The AC is working to gain access to bank accounts and the login to the MI Licensing and Regulatory Affairs website.

Conversations with the Congregation: The AC met with the congregation following worship on February 1, 2026, to discuss the AC's findings and decision to recommend to the Presbytery to dissolve the congregation. The meeting was attended by seven members and eight friends of the church, most new within the last 2-3 weeks. The news was received with immediate pushback and a plea for one more chance with Presbytery help. We discussed next steps and what will happen with the church's real estate and finances. After 45 minutes of discussion the conversation concluded with an appeal to reconsider.

After the February 1, 2026, meeting, the AC met and again resolved to recommend to the Presbytery that the First Presbyterian Church of Allegan, MI be dissolved. Rev. Dr. John Best and

Elder Jud Ross met with the congregation on February 10, 2026, to affirm the AC's decision. Questions were asked about the church's real estate and finances. According to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., Part II, The Book of Order, G-4.0203, "All property held by or for a congregation, a presbytery, a synod, the General Assembly, or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), whether legal title is lodged in a corporation, a trustee or trustees, or an unincorporated association, and whether the property is used in programs of a congregation or of a higher council or retained for the production of income, is held in trust nevertheless for the use and benefit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)."

The AC continues to move toward our plan to hold a final regular worship service on March 8, 2026, and a celebratory service later in the spring.

After a time of discussion, **a motion prevailed** to dissolve the First Presbyterian Church of Allegan, Michigan, effective March 14, 2026.

COMMISSION ON MINISTRY

Rev. Ben Rumbaugh welcomed Rev. Dr. Daniel Griswold (Spring Lake) to the Presbytery of Lake Michigan.

JUSTICE MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY

Rev. Sarah Schmidt-Lee (VM) invited members of the Presbytery to participate in the Palm Sunday Path on March 29, 2026, in response to Christian Nationalism. The Palm Sunday Path is a nationwide movement to voice the values of the Christian faith based on Matthew 25. On March 29, 2026, Christians will gather in Lansing, MI and march to the capital. Rev. Schmidt-Lee encouraged all members of the Presbytery to register and volunteer.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE PRESBYTER

Rev. Dr. Fran Lane-Lawrence highlighted several exciting opportunities in the Presbytery, including several grants to assist with creative ministry, mergers/unions, and closures.

REPORT OF THE BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Elder Beth Dyer (Kalamazoo First) offered a report from the Budget and Finance Committee. Elder Dyer reported the income and expenses summary for 2025. The information was provided prior to the annual financial review. The 2025 Operating Revenue was \$367,117. The 2025 Operating Expenses were \$193,974. The 2025 Investment gains were \$528,563.23. The total unrestricted fund balance as of December 31, 2025, was \$4,090,707.38.

PRESENTATION FROM THE BOARD OF PENSIONS

Rev. Luke Choi, Representative of the Board of Pensions, offered an update from the Board of Pensions. He encouraged members of the Presbytery to consider the Minister's Debt Relief and the new Childcare Assistance Program. He also invited all present to the Regional Benefits Summit at GR Westminster on April 15, 2026. He also invited all retired pastors to attend a lunch at Lansing First on October 21, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:53 p.m. Elder Ben Boerkoel closed the meeting with prayer and the extinguishing of the Christ Candle.

**The next Presbytery meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 9, 2026
at First Presbyterian Church
2577 Wickham Drive
Muskegon, MI 49441**