

MINUTES OF

STATED MEETING OF HOLSTON PRESBYTERY
ROGERSVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
309 W KYLE ST.
ROGERSVILLE, TN
FEBRUARY 3, 2024

CALL TO ORDER:

Holston Presbytery met for its stated meeting at Rogersville Presbyterian Church, Rogersville, TN. The stated meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM by Moderator Kathi Cary who opened with prayer. Moderator Cary welcomed first time commissioners and guests. A quorum was present.

ENROLLMENT:

TEACHING ELDERS PRESENT/ABSENT:

Name	Present	Absent
Adams, Collin	X	
Alderman, Brian		X
Amstutz, Sharon	X	
Anderson, William	X	
Armistead, Robert L.		X
Askew, Catherine Clasen		X
Austin, Richard C.		X
Barron, Earle		X
Bement, Gary		X
Bier, Tom		X
Blackwelder, Andy	X	
Bohn, Christine	X	
Cartwright, Gregory		X
Cave, Payne		X
Chapman, Alan		X
Christian, H. Martin		X
Clark, Dan		X

Clements, Lee		X
Cobb, Harrell L.		X
Coggin, Mitch		X
Davis, Brandon	X	
Donaldson, Dan	X	
Fifield, Richard L.		X
Florence, Kaye		X
Greene, Bishop	X	
Hazelwood, Deven		X
Helphinstine, Paul		X
Hollingshead, Glenda		X
Hopper, Barron	X	
Huff, Allen	X	
Hutchison, Ralph		X
Hyers, William D.		X
Jenkins, Todd		X
Johnson, Khayla		X
Jordan, Greg		X
Kestner, C. Phillip		X
Kendall, Teresa	X	
Knisley, Mark	X	
Locke, Patricia		X
Marcos, Ramy	X	
Martin, James		X
Martin, John L.		X
Mays, James		X
Meredith, Tim W.		X
Moore, Diana		X
Norris, Rodney	X	
Randolph, J. David		X
Raum, Richard	X	
Ray, Richard		X

Rolling, George L.		X
Russell, Karen	X	
Rust, Maggie	X	
Scruggs, Glenn		X
Schaus, Samuel	X	
Sharrett, Lawrence		X
Shaw, Angus	X	
Shelton, Mike	X	
Steinle, Marshall	X	
Sutherland, Terry		X
Weddington, Sam	X	
Weisz, Stephen R.		X
Welch, David		X
White, Katherine		X
White, Ray		X
White, Robert	X	
Willard, Pat		X
Wintringham, John		X
Wyatt, Brian	X	
Young, William		X

MINISTERS OF OTHER DENOMINATIONS PRESENT/ABSENT:

Na me	Present	Absen t
Diddle, Mark		X
Kizer, Lew		X
Playl, Steve		X

COMMISSIONED RULING ELDERS PRESENT/ABSENT:

Name	Present	Absent
Austin, Jim		X
Ballinger, Calvin		X
Barnette, Anthony		X
Cagle, Tracy	X	
Catts, John		X
Cobb, Marci	X	
Culbertson, Mike		X
Dalton, David		X
Farmer, Mary Jane		X
Freshour, TJ		X
Helton, Gary	X	
Johnson, Nancy		X
Light, David	X	
Morelock, Jeff		X

Rice, Cheryl		X
Stevens, Betty		X
Tucker, John	X	
Wilcox, Becky	X	
Wise, Scott		X
Wright, Kathleen		X

RULING ELDER COMMISSIONERS:

Congregation	Principal	Alternate	Visitor/Other
Amity			
Barton Springs	Elizabeth Tucker		
Bethel, Dandridge			
Bethel, Kingsport	Gary Helton		Nancy Waters/Pat Meade/Pat Brose
Blountville			

Bristol, First	Charles Webb		
Cedar Creek	Becky Wilcox		
Cedarview			
Chuckey			
Clinton			
Cold Spring	Suzi Hooley boer	Lori Fleenor	
Colonial Heights			
Cove Creek			
Covenant	Kathi Cary		
Cross Anchor			
Elizabethton, First	M. Suzanne Moody		
Erwin	Betty Stevens		
Greeneville, First	Kidwell King		
Hebron			
Hopewell			
Jefferson City, First	Martha Sanders		
Jennie Moore			
Johnson City, First			
Jonesborough	Patricia Hurley		
Keystone			
Kingsport, First	Cheryl Rice		
Leesburg			
Magill Memorial			
Morristown, First			
Mountain City			
Mt. Hermon			
New Bethel			

New Ebenezer			
New Market			
New Providence			
Newport			
Oakland			
Old Kingsport			
Philadelphia			
Piney Flats			
Preston Hills	Carolyn Russ		
Reedy Creek, Bristol			
Reedy Creek, Kingsport			
Rock Creek			
Rogersville	Mary Ellen Elkins		
Salem			
Shady Valley			
Shenandoah			
St. Paul			
Strawberry Plains			
Tabernacle			
Timber Ridge	Paul Burkey		
Tri City Korean			
Watauga Avenue			
Waverly Road	Ken Marsh		
Weaver Union			
West Ridge			
Zion			

VISITORS:

Name	Presbytery
Joyce D. Phillips	
Michael Garrison	Holston
Hal Drury	
Justin Miller	Holston
Ethan Thomas	Holston
Dave Cohn	Holston Center
George E. Webb, Jr.	Holston
John Golden	UKirk ETSU

PRESBYTERY MODERATOR: Kathi Cary

PRESBYTERY VICE-MODERATOR: Collin Adams

PRESBYTERY STAFF: Karen Russell, Transitional Executive Presbyter; Chris Bohn, Stated Clerk; John Golden, Campus Ministry Director; David Welch, Transitional Treasurer; Andrea White, Administrative Manager

COMMITTEE CHAIRS: General Mission Board, Rev. Rodney Norris; Board of Trustees, Elder David Light; Committee on Ministry, Rev. Maggie Rust; Committee on Preparation for Ministry, Rev Sam Schaus; Finance, Stewardship and Budget, Rev David Welch; Mission & Outreach, Rev. Marshall Steinle; Discipleship and Evangelism, Rev Greg Cartwright; Representation and Nominating, Rev. Bill Anderson

VISITING/CORRESPONDING TEACHING ELDERS/MINISTERS:

VISITORS: Joyce Phillips, Michael Garrison, Hal Drury, Justin Miller, Nancy Waters, Ethan Thomas, Dave Cohn, George Webb Jr.

The below consent agenda was approved:

Consent Agenda:

All matters listed under the Consent Agenda are considered to be in the normal course of business by the Presbytery and will be enacted by one motion in the form listed. If discussion is required from the floor of Presbytery, the item in question will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered separately.

- Approve enrollment
- Declaration of quorum (at least 3 ruling elders and 3 teaching elders from 3 different congregations)
- Approve giving voice to visiting teaching elders
- Approve minutes of November 7, 2023, Stated Meeting (separate document)
- Appointment of Committee on Thanks – Robert White and Gary Helton
- Appointment of Bills & Overtures Committee – Brian Wyatt and Tracy Cagle
- Adoption of Docket

INTRODUCTION OF NEW BUSINESS -None

ELECTION OF GA YOUNG ADULT ADVISORY DELEGATE

The moderator recognized Rev. Bill Anderson, chair of the Nominations committee and nominations were opened for GA Young Advisory Delegate (2-yr term). Angus Shaw nominated Maggie Jacobs (FPC Johnson City). No other nominations were made, and Maggie was elected by acclamation.

SPECIAL GUEST PRESENTATION

Moderator Cary recognized Dave Cohn, Holston Presbytery Camp & Conference Center, who made a brief presentation about summer camp. The camp is still looking for summer staff, and there is scholarship money available for campers living within the bounds of Holston Presbytery.

COMMITTEE REPORTS NOT REQUIRING ACTION

Discipleship & Evangelism - No Report

Greg Cartwright

UKirk Director's Report –

John Golden

Records of Activities from October 18, 2023 – January 15, 2024:

- Weekly Worship at UKirk ETSU

- o Worship and Communion led by Rev. Andy Blackwelder (October 23)
- o Worship led by Rev. Brandon Davis (November 13)
 - Fall Semester Weekly Small Groups
- o Bible Study (concluded on November 2)
- o LGBTQ+ Spirituality Small Group
- o Thursday Lunch Together
 - Fun Events
- o Halloween Party at Gwen and Hal Hunter’s Home – October 20
- o Thanksgiving Potluck (November 20)
- o Christmas Party – December 4
- o Screening of “White Christmas” at the Budd Frank Theatre – December 1
- o Finals Week Pancake Breakfast - December 11
 - Meetings with ELCA and Episcopal Church representatives about collaborations and partnerships (October 25)
 - Switched Internet Service Provider from Spectrum to Brightridge Internet
 - Campus Ministry Association Meetings (November 9)
- o Planned and Hosted a Residential Advisor Lunch, in partnership with Residential Life (January 10)
 - Sent seven students to Holston Camp and Retreat Center for the Youth Retreat (November 10-12)
 - Brought nine students to Montreat College Conference
 - Began collaboration with Presbyterian colleagues on the UWorship Resource (January 11)
 - Pulpit Supply at Piney Flats Presbyterian Church (November 26)
 - Took vacation from November 10-13 and December 18-29
 - Made plans for nine teaching elders from Holston Presbytery to attend and lead worship at UKirk ETSU for the Monday Night Worship programming during the Spring 2024 semester.

Administration & Personnel Sub-Committee- No report

Dave Welch

Committee on Preparation for Ministry- No report

Sam Schaus

Finance, Budget, & Stewardship -No Report

Rick Raum

Mission and Outreach- - No report

Marshall Steinle

MISSION AND OUTREACH

Supplemental Information: The Five-Cents-A-Meal Grant Applications were received and evaluated for distribution. In the year 2023, we received \$27,474,47, so each organization received \$858.58. Organizations receiving support: ALPS Morristown, Hamblen Central Services, Shades of Grace, Cedar Creek Mission and Outreach, Inc., Cedar Creek Presbyterian Church, Bristol Faith in Action, JC Schools Homeless Education Program, ARM, Loaves and Fishes, Shepherd’s Inn, Rural Resources, Tabernacle Mission Soup Kitchen, Church Street Café, Food on Foot, MATS, Senior Citizens Center, Kingswood Home for Children, SafeSpace, Sunset Gap, Hunger First, Care and Share, Partnership with West Greene HS, Appalachian Service Project, East TN Human Resource Agency, Watauga Avenue Presbyterian Church, Waverly Road Presbyterian Food Pantry

Representation & Nominations-No report

Bill Anderson

Trustees Report – No report

Dave Light

Transitional Stated Clerk's Report

Chris Bohn

1. Who has voice and vote at Holston Presbytery meetings is summarized below:

Who can speak and vote at presbytery meetings:

- Teaching elders who are active members, which includes
 - Teaching elders engaged in validated ministry through installed or contracted congregational ministry in Holston Presbytery
 - Teaching elders engaged in approved validated ministries outside the congregation or outside the Presbytery
 - Teaching elders who have been designated retired
- Teaching elders who have been designated members-at-large
- Primary ruling elder commissioners
- Ruling elders commissioned to pastoral service by Holston Presbytery who are under contract with a congregation
- The presbytery moderator and vice-moderator, if ruling elders, for the term of office

Who can speak at presbytery meetings:

- Corresponding members
- Certified Christian educators
- Others permitted by the presbytery (e.g. committee moderators, staff, guests)

2. General Assembly Annual Statistical Report due February 16, 2024.

Statistical Reporting and Frequently Asked Questions - There is no longer a workbook being produced. PDFs have been created related to the questions and definitions being asked. The PDF and the frequently asked questions can be found at:

<https://oga.pcusa.org/section/churchwide-ministries/stats/>

A unique User ID and Password was emailed to Moderators and Clerks of Session.

Remember to PRINT a copy of your report for your session's minutes book.

3. Review of session records will be held in three geographic clusters this year. Each session moderator or clerk of session (or designee) is invited to bring session's minutes for review at the place/date/time that is most convenient. The session minutes will be peer-reviewed at the in-person gatherings and should take no more than an hour to complete. The dates and locations for the meetings are yet to be determined. More information will be forthcoming.

COMMITTEE REPORTS REQUIRING ACTION

Committee on Ministry

Maggie Rust

INFORMATION:

1. An updated pulpit supply list is available, effective December 29, 2023.
2. The following corrections are noted regarding presbytery membership status currently: Rev. Patricia Locke, retired; Rev. Sharon Amstutz, at-large.
3. During 2023, COM “Ambassadors” visited the following churches during Sunday morning worship to bring greetings and gratitude for their ministries:
Shady Valley Presbyterian Church, Mountain City Presbyterian Church,
Reedy Creek Presbyterian Church (Bristol),
Cedarview Presbyterian Church,
Mt. Hermon Presbyterian Church,
Salem Presbyterian Church, Oakland Presbyterian Church,
New Bethel Presbyterian Church,
New Providence Presbyterian Church, and West Ridge Presbyterian Church.
4. Approved the examination of Rev. Teresa Kendall and transfer her membership from Yellowstone Presbytery to Holston Presbytery, at-large status.
5. Approved the following addition to 2024 compensation guidelines for temporary supply pastors: “Unless otherwise specified in the contract, it is agreed that the contract may be terminated or renewed upon 30 days’ written notice by either the temporary supply or the Session.”
6. Approved Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP) for Piney Flats Presbyterian Church.
7. Approved for 2024 the “validated ministry outside of the congregation” of Rev. Brian Alderman.
8. Approved for 2024 the “validated ministry outside of the congregation” of Rev. Robert White.
9. Approved for 2024 the “validated ministry outside of the congregation” of Rev. Mitch Coggin.
10. Approved for 2024 the “validated ministry outside of the congregation” of Rev. Lawrence Sharrett.
11. Approved for 2024 the “validated ministry outside of the congregation” of Rev. Karen Russell.
12. Appointed Rev. Kaye Florence as session moderator for Piney Flats Presbyterian Church, effective January 1, 2024.

13. Appointed Rev. Sam Schaus as session moderator for Strawberry Plains Presbyterian Church, effective January 8, 2024.

14. Authorized CRE John Tucker to administer the Sacrament of Baptism (as well as Communion) for Barton Springs Presbyterian Church for the duration of his 2024 contract.

15. Approved the renewed part-time Temporary Supply Contract between CRE Traci Cagle and Hopewell Presbyterian Church, effective January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024, with the following terms: salary \$2,180/month, mileage reimbursement at IRS professional rate not to exceed \$200/month, vacation 4 weeks, continuing education 2 weeks; and authorized CRE Cagle to administer the Sacrament of Communion for Hopewell Presbyterian Church for the duration of the contract.

16. Approved the renewed part-time Temporary Supply Contract between CRE Marci Cobb and Cedar Creek Presbyterian Church, effective January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024, with the following terms: salary \$1,800/month, vacation 2 weeks/quarter; and authorized CRE Cobb to moderate session and to administer the Sacraments of Baptism & Communion for Cedar Creek Presbyterian Church for the duration of the contract.

17. Approved the renewed part-time Temporary Supply Contract between the Rev. Harrell Cobb and Spirit-Filled Fellowship, effective January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024, with the following terms: salary \$1,800/month, vacation 2 weeks/quarter.

18. Approved the renewed full-time Temporary Supply Contract between the Rev. Andy Blackwelder and Rock Creek Presbyterian Church, effective January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024, with the following terms: salary \$25,600, housing allowance \$22,400, employer half of SECA \$3,672, professional expenses not to exceed \$3,000, Board of Pensions' Pastors Participation Plan \$18,720, vacation 4 weeks, continuing education 2 weeks; and appointed Rev. Blackwelder to moderate session for the duration of the contract.

19. Approved the renewed part-time Temporary Supply Contract for a Minister of another Denomination between the Rev. Mark Diddle and Keystone Presbyterian Church, effective January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024, with the following terms: housing allowance \$1,200/month, vacation 4 weeks/year; and authorized Rev. Diddle to administer the Sacrament of Communion for Keystone Presbyterian Church for the duration of the contract.

20. Approved the part-time Temporary Supply Contract between CRE Gary Helton and Jennie Moore Presbyterian Church, effective January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024, with the following terms: salary \$200/week, mileage reimbursement at IRS professional rate, vacation 1 week/quarter.

21. Approved the part-time 6-month Temporary Supply Contract between CRE Gloria Baird and Magill Memorial Presbyterian Church, effective January 1, 2024, through June 30, 2024, with the following terms: salary \$1,900/month, vacation 1.5 weeks/quarter; and authorized CRE Baird to moderate session and to administer the Sacraments of Communion and Baptism for Magill Memorial Presbyterian Church for the duration of the contract.

Committee on Ministry

Supplemental Information:

Actions taken by the COM at its January 25 meeting:

- Approve the addition of Dave Cohn, director of Holston Presbytery Camp and Conference Center, to the active pulpit supply list;
- Move Sharon Amstutz to the active pulpit supply list;
- Remove Lee Clements from the active pulpit supply list;
- Approved the contract between Piney Flats Presbyterian Church and the Rev. Teresa Kendall, with the following terms:
 - Temporary Supply (Feb. 1 – Dec. 31, 2024) with an effective annual salary of \$18,500 (including an HSA), BOP dues of 9,540 (Minister's Choice and HDHP), Continuing Education of \$500, Professional Expenses and Travel at \$300, and 6 weeks of vacation/continuing education.
 - Rev. Kendall is appointed moderator of the Piney Flats session for the duration of the contract;
- Approved the Rev. Choonki Kim to serve Tri Cities Korean Presbyterian Church as pastoral leader. Rev. Kim's Faith Narrative is below.

A Statement of Faith – Rev. Choonki Kim

I am a retired pastor, Rev. Choonki Kim. I was born in January of 1950 in a rural area of South Korea as an eldest son among six children. My parents were buddhists from their birth, so I thought I am a buddhist until my age of 18.

A crucial event occurred to me at the age of 18. At a mountain-top prayer meeting, I was touched so strongly by the Holy Spirit. And I was assured that my sins were forgiven by the blood of Jesus, and by accepting Jesus Christ as my Savior. I became a child of God in 1968.

At the end of the prayer meeting, I also vowed to become a servant of God. At the time, my educational background was just elementary school level only. Because my parents were so poor that I couldn't go to middle and high school.

So, I had to pass the qualification exams to get middle and high school educational background to get into the college-level of school. And finally, I entered the Music

College of the Kyung-Hee University (my major was music composition) in 1976 at my age of 26. I was so sure that God accepted my vow to become a servant of God, and God led me step-by-step to pass all those courses. And after finishing undergraduate course (getting B.A.), I entered graduate school of same music college (getting M.A. in music composition).

After that, I came to America and entered Jersey City State College (Jersey City, NJ) to study music education majoring choir conducting. Before finishing, however, the music education course, I started theological studies in Drew Divinity school of Drew University, Madison, NJ, and I transferred to Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, VA. After getting M. Div degree, I went to Columbia Theological Seminary to study Old Testament theology (Th.M. degree), and before finishing the course I was accepted to Claremont Graduate School to get Ph.D. degree, and following year, I transferred to Baylor University for the same program, Waco, TX.

While studying in the Ph.D. program at Baylor, Athens Korean Presbyterian Church asked to come help the crisis of the church temporarily in 1995, until a new pastor take a position as a senior pastor. And right after that, an unexpected thing happened that the church called me to be a senior pastor, and I was ordained a pastor to be a senior pastor of the church in 1996. I became a minister member of P.C.U.S.A. (the North-East Georgia Presbytery) in 1996. It continued for 24-years until my retirement in 2019 at the age of 69.

My original plan when I went to AKPC in 1995 was doing one or two-year ministry until a new pastor comes. But God's plan was different from that of mine, that was serving the church until retirement rather than going back to Baylor University and getting Ph.D. degree. My plan had been changed to God's plan, and it was so wonderful and I'm so glad and happy about that.

And right after my retirement, I was called to a missionary work in Guadalajara, Mexico (2019), and serving a small Korean church I was involved in mission works for native Mexicans until the end of 2023. Amazingly enough, now I am being called to Tri-City Korean Presbyterian Church!

I got married to a devoted Korean girl in Seoul, Korea in 1982, and got two children. And unfortunately, she died of a cancer in 2005. And in 2009 I remarried a faithful widow, who lost her husband 13-years ago and had two children. So, we have four children, from 40-year-old son to 32-year-old girl, two in Korea and two in America.

I believe in Jesus Christ only as my Savior (John 14:6). I also believe in only one God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, the comforter. I believe in the sovereignty of God and God's providence, and that God is omnipotent and omnipresent, so no matter what happens in my life God is my final authoritative being.

RECOMMENDATION TO PRESBYTERY:

That a waiver in the rotation of elders for one year (2024), as provided in Book of Order G 2.0404, be approved for the following churches:

- Piney Flats Presbyterian Church
- Mountain City Presbyterian Church
- St. Paul Presbyterian Church
- Cross Anchor Presbyterian Church
- New Market Presbyterian Church
- Old Kingsport Presbyterian Church
- West Ridge Presbyterian Church
- Shenandoah Presbyterian Church
- Bethel Presbyterian Church (Dandridge)

APPROVED

Transitional Treasurer's Report - No Report

Workshops:

Following a 10-minute break, two workshops were offered. Teresa Kendall led a group on vitalizing small churches, and Karen Russell led a group on stewardship. Both workshops were outstanding.

After a delicious lunch provided by the host congregation, Moderator Cary reconvened the presbytery at 1:00 p.m.

General Mission Board Report

General Mission Board

Supplemental Information:

Strategic Planning for 2024 was discussed. By the end of 2025 the goal is stabilized finances, staff, and committee structure. Committees are strongly encouraged to meet at least quarterly. General Mission Board is an advisory board for the Presbytery, functioning as a unified body for the good of the whole. Priorities continue to be resourcing & connecting. The three-item to-do list coming from this meeting includes (1) prioritize training needs, (2) work on an annual planning calendar, (3) develop committee meeting schedules and goals.

Rodney Norris

Recommendation:

That the draft Manual of Administrative Operations be amended for clarity as follows:

Page 3, paragraph 3, strike out ~~At the penultimate Stated Meeting of the Presbytery each calendar year, nomination for the office of Moderator shall be made by the~~

~~Committee on Representation & Nominations with additional nominations from the floor. and page 3, paragraph 6, strike out The Vice-moderator shall normally be nominated and elected at the penultimate Stated Meeting of the Presbytery and take office at the end of the last Stated Meeting of the Presbytery during the calendar year.~~

Recommendation: That the presbytery adopt the proposed Holston Presbytery Manual of Administrative Operations, which was presented for first reading at the November 7, 2023, meeting of presbytery and is presented for second reading at this meeting.

APPROVED

Transitional Executive Presbyter's Report

Karen Russell

Information

2023 Overview:

- 2023 began with an unexpected staff transition, as it became clear that our treasurer was not performing as needed. That quick transition led to several discoveries about our financial reporting situation that led to our outsourcing of our financial reports. Some of the outcomes from that staff transition (both positive and negative) include:
 - o A clearer picture of our income and expense situation, especially as it relates to campus ministry and where our money originates;
 - o Financial reports that are more easily explained, including the places where we need to do better;
 - o A clearer picture of our personnel costs;
 - o A “re-grouping” of our administrative work, including file creation and retention – there is still much work to be done here.
- Work continued on the revision of our Administrative Manual of Operations, which led to the creation of Standing Rules, approved at our November meeting, and a new Administrative Manual, which is scheduled for a final vote in February 2024.
- A new committee structure was approved and launched for 2024.
- We signed a new Holston Meadows Cabin management agreement with the Holston Camp and Conference Center in May, which is part of a new working agreement with the camp. In addition, to clarify the arrangement of land and building at the site of the cabin, a land lease was executed. The new agreement and work relationship with the camp has led to several new opportunities for partnership, including an annual pastors' retreat at the camp.
- Tri City Korean Presbyterian Church required additional cash to purchase a new church building in Johnson City, and funds for renovation. Using the proceeds from the sale of the Rosemont Church, which were set aside for assistance to immigrant and African American worshiping communities, Holston Presbytery “loaned” the money to Tri City Korean, and the loan will be “paid” through a use of space for presbytery offices. The new office space

includes a small meeting room which has proven quite useful as well as workspace for our administrative manager and the Transitional EP.

- We updated and executed a new covenant agreement with Tusculum University, and this year will update and review the covenant agreement with King University.
- We have made greater use of the Campus House in the past year – for meetings, and for shared space with other campus outreach programs. The General Mission Board now meets at Campus House quarterly, and the hope is to see more groups utilize that space in new ways.
- I attended two EP forums sponsored by the Synod of Living Waters. From those forums, it is clear that recruiting and training of ruling elders to commissioned service is a need synod-wide – if not nationwide. An effort to create a synod level training and evaluation program is underway but has taken a back seat to things that seem more urgent.
- In May I attended my first Presbyterian Leader Fellowship residency. This program, sponsored by the Mission Agency, provides collegial support for presbytery executives – and is quite a good learning opportunity for what’s happening around the church, and best practices for various challenges facing presbyteries. It was also a good resource opportunity for information from various denominational offices – including the Board of Pensions, with the coming changes in the pastor’s participation program.

Specifically in the fourth quarter of 2023:

- I attended the annual Polity, Benefits, and Mission Conference, where the anxiety around coming changes to the Board of Pensions’ pastor participation program was front and center. Other concerns were the coming merger of the Office of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency, this summer’s revamped format for General Assembly, and the ongoing issues created by declining numbers in both people and dollars denomination wide. The difficulty in attracting pastoral candidates is not unique to Holston Presbytery. There are fewer folks enrolling in seminary, and fewer seminary graduates are choosing to go into congregational ministry. The scarcity of pastoral leadership is problematic and will require some creative solutions and approaches.
- I attended the Church Finance conference sponsored by the Presbyterian Foundation, Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program, and the Mission Agency, held in Charlotte. This conference was quite helpful in terms of both making connections for help with things like managing cemeteries, insurance advice, and how to best put what money we have to work on behalf of our congregations.
- I continued to moderate the session at Cold Spring as they launch their search for a pastor. I assisted Hebron Presbyterian in re-forming a session and taking back their own financial affairs after several years of being under an administrative commission.
- I have visited with several sessions and hope to be invited to attend a session meeting at every congregation during the coming year.
- While it was technically in the first quarter of 2024, the updated web page has launched and is operational.

The work of building relationships and supporting congregations continues and will continue. The challenges facing congregations are as unique as the congregations themselves. We still need to build better communication networks between the presbytery and congregations, and between congregations.

Bills and Overtures Committee Report on New Business - **none**

WORSHIP

The meeting closed with worship centered on the theme It Takes All of Us to Be Us: Building Communities of Faith, Hope, Love, and Witness. CRE Becky Wilcox, CRE, preached a stirring sermon about Faith, and Rodney Norris presided over the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The offering for 5 Cents a Meal was \$362.

Committee on Thanks

Opportunities and invitations around the presbytery and in congregations were extended during the Promotions time, and the Committee on Thanks called to mind the beauty and the bounty we enjoyed today and as God's people.

Adjournment

Following a time of prayer to lift up the joys and concerns of those gathered, the moderator adjourned the meeting at 2:50.

_____Kathi Cary, Moderator

_____Sharon Amstutz, Acting Stated Clerk