

## **COM report to the 11.11.2023 Presbytery Assembly**

The Committee on Ministry has met three times since the August Assembly on Zoom. The three subcommittees meet between the main meetings as needed. We thank you for the excellent cooperation we are receiving by our congregations and pastoral leadership submitting forms and requests in such a timely way. We are able to complete our monthly meeting in 75 minutes or less because of your help.

The new CLC system is being continuously updated. A new video is in the [pcusa.org/clc](https://pcusa.org/clc) webinar section for PNCs that goes through the whole calling process from the beginning to receiving and working with the PDPs (applications). While basic forms were added to the COM part of the PGR website in June, please go first to the CLC website for the most up to date information. Please contact your ministry partner or send an email to [greatriverscom@gmail.com](mailto:greatriverscom@gmail.com) with any questions about the new system.

The 2024 Terms of Call forms and contract forms are fillable forms and are in the COM part of the PGR website (FORMS, COM Forms).

*Actions taken since the 8.26.23 Assembly:*

*The committee has approved*

all Terms of Call and Contracts submitted by 10.27.23,  
approved Mission studies, financial reports and resourced PNCs,  
appointed TE Tim Bauler as Moderator at Virginia First and TE Joanne Hinds as Moderator at Athens Indian Point,  
and accepted the resignation of TE Joel Jackle-Hugh.

*Hosted two sessions of mandatory boundaries training with the Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois made possible through the generosity of the Synod of Lincoln Trails.*

*Transitions*

*We welcome:*

We have welcomed back TE Anna Saxon from laboring outside the bounds in Long Island Presbytery

Welcomed TE Peter Galbraith from Scioto Valley Presbytery to serve at Rock Island Grace

*Noted:*

The retirement of CP Sandi Woodard from Athens Indian Point

The commissioning of CP Alan Willadsen by the Presbytery of Blackhawk to a bridge position at the First Presbyterian Church of Fairbury, Illinois

*Received certificates of dismissal:*

From the United Methodist Church for Rev. Dr. Scott Carnes, thus completing his transfer to the PC(USA)

From the Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, for Rev. Bryan Burris, thus completing his transfer to the PC(USA)

*We have trained and certified the following ruling elders* to serve communion in worship within their own congregation under G-30301b and W-03.0410

For Seaton Center, Ruling Elders Karen Jones and Thomas Nipper for terms of 3 years, October 2023-September 2026.

*Administrative Commissions*

*We approved these ACS for installations, received their reports and dissolved them:*

Galesburg First and TE Scott Carnes, installation held October 1

Peoria First Federated and TE Edward Wegele, installation held October 15

Rock Island Grace and TE Peter Galbraith, installation held October 29

*We have concurred with:*

The request of the First United Presbyterian Church of Le Roy to move Rev. William S. McLean II from Stated Supply to Called and Installed, the way being clear and upon a three quarters affirmative vote of the November Assembly.

The request of the Rev. Dr. John Huxtable to be received as a PC(USA) Minister of Word and Sacrament from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the way being clear and upon a three quarters affirmative vote of the November Assembly.

**Action items for the Assembly:**

**Motion 1:** COM recommends to the Assembly the approval of the call of the Rev. William S. McLean II as the installed Pastor at First United Presbyterian Church, Le Roy Illinois for an indefinite period effective 1.1.2024 under the provisions of G-2.0504c.

**Rationale:**

COM approved changing the status of Rev. William S. McLean II from Transitional Minister to Stated Supply in January 2023 in recognition that this relationship was ready to shift to working with the congregation to develop sustainable ministry in the coming years. This pastoral relationship is flourishing. The request is to change to an indefinite term from an annual contract.

**Background:**

Starting in September 2011, First United Presbyterian Church of Le Roy had three pastoral relationships in the next ten years. In 2020-2022, they experienced the changeover of all their staff, including the troubled end to their last called relationship in May 2021. These transitions provided the opportunity to conduct two mission

studies and other multiple opportunities to reflect on their identity and mission as staff was replaced. COM was deeply engaged with the Session as a committee of the whole during this period. With the Session's commitment to leading, including starting a mission study under COM guidance, they did a thorough search for a transitional minister before identifying Rev. McLean for this role in May of 2022. He completed the mission study with FUPC and encouraged the congregation to implement it. This marked a shift from focused interim work to developing sustainable ministries for years to come. The church is currently nearing the end of a long delayed capital improvements project and experiencing new energy.

In September of 2023, the Session of FUPC Le Roy requested an exception per G-2.0504c so the Reverend William (Bill) S. McLean II may be called and installed as the pastor of First United Presbyterian Church of Le Roy, IL. COM concurs with this request and unanimously recommends its approval by the Assembly.

**The motion requires a three fourths positive vote of the Assembly**

Book of Order G-2.0504 Pastoral Relationships

b. Temporary Pastoral Relationships

Temporary pastoral relationships are approved by the presbytery and do not carry a formal call or installation. When a congregation does not have a pastor, or while the pastor is unable to perform her or his duties, the session, with the approval of presbytery, may obtain the services of a minister of the Word and Sacrament, candidate, or ruling elder in a temporary pastoral relationship. No formal call shall be issued and no formal installation shall take place. Titles and terms of service for temporary relationships shall be determined by the presbytery. A person serving in a temporary pastoral relationship is invited for a specified period not to exceed twelve months in length, which is renewable with the approval of the presbytery. *A minister of the Word and Sacrament employed in a temporary pastoral relationship is ordinarily not eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor.*

c. Exceptions

*A presbytery may determine that its mission strategy permits a minister of the Word and Sacrament currently called as an Associate Pastor to be eligible to serve as the next installed pastor or co-pastor, or a minister of the Word and Sacrament employed in a temporary pastoral relationship to be eligible to serve as the next installed pastor, co-pastor, or associate pastor. Presbyteries that permit this eligibility shall establish such relationships only by a three-fourths vote of the members of presbytery present and voting.*

**Motion 2:** To recommend to the Assembly approval of the following actions with Rev. Dr. John Huxtable, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

- Examine, arrest and sustain the examination of the pastor (see statement of faith, last page of report)
- to concur with the recommendation of COM to waiver the requirement for a course of study in Hebrew. (per G-2.0607c and G-2.0610)
- And enroll him as a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the PC(USA). (G-2.0505.a(2))

Upon enrollment, Rev. Dr. Huxtable shall furnish to the Presbytery evidence of having surrendered membership in any and all other Christian churches with which he has previously been associated. (G-0205.b)

**The motion requires a three fourths positive vote of the Assembly**

Rationale and Background:

*This action to receive Rev. Dr. Huxtable is recommended unanimously by CPM and COM. Were we recommending his transfer only, the Assembly would need to approve the motion by a two thirds vote. Because Rev. Huxtable did not take a course in Hebrew in seminary, his transcript does not meet the requirement of G-2.0607c. He has had courses in the Old Testament. He also has 21 years of parish experience, serving the First Presbyterian Church of Knoxville IL for three years as a Monmouth undergraduate and serving the Christian Church in Virden IL from 2004-2022. He has been the Chaplain and Director of the Lux Institute at Monmouth College since the fall of 2022. While COM is recommending the transfer without requiring a course in Hebrew, the authority in the matter rests with the Assembly. The requirement for a course in Hebrew can be set aside by a three-fourths vote.*

Rev. Dr. Huxtable met with Committee on Preparation (CPM) on 8.9.23 for a review of his education and experience to determine if they meet PC(USA) standards for ordination and approved the following motion: *We move that by examination the Committee on Preparation for Ministry is satisfied with Rev. Dr. John Huxtable's qualifications to transfer his ordination to the PC(USA) and so recommends that to the Committee on Ministry.* The decision was unanimous.

Rev. Dr. John Huxtable met with the Committee on Ministry (COM) on 10.5.23. COM approved the following motion:

*~To approve the Theological Exam of Rev. Dr. John Huxtable.*

*~To waive the requirement for a course of study in Hebrew (G-2.0607c)*

*~To validate his ministry as the Chaplain and Director of Lux Center for Church*

*and Religious Leadership, Monmouth College, Monmouth IL*  
~to recommend to the Assembly approval of the following actions with Rev. Dr. John Huxtable, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)  
~Examine, arrest and sustain the examination of the pastor  
~waiver the requirement for a course of study in Hebrew. (per G-2.0607c and G-2.0610)  
~And enroll him as a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the PC(USA).

*Upon enrollment, Rev. Dr. Huxtable shall furnish to the Presbytery evidence of having surrendered membership in any and all other Christian churches with which he has previously been associated. (G-0205.b)*

#### *Book of Order references*

These are the references on transfers, the requirement for Hebrew and accommodations the Presbytery may make on the Hebrew requirement.

#### G-2.0505 Transfer of Ministers of Other Denominations

a. When a minister of another Christian church is called to a work properly under the jurisdiction of a presbytery, the presbytery, after the constitutional conditions have been met, shall recognize the minister's previous ordination to ministry. Such ministers shall furnish credentials and evidence of good standing acceptable to the presbytery, and shall submit satisfactory evidence of possessing the qualifications of character and scholarship required of candidates of this church. (G-2.0607 and G-2.0610). In exceptional circumstances the following provisions will apply:

*(2) A minister of another Reformed church who has been ordained for five or more years may be granted an exemption for some or all of the examinations required of candidates for ordination by a two-thirds vote of the presbytery.*

b. *Upon enrollment, the minister shall furnish the presbytery with evidence of having surrendered membership in any and all other Christian churches with which the minister has previously been associated.*

#### G-2.0607 Final Assessment and Negotiation for Service

A candidate may not enter into negotiation for his or her service as a minister of the Word and Sacrament without approval of the presbytery of care. The presbytery shall record when it has certified a candidate ready for examination by a presbytery for ordination, pending a call. Evidence of readiness to begin ordered ministry as a minister of the Word and Sacrament shall include:

- a. a candidate's wisdom and maturity of faith, leadership skills, compassionate spirit, honest repute, and sound judgment;
- b. a transcript showing graduation, with satisfactory grades, at a regionally accredited college or university;
- c. *a transcript from a theological institution accredited by the Association of Theological Schools acceptable to the presbytery, **showing a course of study including Hebrew and Greek, exegesis of the Old and New Testaments using Hebrew and Greek, satisfactory grades in all areas of study, and graduation or proximity to graduation;** and*
- d. examination materials, together with evaluations that declare those materials satisfactory in the areas covered by any standard ordination examination approved by the General Assembly. Such examinations shall be prepared and administered by a body created by the presbyteries.

#### G-2.0610 Accommodations to Particular Circumstances

*When a presbytery concludes there are good and sufficient reasons for accommodations to the particular circumstances of an individual seeking ordination, **it may, by a three-fourths vote, waive any of the requirements for ordination in G-2.06,** except for those of G-2.0607d. If a presbytery judges that there are good and sufficient reasons why a candidate should not be required to satisfy the requirements of G-2.0607d, it shall approve by three-fourths vote some alternate means by which to ascertain the readiness of the candidate for ministry in the areas covered by the standard ordination examinations. A full account of the reasons for any waiver or alternate means to ascertain readiness shall be included in the minutes of the presbytery and communicated to the presbytery to which an inquirer or candidate may be transferred.*

### Faith Statement of John Huxtable

I believe in the Triune God, who walks with us, and calls us into intimate relationship with Jesus and the Holy Spirit. God is larger than any definition or description. God calls us into covenant with all of creation. This covenant calls us to work towards creating a justice-oriented, love-centered world that echoes God's ethos into creation. We are all created in the image of God and are called to be in relationship with God, as well as with one another. Often, we as humans choose to disrupt these relationships and break this connection with God. Yet, God is continuously seeking and reaching out to us, always present, awaiting our return.

Jesus is the fullest manifestation of God in the world. Jesus taught us how to re-imagine a greater understanding of God's relationship with creation. He taught us to engage in the world with a love-centered presence. Jesus showed us that we are not simply to await the afterlife, or simply live into a "fire-insurance" faith; rather, he taught us that we are called to be the active agents of the Good News. In that agency, we must seek to show the world the love that God pours out upon all of God's people. Jesus helps bring us into connection with God and opens our eyes to a larger and more complete image of God.

The Holy Spirit is our advocate and support in this life. The Spirit helps us to spread the message of God's presence to all the world. The Holy Spirit is an ever-moving force that empowers us to act in ways that can transform the world towards the vision of God. The Holy Spirit is in constant communion with God, and Jesus, and calls upon humanity to enter this communal moment. The Holy Spirit helps guide us into a deeper covenant with the Trinity and calls us into the divine dance of creation.

The Bible stands as a unique and authoritative witness that allows us to grow in our understanding of God's relationship with humanity, as well as all of creation. The Bible helps grant us a picture of God's covenant with humanity and the profound relationship God seeks to have with creation. It also helps humanity to understand that God continually speaks to all through the Holy Spirit. Within the Scriptures, we are given profound witness from the Prophets when we fall away from the call to serve; we are granted comfort when we feel lost through the words of specific Psalms; the Gospels teach us the grand narrative of a life lived in the manner that sought God's justice, always. The Bible can help guide us as we walk life's journey.

The Church is called to be the hands and feet of Christ. We are one body of Christ that is called to be an example of the love of Christ in the world. The Church is called to work to bring justice to all, the way Jesus sought justice throughout his life. It is our call, as the Church, to bring forth love, compassion, grace, and peace. The Church is to be the harbinger of hope for all creation.

The cross is the embodiment of God's preferential treatment of the poor, oppressed, and lost. The cross deeply signifies that the last shall be first. The example the cross bears for us is that we are called to serve and to be present, so that no one is ever seen as less than. It is the salvific symbol that reminds us that God is present with all people, always. In the cross, and in grace, we find salvation through the love of God.

The sacramental actions of our lives remind us of the importance of seeing God in all things. Through baptism, parents acknowledge their desire for their child/children to be present with God and for God to be with them. Baptism is an intentional act of letting go and trusting completely in God. When we celebrate communion and the breaking of bread and sharing in table fellowship, we are reminded of the importance of the interconnectedness between God and creation. We are blessed by the act of Communion to see the beauty of all of God's creation and the deep intersectionality of the Divine and the world. It is in this moment, at the table, that we can experience a profound connection with Jesus. We learn the importance of being a servant of the good news.