

**COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY  
REPORT TO THE PRESBYTERY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE  
OCTOBER 18, 2018**

**INFORMATION**

1. The Committee on Ministry meets on the second Tuesday of each month at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Nashville.
2. The Rev. Jane Herring (chair of COM's Mediation Team), The Rev. Dr. Carol Tate (interim executive presbyter), and Therese Howell (Stated Clerk) attended the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center Conflict Mediation Training, sponsored by the Synod of Living Waters and North Alabama Presbytery.
3. The COM recommended The Rev. Stephen Yates to the Nominating Task Force as COM 2019 COM chair.
4. The COM receives regular reports from interim executive Presbyter Carol Tate.
5. The COM received an update on the remedial case against the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee.

**ADMIT TO RECORD**

1. The COM approved The Rev. Michael Davis as mentor for The Rev. Candace Klein (First Gallatin).
2. The COM examined The Rev. Dr. Carol Tate and approved her call as interim executive presbyter of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee. The COM also approved the following terms of call: 32 hours/week; [insert]
3. The COM examined Ruling Elder Scott Hanna (First Lynnville) and approved his filling the pulpit at First Lynnville while he completes the Commissioned Lay Pastor training at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary. The Rev. Dr. Bill Bryant will supervise Mr. Hanna.
4. First Presbyterian Church, McMinnville, elected the following persons to serve as the PNC: Barry Barnes (chair), Ginger Sinks (secretary), Ray Goode, Cynthia Campen, and Jeanine Miller.
5. The Ministry Information Forms for Harpeth Presbyterian Church, Brentwood; First Presbyterian Church, McMinnville; and Emmanuel Presbyterian Church, Nashville, were approved.
6. The Committee on Ministry approved the dissolution of the pastoral relationship between The Rev. Kristi Moore and Bellevue Presbyterian Church, Nashville. The COM approved the severance agreement of seven months salary, housing, and Board of Pensions for Rev. Moore, and changed her status to member-at-large.
7. The COM approved The Rev. Mike Wilson as Moderator of the session of Bellevue Presbyterian Church, Nashville.
8. The COM approved Ruling Elder Pat Bridges (First Columbia) as moderator for First Presbyterian Church, Spring Hill.
9. The COM dismissed The Rev. Dr. Angela Hancock (member-at-large) to the Presbytery of Pittsburgh, effective October 9, 2018.
10. The COM dismissed The Rev. Dr. Sam Cooper (Honorably Retired) to the Presbytery of Charleston-Atlantic, effective October 9, 2018.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Committee on Ministry examined The Rev. Wael Sous, a member of the Evangelical Church of Egypt, Synod of the Nile, who is leading a new worshipping community nested at Priest Lake Presbyterian Church, Nashville. Pursuant to G-2.0505a.(2), the COM recommends that Rev. Sous be granted an exemption for the examinations required of candidates (requiring 2/3 vote of the presbytery), and that he be received as a member of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee. A copy of Rev. Sous' statement of faith and biographical information is attached.
2. The Committee on Ministry examined The Rev. Dr. Samy Estafanos, a member of the Evangelical Church of Egypt, Synod of the Nile, who is leading a new worshipping community nested at First Presbyterian Church, Nashville. Pursuant to G-2.0505a.(2), the COM recommends that Dr. Estafanos be granted an exemption for the examinations required of candidates (requiring 2/3 vote of the presbytery), and that he be received as a member of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee. A copy of Dr. Estafanos' statement of faith and biographical information is attached.
3. The Committee on Ministry recommends an administrative commission be elected to work with Bellevue Presbyterian Church, with the following charge and membership:

The Committee on Ministry, in consultation with the Administrative and Finance Committees, recognizes that Bellevue Presbyterian Church, Nashville, is seeking to discern its mission and its future in its current context and within the scope of its current membership. The Committee on Ministry believes that the recent history of the congregation necessitates an administrative commission.

The congregation of Bellevue Presbyterian Church, Nashville, has declined in membership because of conflict over recent years and is now under additional financial duress—perhaps to the verge of survivability--during a period of pastoral transition. The most recent conflict, though it focusses on a decision of Session, is likely more chronic and requires assistance from outside the resources of the congregation to assist in promoting healing and reconciliation and the creation of new patterns of relating.

An administrative commission will assist the Bellevue Presbyterian Church and its session in creating opportunities for healing and reconciliation, ~~in~~ discernment about their future, and will provide training and guidance to the session in evaluating the congregation's financial viability and strategy for implementing its mission.

- A. Therefore, the Committee on Ministry recommends to the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee that it elect an administrative commission for the Bellevue Presbyterian Church, Nashville, and that this commission be given all the powers of Presbytery except that approval of merger or dissolution, or the sale of the property, must be approved by the Presbytery. The administrative commission, upon its election, shall be charged as follows:
  1. The administrative commission shall assist the session in leading the congregation to examine the nature and pattern of their recent conflicts and to engage in intentional processes of healing and reconciliation following the recent departure of their pastor, with the aim of exercising and beginning to establish new ways of relating and healthy patterns of conflict resolution.
  2. The administrative commission shall support the work of the session by providing comprehensive elder training prior to the installation of the next class of elders.
  3. If the administrative commission believes at any point that it is in the best interest of the church to assume original jurisdiction of the session, the administrative commission shall have the authority to do so (G-3.0303e.).

4. The administrative commission shall work alongside the session of Bellevue Presbyterian Church in managing its affairs and in determining what form pastoral leadership shall take, and shall assist the session to assess the financial viability of the church and to make necessary changes to recover financial health.
5. The administrative commission shall work with the session and congregation to discern God's will and their vision for the future, to ensure that all voices are heard, that all options are explored and considered, and that appropriate time is given to understand and appreciate the momentous crossroads that the church has reached in its history and life.
6. The administrative commission is committed to Bellevue's call to be the church and strives with them in prayer that God will open all doors for their spiritual, ecclesial, communal and financial well-being. While the immediate road ahead seems daunting, the administrative commission rejoices that the "Church is the body of Christ" and that "Christ gives to the Church all the gifts necessary to be his body." (F-1.0301) The past few years have been difficult for Bellevue and the present poses many questions, but Christ is the Church's hope. In the light of this, the administrative commission will work in this hope with Bellevue Presbyterian Church to live in the "lively, joyous reality of the grace of God" (F-1.0204) and to continue finding a way forward as the church.
7. The administrative commission shall work with the session and congregation to discern whether to merge or dissolve the congregation. If it is the will of the congregation to merge with another PCUSA congregation, the administrative commission will work to facilitate the merger, after the presbytery's approval.
8. If dissolution is determined to be the most pastoral and wise course of action, the administrative commission shall, subject to approval of the presbytery, determine a date for the dissolution, and:
  - (1) assist the session and members to wind up the affairs of the church, and transfer its remaining members. The Stated Clerk of presbytery shall be authorized to grant letters of dismissal to members whose names are still on the roll for up to one year after the closing worship service; and
  - (2) The administrative commission shall draft a plan of dissolution, subject to the approval of the presbytery, if it is the will of the congregation to dissolve. The administrative commission shall plan, in consultation with the session and members of the church, a closing worship service to honor the life, witness, and ministry of Bellevue Presbyterian Church.
  - (3) The administrative commission shall, in consultation with the session and congregation, recommend to the Trustees of the Presbytery a plan for the disposal and sale of all church property. The Trustees of presbytery shall be responsible for the property, until such time as the administrative commission, in consultation with the Trustees, makes a determination on the disposition of the property.
  - (4) The Trustees of presbytery shall have claim, on behalf of the Presbytery of Middle Tennessee, to any property of the Bellevue church not known at this time or property which may come to the church as the beneficiary of a will or trust not known at this time.

B. The Administrative Commission shall report quarterly to the Committee on Ministry and

will submit a final report to the presbytery. Should the Administrative Commission decide that the sale of the property is advisable, it shall also notify the Trustees for their recommendation to the presbytery.

- C. The Committee on Ministry recommends the following persons for election as members of the administrative commission for the Bellevue Presbyterian Church, Nashville, Tennessee:

Evelyn Graham, TE, Southminster Presbyterian Church, Nashville

Jane Herring, TE, Normandy and Belfast Presbyterian Churches

Larry McElroy, RE, Northminster Presbyterian Church, Murfreesboro

William Russell, RE, First Presbyterian Church, Spring Hill

Mike Wilson, TE, Downtown Presbyterian Church, Nashville (chair)