

PRESBYTERY OF SAN DIEGO CALLED MEETING – August 18, 2010

The Called meeting of the Presbytery of San Diego, held in the chapel of the Point Loma Community Presbyterian Church, was convened by Elder Gerry Tayler, Moderator, at 2:15 p.m. She led the presbytery in prayer. Rev. John Powell, host pastor, welcomed the presbytery.

ROLL: It was VOTED that the roll would be taken by card, and that those registering during the meeting, together with corresponding members, and those requesting leaves of absence (when granted) constitute the roll. A quorum was present.

	<u>CONGREGATION</u>	<u>MINISTERS</u>	<u>ECCLESIASTICAL DESIGNATION</u>	<u>ELDERS</u>
1	Brawley, First	J. Pazan	191	
3	Chula Vista, Chula Vista	R. Davis	101	
5	El Cajon, First			Dick Berry
6	El Cajon, Fletcher Hills	K. Womack	101	Patsy Battenfield Bob Battenfield
7	Escondido, Westminster	J. S. Rauch	101	Carole Ostrander
8	La Jolla, La Jolla	P. Cunningham M. Sedgwick	101 103	Mary Kinyon
9	La Jolla, Mt. Soledad	J. Moser E. Piper	101 797	
11	Lakeside, Community			Michael McKnight A
12	Oceanside, First	T. Beal E. Wilson	191 103	Dale Habermann Paul Hefner A
13	Rancho Santa Fe, Village Community	J. K. Farley S. Mitchell	103 105	David Buck Bill Tayler Mike Williams
15	San Diego, Faith	C. M. Lenocker	101	Nancy Harber
16	San Diego, First	J. Andrews M. E. Walls	101 103	Rudy Kosits Maurice Caskey
18	San Diego, Linda Vista	I. Farrell	106	Stephen Awe
19	San Diego, Mira Mesa	B. Roth	191	
20	San Diego, Northminster	M. Watson	101	
21	San Diego, Pacific Beach			Jane Kay
22	San Diego, Palisades	H. G. Throop	101	Barbara Van Meter
23	San Diego, Point Loma Community	J. Powell	101	Charles MacVean Anne Fristrom Art Michalek A
24	San Diego, Rancho Bernardo Community	B. Humphrey N. Nybo R. Sparling M. Wasef	101 193 103 103	Lois Sheldon Jeanne Pochel Bob Newton
25	San Diego, Southeast			Melba Bland
26	San Diego, Taiwanese			Sam Tsai
27	San Diego, Westminster	T. Wolfe	101	William Hodgkiss
28	Solana Beach, Solana Beach	T. D. Theriault	103	Russ Love
29	Spring Valley, Trinity	R. W. Yenter	101	
30	Vista, Grace	T. Straeter W. C. Bynagte	101 797	

BOLD = Attended Meeting E = excused A = Alternate

<u>SPECIAL OFFICES</u>		<u>ECC DESIGNATION</u>
* Executive Presbyter	Clark Cowden	302
* Stated Clerk	Linda Therien	303

INQUIRERS & CANDIDATES

Laura Jones	Deb Mitchell
Dave Rohde	Bev Franco
Tina Thompson	Taeler Morgan
Andrew Sagar	Rene Roth

MODERATOR

* **Gerry Tayler**

VICE-MODERATOR/MODERATOR ELECT

* **Paul Cunningham**

* Owen Wickstrand	Chair, Budget, Property, and Finance Committee
* Paul Diller	Chair, Human Resources
* Barry Billingsley	Member-at-Large of Council
* Peter Lual	Sudanese American Presbyterian Church
Steve Rybicki	Director of Administration and Missions Services
Heather Paton	Presbytery Secretary/Receptionist

*= voting member

VISITORS AND GUESTS:

Pat Kellenbarger, Solana Beach Presbyterian & Commissioner to 219th General Assembly
 Karla Klockenteger Shaw, Candidate from Pittsburgh Presbytery
 Gerie Morrin
 Sande Rajcic, First Presbyterian Church of Oceanside
 Roslind Marver, First Presbyterian Church of Oceanside
 Irene Ainza, Chula Vista Presbyterian Church
 Donna Robertson, First Presbyterian Church of Oceanside
 Eloise Housman, Solana Beach Presbyterian Church
 Teri Delcamp, Christ LaCosta Presbyterian Church
 Debbie Morris, La Jolla Presbyterian Church
 Lucy Decorte, LaJolla Presbyterian Church
 Hailey Rohde, La Jolla Presbyterian Church
 Lisa Scott Jones, Christ LaCosta Presbyterian Church
 Margaret Griffith, Pt Loma Community Presbyterian Church
 Cheston Crockett Brand, Pt Loma Community Presbyterian Church
 Colin Wagerman, Pt Loma Community Presbyterian Church
 Deserae Bland, Southeast Community Presbyterian Church
 Rev. John Breeding, Member American Baptist denomination

OTHER MINISTERS:

K. C. Bealo, Sr.	299	R. Hayward	299	D. Pierson	797
W. Hoffmann	299	P. Powell	797	J. H. Robertson	299

Attendance:

Ministers	36
Elders	30
Corresponding	0
Inquirers/Candidates	8
Visitors/Others	20
Total	94

The Moderator introduced Elder Linda Therien, Stated Clerk & declared the purpose of the meeting to be to hear the report of the commissioners & Young Adult Advisory Delegate to the 219th General Assembly, to act on a recommendation of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry and to act on recommendations from the Committee on Ministry.

Presbytery VOTED to approve the proposed docket.

Clark Cowden, Executive Presbyter, led the presbytery in a study of Elijah.

The Presbytery Commissioners to the 219th General Assembly in Minneapolis, Minnesota each presented their written reports from the Assembly. Commissioners Tim Beal, Jerry Andrews, Pat Kellenbarger and Gerry Tayler spoke to their experiences. Young Adult Advisory Delegate, Ryan Johnson, was unable to be present. Their complete written reports can be found on pages 11 through 20 at the end of these minutes.

Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)

The CPM recommended that Inquirer Laura Jones be advanced to Candidate. Ms. Jones read her Statement of Call and answered questions of the presbyters. Ms. Jones was excused from the meeting and the assembly was invited to ask questions of the CPM. The Presbytery VOTED to advance Ms. Jones to Candidate. She returned to the meeting and was greeted with a standing ovation. The Moderator asked Ms. Jones the constitutional questions and she responded in the affirmative. The presbytery engaged in a time of prayer for Laura and she was surrounded by members and friends of her home church; Christ La Costa.

Committee on Ministry (COM)

1. The COM recommended that the Rev. Neal Nybo be approved to receive the call of the Rancho Bernardo Community Presbyterian Church to transition from being their Designated Associate Executive Pastor to being called as their Associate Executive Pastor effective September 12, 2010 with the following terms:

Salary	\$46,800
Housing	45,000
Board of Pensions	28,917
Medical Reimbursement	1,500
Miscellaneous (includes auto)	1,000
Professional Expense	1,500
Study Leave	2,000
4 weeks vacation/2 weeks study leave	

Rev. Nybo presented his *Statement of Faith* which can be found on pages 7 & 8 of these minutes. He was questioned by the Presbytery and excused from the meeting. The presbyters were then able to ask questions of the COM. The Presbytery VOTED to approve this call and Rev. Nybo returned to the meeting and was greeted with a standing ovation. Members of the Rancho Bernardo Presbyterian Church community and friends of Neal's gathered around him as prayer was offered for his ministry.

2. The COM recommended that David Rohde, a Candidate under care of our Committee on Preparation for Ministry and a member of La Jolla Presbyterian Church, be approved for ordination to the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament. The following is his *Statement of Faith*.

Background information:

Mr. Rohde has been under the care of our Committee on Preparation for Ministry since March 2007. He became a Candidate in September 2008 and passed his Final Assessment in May 2009. He is certified ready to receive a call. Mr. Rohde graduated from Fuller Seminary in 2009 with a Masters of Divinity.

Mr. Rohde has pursued a call in ministry since that time and has now received a call to serve at the Lingadzi Church of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP). The Committee on Ministry has met with Mr. Rohde and agreed to validate his ministry in Africa and grant him permission to labor outside our bounds for a period of one year from September 1, 2010, contingent on his ordination exam and ordination.

The following is an excerpt from the memo written to Mr. Rohde received from the CCAP:

“I write to confirm that the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian has decided to request you through the PCUSA to come and serve at a Local Congregation in Lilongwe Malawi. This has come about because of the vacancy for a missionary pastor that has existed for the past five years. Lingadzi CCAP is one of the Congregations on the CCAP Nkhoma Synod which is based in the Capital city of the Country. The congregation has a big population of foreign dignitaries who mainly speak English and hence the need for a pastor from outside Malawi. Apart from the congregation work we also believe that by having you with us, the relationship between the PCUSA and the CCAP will be strengthened. The CCAP Church in Malawi hope and trust that the PCUSA will accept our request and allow you to serve with us for a minimum of 1 year.

The church here will provide free comfortable housing and the synod will process all the paper work for you to work in Malawi. Our prayer once again is that you will be able to arrive in Malawi by September 2010 God willing. “

This communication was signed by the Rev. Davidson Chifungo, the General Secretary of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod.

Mr. Rohde and his wife, who will take a leave of absence from her job as a school teacher, hope to be in Malawi in early September to begin their work.

Mr. Rohde read his *Statement of Faith* and then responded to questions from the presbyters. A motion was made and voted to arrest the examination and Mr. Rohde was excused from the meeting. The Presbytery then asked questions of the COM and the Presbytery VOTED to approve Mr. for ordination. He returned to the meeting and was greeted with a standing ovation. Members and friends of the La Jolla Presbyterian Church surrounded Mr. Rohde and his wife (Hailey Rohde) for a time of laying on of hands and prayers for their future in ministry.

Mr. Rohde's *Statement of Faith* can be found on pages 8 &9 of these minutes.

3. The COM recommended that the Presbytery receive Rev. John Breeding, a minister member of the American Baptist denomination into the Presbytery of San Diego as a minister member at large and request transfer of his ordination from the American Baptist denomination. Rev. Breeding read his *Statement of Faith* and responded to questions presented by the presbyters. A motion was made to arrest the exam and he was excused from the meeting. His *Statement of Faith* can be found on pages 9 & 10 of these minutes.

The Presbytery then asked questions of the COM and then VOTED to receive Rev. Breeding into the membership of the Presbytery with the understanding that a subsequent motion would be made regarding this business.

The Presbytery VOTED to instruct the COM to provide additional polity training and training in the reformed traditions of the church to Rev. Breeding as soon as is possible.

Rev. Breeding returned to the meeting and was greeted with a standing ovation. Members and friends of the Solana Beach Presbyterian Church gathered to lay hands on him and pray for his continued ministry at Children's Hospital in San Diego.

The COM Moderator explained to Rev. Breeding the expectation that he will be expected to submit to the training required of the second motion.

Background: Rev. John Breeding was ordained by the American Baptist Church in 1991. He was endorsed for Institutional Chaplaincy with the American Baptist Church in 1994, certified as an Associate Clinical Pastoral Education Supervisor in 2000 and certified as a full Clinical Pastoral Education Supervisor in 2002.

Rev. Breeding earned a Master of Divinity from Fuller Theological Seminary in 1989 and currently serves as the Manager of the Pastoral Care Department of Rady Children's Hospital and Health Care Center in San Diego.

As part of the process to transfer to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Rev. Breeding submitted to all of the ordination exams administered by the General Assembly and received exceptional grades in all areas of testing. The Office of Constitutional Services of the General Assembly has guided this process and all the constitutional requirements of this transfer are decent and in order.

Rev. Breeding is involved with the Solana Beach Presbyterian Church and will continue in that relationship.

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry and the Committee on Ministry have both been involved in this process and the Committee on Ministry has agreed to validate his ministry as a Chaplain.

4. The COM recommended that the Presbytery approve Karla Klockenteger Shaw for ordination to the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament so that she might receive and accept the call to serve as an Associate Pastor at Pt. Loma Presbyterian Church effective September 1, 2010.

Mrs. Shaw read her *Statement of Faith*, which can be found on pages 10 & 11 of these minutes and responded to questions asked by the presbytery. A motion was made to arrest the exam and she was excused from the meeting. The Presbytery then asked questions of the COM and VOTED to approve her for ordination.

The Presbytery then VOTED to approve the following terms of call:

Salary/Housing	\$55,000
Board of Pensions	17,325
SECA Reimbursement	4,125
Study Leave	1,000
Auto Reimbursement	1,000
Expense Reimbursement	1,000
Medical Allowance Reimbursement	1,250
Total Cost	\$80,700

4 weeks vacation/2 weeks study leave
\$2,500 moving cost (reimbursement)

Mrs. Shaw returned to the meeting and was greeted with a standing ovation. Members and friends of the Point Loma Community Presbyterian Church gathered around her for laying on of hands and a time of prayer for her ministry.

The Moderator then entertained a motion to approve the following two items that were presented on the consent docket. Both motions were approved.

That the following Administrative Commission be elected to ordain David K. Rohde as a Minister of Word & Sacrament on August 29, 2010, at La Jolla Presbyterian Church, at a time to be determined.

Elder Gerry Tayler, Moderator (Village)
Elder Christy Zatkan (La Jolla)
Elder Kent Grooms (La Jolla)
Elder Lucy Decorte (La Jolla)
Elder Debbie Morris (La Jolla)
Rev. Dr. Paul Cunningham
Rev. Michael Sedgwick
Rev. Brad Roth
As corresponding: Rev. Dr. Jeff Holmes (San Jose Presbytery)

That the following Administrative Commission be elected to install Rev. Nybo on October 17, 2010, at the Rancho Bernardo Presbyterian Church during the 8:30 am worship service.

Elder Gerry Tayler, Moderator (Village)
Elder Linda Therien (Palisades)
Elder Frances Lin (Rancho Bernardo)
Rev. Dr. Bruce Humphrey
Rev. Dr. Clark Cowden

The Stated Clerk addressed the presbytery and recognized the Rev. Ian Farrell as having served our Budget Property & Finance Committee, PUM Steering Committee and Administrative Commission for the La Mesa Presbyterian Church. Rev. Farrell is in the process of transferring his membership to Los Ranchos Presbytery as he and his wife have relocated to the Newport Beach area. Mrs. Farrell is a psychiatrist in private practice in that region. The Presbytery expressed their appreciation of Ian and for all of his work in the presbytery.

There was no unfinished business. Presbytery adjourned at 5:00 p.m. with prayer by the Moderator.

Elder Carole Ostrander, Minute Clerk for
Elder Linda Therien, Stated Clerk

Statement of Faith - Rev. Neal Nybo

(Where a statement could be unclear, I have referenced the BOO, Essential Tenets of San Diego Presbytery and Scripture)

I believe in Jesus Christ because I have met Him, felt His presence^{4.047} and because He put faith in my heart^{6.078}. Others wiser than myself have taught me about Him and by faith I believe what the word of God has revealed about Him^{6.079} including that He is different from but of the same being as the Father^{5.062}.

I believe in God the Father because I live in a world that describes God to me. It reveals God as an infinite creator and as a sustainer of life^{9.16}. It shows that His processes are patient and slow, that rules exist that guide and boundary His creation. I believe He is loving, kind and generous because these qualities give human beings the greatest pleasure and we are His creations. I believe God is humble because it is so easy to not believe in Him that He must constantly hide from us. He (is not a he) is the only God infinite, living and true^{6.011}.

I believe in the Holy Spirit because I have experienced Him in my life as a guide and comfort. I have sought Him out and received direct responses from Him in prayer. I understand and believe that the Holy Spirit is equally, eternally God^{4.053}.

These three, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are inextricably linked to Scripture. It is the history of the Father's interaction with creation, the revelation of the Son's redemption of humanity and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is the first and final authority for the church and individuals for faith and life^{ET9}.

I believe that human beings have an undeniable glory and nobility as image bearers of God^{ET12} but that image is broken so that there is an inherent badness in them^{10.3}. I believe this because they constantly develop creative ways to hurt themselves and each other. How else can this propensity for evil be explained in a universe created and held together by a loving God?

The inherent depravity of human beings separates us from God so completely that we have no ability to access God^{ET11}. So, God accessed us by becoming one of us. In what will remain a mystery, God walked the earth in human flesh, though not born of man^{5.064} and ultimately suffered searing pain and deep grief at being separated from God^{ET14}. And, God, the Father remained infinitely beyond the earth and suffered great loss at having to sacrifice God, the Son for humans who did the killing. God rose^{6.046}. This sacrifice, this message, this cross is foolishness to some and power to others and therefore will never be agreed on^{1COR1:18}.

It cannot be that God would inflict that suffering on anyone, much less on Jesus Christ if another means of recovering human beings was possible. The God who has been revealed as all loving could not do such a thing. Therefore, such a thing is not possible. I do not believe that a person can truly believe all that Christians and our Scripture and our Confessions say about the sacrifice of Christ and also believe there are other effective atonements^{ET15}. These beliefs are mutually exclusive. Yet, I trust the goodness and love of this God enough that I leave people like my father who died unsaved, seemingly unrepentant, in the hands of this same God who sacrificed so much in order that my father would be saved and who is not willing that any should perish but that all would have eternal life. May His will be done.

So, some, longing to be rid of their predisposition towards evil, believe and turn toward this great, creative, loving God and away from their lifelong patterns^{5.094}. They accept Christ's sacrifice, receive it and are transformed by it.

The church is the local and global gathering together of these believers whose faith is proven by their transformation and is demonstrated by their love for one another and the creation God loves. Baptism is the promise of God to eliminate the bad that is in us and is a visible sign of our belonging to God's family, along with our children^{4.069,074}. Communion invites believers to embrace the whole passion and death of Christ and to be more and more united with Him through the Holy Spirit^{4.075}.

Because I believe in and am guided by the confessions, I believe so much more about God and faith than is written here, understand so little, but strive to be so consumed by God that others experience me and say, there must be a God for I have met Him today in this person^{MATT5:16}. To the extent I accomplish that, I rejoice. To the extent I don't, I repent and stand in His grace by faith.

Statement of Faith David Kiff Rohde

I believe in the one and only true God, maker of heaven, earth, and all living and non-living things. I believe God exists eternally in three equal persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I believe that, from the beginning, God intended for all of creation to be in perfect relationship with the Creator. After creation, humanity betrayed God's original intention by sinning in disobedience. However, God longs for creation to return to a state of worship and obedience. This longing is prevalent throughout the entire Bible, both Old and New Testaments, climaxing in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and is of one substance with the Father. I believe that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. He descended from heaven and was born in the flesh, fully human, while remaining fully God. I believe that the incarnation is necessary for the mediation between fallen humanity and God. I believe that Christ alone led a sinless life. His death on the cross was necessary for all to live as a new creation. I believe that after being crucified He rose again and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of God the Father. Along with the Father and the Holy Spirit, He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, who is of the Father and the Son, and who is worshipped with the Father and the Son. I believe that it is the Holy Spirit who calls us into community and sends us out in mission. I believe God's grace is the only way one may gain eternal life through the opportunity to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior; this grace was shown to humankind through the life of Jesus Christ. It is evident today through the existence of the Holy Spirit, who convicts, calls and guides, while empowering us with the strength to repent.

I believe the Church exists as the body of Christ in order to spread the good news of grace that is only offered through Christ. This is done in love through the reading and preaching of the Word of God, the Holy Sacraments and in the act of living as a missional community. I believe in the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. I believe baptism is a symbol of one's incorporation into the body of Christ and it serves as a seal to one's participation. I believe that in the Lord's Supper, Christ is mysteriously present. It is served as a symbol of the communion we hold together with Christ and is a reminder of what is to come.

I believe that the stories recounted in the Bible tell of how God has moved in God's people and paint a picture of what it means to be a part of the people of God. I believe the Bible is completely God breathed and that God chose to use humans to write God's story in order that we may begin to understand that God's intention is to be in relationship with humanity.

I believe it is the combination of the grace offered by the death and resurrection of Christ and the community to which the Holy Spirit calls that offers hope for the world and all of humankind. I believe the Church is called to represent Christ in deed and word, loving those it encounters and serving the

world in every way possible. I believe that this has been attempted throughout history and will continue to be until Christ returns. I feel called to be a part of what God is doing in the world, being obedient in worship until Christ comes again or calls me home.

Statement of Faith
Rev. John Breeding

I believe there is one God, not bound by time or space, who is the creator and sustainer of all things. God, who is all good, powerful and holy, is one in nature yet exists in three persons. God is loving and gracious with all creatures and all God's creation.

Humans were created in the image of God, and were deemed good. Humans belong to God and were created to be in relationship with God, to worship God, to enjoy God, and to care for God's creation. God is sovereign over creation and allows human beings free will to choose our course in life. The choice by humans to disobey God and rebel brought sin, corruption and death into the world. Humans cannot repair the effects of sin and brokenness; it must come from the intervening grace of God to bring salvation to human beings.

Biblical Scriptures are God's authoritative written word to guide us in our faith and allow us to understand the nature of God and humans. They tell us that God entered human history in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, who was born of a virgin and was fully human and fully God at the same time. This profound act in human history brought the second person of the trinity into the world allowing the Word of God to become human flesh. Jesus taught us how to live both by his words and actions, showing compassion on the weak, mercy on repentant sinners, and confronting all forms of evil. Jesus made a willing sacrifice of himself on the cross, which brought redemption to humankind and the ability for creation to be reconciled with God. Jesus rose from the dead, conquered death, and ascended to heaven. He will return to judge the living and the dead, and restore his kingdom.

Through the grace of God humankind has been redeemed by the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, allowing humankind and God to be reconciled. This salvation is a gift that comes by the grace of God which is received by faith. Upon receiving this gift of salvation comes repentance, a turning toward God with all of our lives and away from sin in an ongoing process of sanctification, which is possible by the grace of God through the working of the Holy Spirit in us.

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the trinity who draws us into repentance and into a relationship with God. The Holy Spirit is Spirit of God that lives within us. The Spirit awakens us to God, convicts us of sin, comforts us when we're afflicted, unites us with Christ and with other believers and leads us in the ways of God. The Spirit bears witness to the truth of God, giving us insight to live righteously and the courage to have uncommon compassion and generosity. The Spirit is an agent of transformation, leading us away from corruption and toward holiness, so that we may experience the fullness of life that God intended.

We live in a divine covenant with God that begins with God's initiative. Believers live out this covenant together as a community to worship, serve and fellowship. We celebrate two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which remind us of the sacrifice made by Christ on our behalf. The sacraments remind us of the promises we have of forgiveness, redemption, communion with God, and eternal life.

Although God is the creator of all things, God is not the author of any form of evil, but instead is eternally working to bring forth goodness in all creation and reconciliation of all things with God. Throughout history humankind has utilized our free will for acts of disobedience to God, selfish acts and horrendous wickedness as well as obedience to God, charity and benevolence. The action of reconciliation by God is a grace which humans are invited to respond. The greatest human choice that can be made is to respond to God's graciousness by leading a life of worship of God and being oriented toward God in our actions and relationships with others.

Statement of Faith
Karla Klockenteger Shaw

I was sitting in a church service several years ago singing the familiar hymn "Amazing Grace" when something clicked in me. Although I had heard the words of this musical piece countless times before, as the second stanza was played, "Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears reliev'd", my journey of faith, as if in a film montage, connected. All that I am and the little that I claim to know comes as a result of God's grace. With this story as my backdrop, I humbly write this statement.

I trust in a triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in one, whom I was created to worship. This communal Godhead, overflowing with love, created the world out of divine grace and has drawn me into relationship. I am alive as a result of God's pursuit. My whole being is found in this God.

I believe in God the Father, referred to as Abba by Jesus, who is our Source, and thus, Creator. God is the Sovereign Sustainer of the Universe. I believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Word, who is both fully divine and fully human. Jesus came from the Father to reconcile the world to God. He became incarnate as a human man and emptied himself of divine prerogatives in obedience to the Father. I believe in the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son. As a Comforter and Guide, the Holy Spirit enables us to respond to God and do the work of God in the world. This is seen through the life of the prophets, the illumination of the Scriptures, and the gifts given for the unity of the Church.

I believe that humankind is part of God's creation; whereas God is uncreated, humankind is created. God created the world as good and humankind was made in the image of God, reflecting his glory. In creation, shalom or wholeness existed among God, humankind, and nature. It was through humankind's rebellion, disobedience, and desire to be God that sin and evil entered the world, which resulted in the separation and distortion of all creation. This separation is a chasm between humanity and God that results in death, both physically and spiritually. This distortion, seen in individuals and institutions, results in injustice both personally and systemically and all of creation groans under its weight.

Through the establishment of a covenant with humanity, manifested in different forms in the Old Testament, God ultimately sent Jesus Christ to establish the New Covenant between God and humanity. Salvation and reconciliation are only found in Christ and are initiated by Christ. During his life, Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God through words and actions. When Jesus Christ died a suffering death, which was preceded by a sinless life, and was resurrected by God, he not only reconciled the world to the Father, but provided the way to live for all of humanity for all times and places.

God speaks to us in a unique way through the Scriptures. I trust the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God that reveal God's relationship with his creation and serve as a witness to the Living Word. These Scriptures provide an overarching narrative for humanity which is essential in this postmodern world. Through the authority of the

Scriptures, humanity is able to know the heart of God and thus able to respond in true worship, resulting in both obedience and sacrifice.

The Church, as Christ's body, which is both universal and inclusive across time and culture, exists to glorify God and respond to his grace by doing the work of Jesus in the world. The mission of the Church is to make disciples of all nations by proclaiming the good news of Jesus, point toward the Kingdom of God through acts of social justice, preserve the truth, nurture the saints, and maintain divine worship. The sacraments of baptism and The Lord's Supper, as outward signs of an invisible grace, are to be maintained in divine worship. Baptism is an outward expression of repentance and forgiveness of sins, reception of the Holy Spirit, and inclusion in Christ's body, the Church. Baptism, being about God's grace, not our action, can be received at any age. In The Lord's Supper the Church is fellowshiping with and participating in the real spiritual presence of Christ and thankfully remembering his life, death, resurrection, and ascension relying on his promises for a full establishment of his Kingdom.

Some day Jesus will return again and fully establish his Kingdom on this earth. At that point the entire world, people from every tribe, tongue, and nation, both living and dead, will come before the throne of God in worship. I commit to serving God, anticipating this moment, and give my life to wherever God leads.

General Assembly Commissioner Reports:

Rev. Dr. Jerry Andrews:

I intended on attending the General Assembly as the Overture Advocate for San Diego Presbytery and to fulfill my obligations as Co-Moderator of the Presbyterian Coalition – an evangelical advocacy group. I was an alternate commissioner. Bob Davis, pastor of the Chula Vista Church, because of his wife's health was unable to attend. I kept my original schedule and arrived Sunday evening in Minneapolis after preaching at First Church in the morning. I was late therefore, missing the pre-Assembly meetings, the group building in committee, and lots of free meals.

I served on the Health Issues Committee. Much was without significant controversy, though little of the agenda was obvious for being necessary or of consequence. Most of the agenda was the consideration of reports of the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy – an advocacy group within the General Assembly; some was from presbyteries. We debated urging pastors to take HIV/AIDS test so as to help remove the stigma of taking the test for at risk populations; adding to our concerns the violence done to pregnant women by those who want them to abort their child; determining whether recent changes to denominational sexuality materials for young adults was sufficiently grounded Biblically and theologically. We met on Monday and Tuesday, finishing earlier than several other committees.

Eleven presbyteries concurred with the overture from San Diego, thus giving twenty-four minutes for joint presentation the Church Orders Committee. All eleven Overture Advocates deferred their time to San Diego and I presented on behalf of all. The presentation is attached. It was accompanied by a power point, then two videos – one of several men and women of homosexual orientation grateful to congregations for welcoming them into their lives, assisting them and holding them accountable for their sexual lives, and always offering God's grace; one a brief testimony of man whose struggled with his homosexuality and the redemption he found in the church.

The plenary sessions were from Wednesday to Saturday, with two long days 9-9 and later on Thursday and Friday. We voted on everything, often voting on voting. We debated everything including the wisdom of debating everything.

Four votes stand out.

1. To send, once again, to the presbyteries a reworded paragraph which removes the standard of fidelity in marriage and chastity in singleness. Once again the presbyteries will vote on this. This same measure has failed three times previously when the presbyteries vote. Close votes at General assembly (57% to 43% in favor of the measure; this vote was 53% for) and in the presbyteries (anywhere from 73% to 55% not in favor of the measure) characterize this vote.
2. To send to the presbyteries a new Form of Government document, somewhat smaller than the current one, with the hopes that greater flexibility will produce greater missional work. Each of its strong features were unchanged at the Assembly – governing bodies become councils (councils are places where the Faith and faithfulness are determined; governing bodies...well govern); Ministers of Word and Sacrament become Teaching Elders (this is a far more accurate description of my calling). Some parts that were troublesome were changed at the assembly – “church” is no longer defined as the denomination and per capita language no longer suggests it is mandatory. Some parts remain troublesome – the vacating of previous carefully worked out authoritative interpretations of particular paragraphs (the paragraphs interpreted themselves have been altered or deleted), inclusion has been elevated to a priority of the church including leadership positions opened to all without regard to theological convictions.
3. Belhar Confession of the South African Church was recommended for adoption by the presbyteries. Two-thirds of the Presbyteries must approve the document. The most significant problem with the document is that it is unknown. Confessions of the Faith are adopted by their demonstrated usefulness in the life of the church – in pastoral work, in teaching the Faith to the next generation and to converts, in guiding the officers of the church in promoting the faithfulness of the church, in setting before the world who we are, what we believe and what we resolve to do.
4. A decision was made not to debate the requests to consider same-gender marriages and instead to send to the church two documents (which were at one time competing documents – a majority and a minority report) that (1) describe what Presbyterians believe on this issue and recommend toleration in our common life and grace in our debates and (2) teach what the Scriptures teach and recommending a faithful obedience.

All this is coming to San Diego Presbytery.

Hope is a valuable and rare virtue. Encouragements to hope were many – the reconfirmation of Linda Valentine as our CEO, the confirmation of Roger Dermody as our COO, the confirmation of Tom Taylor as President of the Presbyterian Foundation, the election of Steve Hayner as President of Columbia Seminary, the focus whenever possible on congregations effectively reaching out to new populations with the gospel, the sending of more (not less!) of our members as fraternal workers throughout the globe, civil conversation and often good fellowship.

Concerns remain. The General Assembly while in session gives every appearance of an uncatechized church. We argued seldom on the basis of the Faith and so, I judge, rarely achieved a new level of faithfulness. Seven hundred plus commissioners, eighty percent of whom have never been to a General Assembly and who will never be together again and having no responsibility for the continuing work of the decisions they made, is less than optimal. The agenda is at once too broad (simply too many items) and too particular (micromanaging minutiae), the deliberations consider the feelings of all present but not the Faith of the Church around the world and through the ages, and the conclusions will for the most part dissipate in memory. Often it is just as well; sometimes it's a shame.

The best moment was provided by an ecumenical advisory delegate who, when asked to bring greetings, commented on the discussions of the day. A link is provided here to the video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVOEeQYhX7k>

The Church has a Faith, without which it can not live faithfully.
The Church has a Savior without whom it will never be.

Rev. Dr. Tim Beal:

Thank you for entrusting me with your commission to be a part of the 219th General Assembly. I was also honored to be appointed as Moderator of the G.A. Committee on the proposed Form of Government. You will be able to find out about the actions of the General Assembly from publications like *The Presbyterian Outlook* or the PCUSA website so I will focus my remarks on an overview of the Assembly and the work of my specific committee.

Among other things, a General Assembly is always a political event in which many different, and sometimes opposing constituencies try to shape the Assembly's response to the business presented to it. This year there were about 300 items of business to be addressed. One inevitable consequence of this extraordinary dynamic is that anyone who wants to find a reason to be unhappy with the General Assembly will find it. My experience of this Assembly of 700 commissioners was that we were seeking to discern the leading of the Holy Spirit and do that in ways that brought honor to Christ. It was rare to hear a commissioner impugn the motives or dedication of others, even those who held opposing predispositions. The general character of debate and discussion was mutual respect.

But tolerance and respect are not sufficient to build a community. It is not clear what the gravitational center of the denomination can be. There is surprisingly little discussion of a unifying theology, even during discussion about adding the Belhar Confession to our constitution. There is little impetus for developing central mission projects. Discussion of polity, even a new constitution, does not excite much passion. Although I was blessed to be a part of this Assembly, I am not sure that someone who was not a participant in the process will look at the actions taken and declare: "That is why I am proud to be Presbyterian!"

The committee I moderated had the responsibility to recommend to the whole Assembly, and to the denomination, whether the proposed Form of Government should replace that part of our existing constitution. Of the 44 members of the committee (clergy, elders and young adult advisory delegates), few would have described themselves as experts on the current constitution and most wondered how they could responsibly determine whether the proposed document would be better than the current Form of Government. To that end, we designed a process that utilized the expertise of the Task Force making the proposal, the advocates of presbyteries who overtured the G.A. to not replace the current FoG, and both the Advisory Committee on the Constitution and the G.A. Permanent Judicial Commission to be resources to the committee but not determiners of our agenda. In the end, the committee made 30 amendments to the initial document. One of the most significant criticisms of the original proposal was that it would change the working relationships between congregations, sessions, presbyteries and the General Assembly. This concern was based on a footnote to the caption of the first section of the nFoG that said that throughout the document "the term 'church' refers to denominations. This redefinition of the term had significant consequences even when language in the nFoG was identical to the existing constitution. The new definition implied new responsibilities and mandates for congregations and sessions to support denominational missions set by presbyteries and the General Assembly. It turned out that this was never the intention of the Task Force. They not only supported the deletion of this footnote but also recommended adding another footnote from the existing constitution that had been the foundation for a long line of Authoritative Interpretations by PJC's and General Assemblies regarding the relationships between Sessions and other governing bodies concerning per capita assessments and mission funding. The net results of the amendments assure that the nFoG does not change the present constitutional relationships between governing bodies.

In the end the committee recommended approval of the amended NFoG by a vote of 37/5. The whole Assembly voted 468/204 to recommend it for ratification by the presbyteries. The intention of the recommended FoG is to clearly articulate the standards that shape the Presbyterian form of Christ's Church and allows flexibility for each council (the new term for governing bodies) to

determine how to best express that standard in their particular context. This is in contrast to the present FoG that mandates structures and processes as a manual of operations. This will be a matter for our presbytery to discuss and decide in the next year.

Elder Pat Kellenbarger – Solana Beach Presbyterian Church

Deeply humbled and honored partially reflect my feelings upon being notified that I would be San Diego Presbytery's elder commissioner to the 219th General Assembly of PCUSA. My elation at the prospect of fulfilling a life-long dream was mitigated by the sad circumstance that Eloise Housman would be unable to attend due to her husband's need for cancer treatments. I wish to thank the members of Presbytery for electing me as the alternate commissioner and thank all who made my attendance at this GA possible, most especially, my grandson Nick Wright, who stayed with my husband Charlie every night during my absence, and my daughter, Cindy Wright, who kept a daughter's loving eye on him. (Charlie is in his 28th year battle with Parkinsons.)

Being unable to be commissioned at the Presbytery meeting, I requested that my Solana Beach congregation do a mini-commissioning and pray for me. In introducing me, Josh said that I had been a member of SBPC longer than he had been alive.....thanks, Josh!

Eloise's committee assignment and hotel assignment were transferred to me. I was totally unprepared for the flood of emails and letters received from strangers throughout the country assuring me of their prayers on my behalf. Because of the lateness of the notification of my attending, I was rushed into many hours of pre-GA reading and my prayer lamp burned many hours. I familiarized myself with Presby-Biz and the HELP websites.

My committee assignment was #16 – Theological Issues and Institutions. I was able to attend the pre-GA Riverside discussions for this committee. My roommate, from Syracuse, NY, told me that her presbytery had spent the past six month studying and discussing the Belhar Confession – would that this knowledge had been mine. She, of course, was not on this committee, but on one with more “housekeeping” than challenge.

The two major challenges of the Theological Issues committee were the Heidelberg Confession and the Belhar Confession. I had no argument with the recommendations that the more accurate language suggested for the Heidelberg Confession be approved. I was encouraged by the fact that our PCUSA input was honored by the other two reformed denominations who are working in concert with PCUSA on this revision/update project.

The Belhar Confession is worthy of much study and discussion at the presbytery level before the vote to adopt is taken. While many may argue, “Why not adopt? – Nobody reads the confessions anyway.” I personally feel that the Belhar, while stressing unity in the church, would cause more disunity in our denomination if adopted. I do not believe the Belhar would be a good addition to our Book of Order.

While I was pleased that the definition of traditional marriage was upheld; I was distressed that the issue has not been laid to rest permanently. I was also distressed when the GA instructed the Board of Pensions to offer benefits to those members in same sex or civil unions, with dues increases surely to result. This seemed to be in direct conflict with the upholding of the marriage definition.

There were numerous highlights of this General Assembly for me.....

- The opening worship serviced and the honoring of our Presbyterian military and VA chaplains
- The Chaplains luncheon where the newly appointed Navy Chief of Chaplains gave an update on the tremendous ministry our chaplains are providing our troops, veterans and their families, often at

the expense of their own families and congregations (in the case of reserve chaplains having been called to active duty)

- The commissioning of new missionaries and their families and the honoring of those retiring after years of service to our Lord and denomination.
- The opportunity I had to reconnect with four of Charlie and my “best friends” from Tarkio College days.

My GA experience was greatly enhanced by the late night summaries of the day’s actions and strategy planning sessions that the conservatives held. I have grave concerns for the future of a denomination that I have served, have extensive family missionary history, and deeply love.

Martin Luther King had a dream that became his life goal. I also have a dream.....that a General Assembly in the not-too-distant future be one filled with strategies for evangelism, for feeding the world’s hungry not only food, but introducing them to the Bread of Life; taking care of God’s creation – and not filled with re-arguing sexuality, ordination, and marriage definitions. Will you dream with me????

Elder Gerry Tayler – Rancho Santa Fe Village Presbyterian Church

I want to thank the Presbytery of San Diego for electing me to be an Elder Commissioner to the 219th General Assembly in Minneapolis. I had attended three prior assemblies as an official observer but this was my first experience to fully participate. Even though it required much reading and long hours of meeting and discussion, I really enjoyed it.

Before the assembly, I was randomly assigned to Committee #2 Bills and Overtures. I was not really excited about this assignment because I was hoping to be part of a committee with "real" issues to discuss and recommend. However, as sometimes happens, Bills and Overtures was a great experience. There were twenty-seven of us on the committee, including an excellent moderator and vice-moderator. We met as full committee, sub-committees and also were assigned other committees to observe and report. As a part of this work, we created a report to go to GAMC, the Office of the General Assembly and COGA (Committee on the Office of the General Assembly) "in the hope that our observations and ideas will prove helpful to those charged with the design and oversight of future General Assembly meetings". We also had an opportunity in full committee to prioritize the committees reporting to GA plenary sessions and to decide the order in which they would report with special attention to time of day. The committee did a good job with this work because the assembly was able to complete its work in a fairly timely manner without staying there until the wee hours of the morning.

I had the privilege of observing and reporting on Committee 14 Middle East Peacemaking Issues. As you have heard, this was truly the miracle committee, the work of God's Spirit in the Assembly. When the work began, they were about as far apart as the whole church and the secular world. And yet they were able to come together after much difficult work and present a very positive, united report to the Assembly. Praise God, the report concerning the Middle East Task Group as amended by committee and passed by the Assembly has been affirmed by leaders of both the Jewish and Palestinian communities.

My overall impression of the 219th General Assembly was that it was the church trying very hard to be the church. There was much thoughtful comment and debate but no angry words directed at individuals. Did we do everything right? The way I would have preferred? Absolutely not! But the Assembly took a thoughtful approach saying "Let's study these issues and work to understand each other.". Now it will be up to the presbyteries to vote on the important issues that were debated and addressed. This will be our chance to express our opinions, to confirm the work of the Assembly or to

say "no, not in this way". However we vote we can still feel good about how the PC(USA) does its work as it seeks to follow Christ into the world.

Ryan Johnson, Young Adult Advisory Delegate – Palisades Presbyterian Church

Dear San Diego Presbytery,

First off I would really like to thank you all for giving me the opportunity to represent you all at the 219th General Assembly. It was truly an honor. Being a YAAD was an awesome and humbling experience. I really enjoyed learning how our denomination functioned.

At the 219th GA I was assigned to the Committee on Permanent GA Committees, a good assignment for my first GA! Our committee had a great leadership team that included San Diego Presbytery's own Dick Berry, which really made the committee stage enjoyable and informative. Though the topics we discussed lacked controversy, important issues were looked at. We approved reports from four committees that included: Committee on Theological Education (COTE), Assembly Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC), and the Committee on Ecumenical Relations.

The next stage of GA was the Plenary. It was a little overwhelming at first, but with the help of Gerry, Jerry, Tim, Pat, and Linda, I got the chance to really participate and enjoy the plenary sessions, no matter how long they were. In the plenary sessions I was really able to see the passion and love that our denomination has for God and his kingdom. The overall theme of the 219th GA was that from the believer's hearts will flow rivers of living water, and that showed in every aspect of the assembly.

Thank you all for supporting me in this life changing experience and may God bless you all.

Ryan Johnson
ryancredible@gmail.com
Feel free to contact me with any questions.

Overture Advocate Report by Jerry Andrews

Presbyterians know God is faithful and desire to live faithfully in grateful response.

Toward that end, over the length of a long generation now, we have wrestled, often with each other, how best to live faithfully and witness to the faithfulness of God in a culture that has exchanged earlier ideals and practices regarding human sexuality and which continues to reexamine nearly every part of its own moral tradition. The church has rightly seen in this an opportunity to reexamine its own understanding of Scripture and its faithfulness to that understanding. We, the church, reflecting the culture too much, are in disagreement about these things and are having a difficult time coming to a broad consensus.

While this has led to much unhappiness in our common life, even division, that we engage in asking the questions and seeking the answers concerning faithfulness in any culture is appropriate and much good can come from it, if, and this too is contested, we look at the Scriptures, together in a sustained and committed way.

The only authority in the Church is the Lord of the Church – Jesus Christ; Christ's will for the Church is set forth in Scripture.

We trust Christ's gifts to be sufficient for the church. "Christ gives to his Church its faith and life, its unity and mission, its officers and ordinances." G-1.0100. One of those gifts is making known his will

for the church, which is an irreplaceable help for us – discernment in times of perplexity, unity in times of disagreement, common mission in times of uncertainty.

Christians – Presbyterians not least of all – seek to know and follow Christ’s will for the church. Amid all the voices clamoring for the attention of the church, many of whom claim for themselves authority on the basis of expertise or personal experience, the church, when it deliberates and decides, rightly asks the Spirit to illuminate the church’s reading of Scripture and to still all voices but God’s own so that Christ’s voice may be heard and Christ’s will may be known – and known so that it can be obeyed. “Insofar as Christ’s will for the Church is set forth in Scripture, it is to be obeyed.” G-1.0100

The Scripture expresses Christ’s will clearly, for the sake of the church.

The Reformed study the Scripture together in a sustained way. A first reading does not suffice for us because we know that though the Scripture invites us to a simple trust, the depth of Scripture is approximated only by a sustained rigor. So we study, constantly and with great reward. We study together with others near us because we know our own private readings are partial and thus insufficient for the whole church, and because our own readings are enriched when we hear how the Spirit has illumined others. We are sure to include in our committed study those who do not share our culture – the Church around the world and the ancients who were faithful in their generation – because we know our own culture can deafen us to the voice of Christ and prevent us from being aware of our blind spots.

The sustained committed study of Scripture around the world, throughout the ages, and in our own place and time has reaffirmed that the Scripture teaches that God has created and commanded us to express our sexuality fully only within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman.

Genesis reveals the order of creation and the purposes for creating us male and female. Christ affirms this when he quotes as authoritative the Genesis record, “Have you not read that the One who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’?”

Among the sins listed and acts proscribed in the Old Testament and in the holiness code – a code which invites us to love our neighbor as ourselves - are sexual acts outside of the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman. The New Testament reaffirms these specific prohibitions about human sexuality, and the Apostle Paul cites as illustrative of the disordered passions of humanity women and men committing shameless acts – sexual acts outside the marriage covenant between a man and a woman.

While there is debate about the implications and applications of this consensus reading of Scripture, no other reading has replaced it or rightly been approved by the church. Indeed, all other readings have been judged to be inadequate.

Thus the Church teaches on the authority of Christ that human sexuality which seeks to be blessed by the church because blessed by God is expressed fully only within the marriage covenant of a man and a woman.

While the discernment of the church continues – a rigorous, sustained, committed study of Scripture – the Presbyterian Church has rightly expressed its conscience on the matters before it. In the judgment of previous General Assemblies and of its Presbyteries the discernment “cannot effectively be pursued in the uncertainty and insecurity that would be generated by the Assembly’s silence on this matter at this time.” (Definitive Guidance/ Authoritative Interpretation)

Toward the end of announcing its conscience to the church and to the world, the Presbyterian Church approved specific and clear standards and asked its governing bodies to abide by those standards.

The Church has standards for its ordained officers.

Some of these standards invite candidates to aspire toward them;
Some of these standards prohibit governing bodies from ordaining without them.
Some do both – educational standards for Ministers of Word and Sacrament –
 set and announce the standards,
 invite candidates to aspire,
 prohibit presbyteries from ordaining w/o those standards being met.

Several standards are named in the first section (Offices of Ministry) in Chapter VI of the Form of Government (The Church and Its Officers):

“the standard for all officers is the pattern of the one who came ‘not to be served but to serve’”
“those who undertake particular ministries should be persons of strong faith, dedicated discipleship, and love of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.”
“Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world.”

“Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church.”

“Among these standards is the requirement to live either within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman, or chastity in singleness.”

“Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained or installed as deacons, elders, or Ministers of the Word and Sacrament.”

Every statement in our Constitution was born of some need, often controversy, in our common life. These statements are fresh in our memory and regard the matter before us. Two presbyteries in the mid 70’s overtured the General Assembly to give guidance on the matter of ordaining candidates who presented themselves as homosexual in orientation and behavior. The General Assembly adopted a statement (definitive guidance that later, after much debate, became an authoritative interpretation of our constitutional standards), that invited homosexual persons into the life of the church, exhorted the church to welcome them, and declared homosexual practice itself to be outside the intention of God for God’s people. It also invited more conversation on these matters.

After still more debate, a later General Assembly amended the constitution to state this standard, broadening the standard beyond matters of homosexuality to matters concerning all of us – faithfulness in marriage and chastity in singleness. The adoption of first the Definitive Guidance, then the Authoritative Interpretation, and finally a constitutional standard in 1996 – G-6.106b – was not designed to settle the controversy or to end debate, but to announce the conscience of the church in these matters in the midst of controversy. The invitation remains to commit to sustained, common study of the Scriptures to discern the will of Christ.

Knowing these things we ask this Committee to:

1. Retain the specific statements of the standards of the church for its officers.

- a. when we are at our best – not easiest, but best -
 we, by the grace of God, are raised toward the standards,
 rather than, by considering the difficulty, lower the standards to us.

Many attempts have been made over several years now to lower those standards by ridding them of their specificity or eliminating them all together. Several overtures before you attempt the same this year. The presbyteries have always seen the wisdom in retaining these standards. Indeed, these standards are now the most often and best defended paragraph in the Book of Order.

- b. announce the continuing conscience of the Church on these matters
 - no new arguments have been advanced to dissuade us,
 - no appeal to Scripture has been successful, not nearly,

The Scriptures, in both the Old and New Testaments, teach faithfulness in marriage and chastity in singleness and prohibit all alternatives.

The Scriptures set forth Christ's will for the Church – these are his apostles and prophets – it is to be obeyed.

The Church that desires to obey its Lord, obeys his Word. We are a Church that so desires.

- c. supports those who rightly struggle with their sin these matters

In my congregations – former and present – there were members who identified their sexual orientation as homosexual and invited me, as their pastor, into their lives. I regard this as an act of grace on their part and hope to have been a suitable companion to them in their struggles. Some disagree with me and the church on these matters. Yet they love Jesus, benefit from hearing his word preached and his sacraments offered, and see him at work in the congregation. So they come, support, and commit as members of the church. Others agree with me and the church on these matters. They express profound thanksgiving for the help given them in the gracious and clear teaching of the church, a patience in their struggles, grace when they fall, and love abounding both in the giving and the receiving.

Retaining the standards for the officers of the church is best for the members of the church and the church at its best.

2. Restore the church's teaching by restoring the Authoritative Interpretation.

The Authoritative Interpretation invites the Presbyterian Church to provide its conclusions and background paper to the whole church, undertake a variety of new educational activities, reach out to homosexual persons beyond the church to allow higher levels of rapport to emerge, encourage dialogue, conduct candidate examinations with discretion and sensitivity not making specific inquiry into the sexual orientation or practice of candidates, call the media to end harmful stereotypes, call on all members to reject homophobia in their own lives, encourage the human sciences to continue their studies, encourage the development of support communities for those struggling to live productive celibate lives, encourage seminaries to have non-discriminatory admission policies, work for the decriminalization of private homosexual acts and an end to discriminatory enforcement of other laws and discriminatory laws, declare that this shall not be read to affect negatively the ordination of those ordained prior to the Authoritative Interpretation, and calls upon those who in conscience have difficulty accepting these decisions to express that by continued dialogue within the church.

The Authoritative Interpretation has not yet, after all these years, been lived into fully or well. Simply put, the AI is better in its call than the Church is in its practice.

The AI was dismissed by the last GA without debates on its merits or consideration of its content. Indeed, the AI document was not given to the commissioners. AI's are established to clarify what is unintentionally unclear in our constitution. Confusion has resulted from the removal of the AI. It is an absence with new unwanted, unintended consequences. More court cases have been generated since the GA substituted clear and gracious teaching with a process of discernment – a process that

ignores the clear and gracious teaching of the church . The process has not generated the hoped for study of the teaching of the church in light of the Scripture. Restoring the AI restores that teaching and re-invites Presbyterians to be at their best.

We, the Presbyteries of San Diego, Beaver-Butler, Central Florida, Cherokee, Mid-South, Redstone, South Alabama, St. Andrew, Tropical Florida, Upper Ohio Valley, Washington, and Yukon (a greater number of presbyteries concurring on this matter than on any other before the Assembly) ask this committee and the commissioners to this General Assembly to retain the standards of the Church for its officers, and restore the teaching of the Church for the whole church.