

**Summary of the 180th Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of the Midwest
September 15-16, 2023**

(Please share this at your next Session meeting and with members as a way of staying connected.)

The 180th Stated Meeting of the Midwest Presbytery took place at Warsaw EPC, Warsaw, IN. The meeting was opened with prayer by Moderator RE Bruce Shown. We were introduced to newcomers and special guests, Ch. Mark Ingles, TE Tom Ricks, and Dr. K J Drake. TE Aaron Klein welcomed us to Warsaw EPC and led us in prayer.

A quorum was declared representing 70 TEs and REs present and 25 online participants. The Docket was approved without exception or addition. Presbytery Minutes from the 179th meeting and Revisions of 2022 Presbytery Minutes from the PRC were also approved.

Approval of a New Stated Clerk

Presented by RE Bruce Shown

Our first order of business was to hear the recommendation of the Stated Clerk Search Committee and to vote to approve TE Peter Scribner to become the Stated Clerk of the Midwest Presbytery beginning in January, 2024 (for an initial three-year term). Peter Scribner will serve as Stated Clerk elect from September 16 - December 31, 2023. In other words, he is ramping up and will be prepared to hit the ground running in January 2024!

Ministerial Committee Report

Presented by TE Jerry Van Auken, Chair

Three different kinds of examinations were completed at this presbytery meeting. Matthew Liethen has been called to serve as a hospice chaplain and if the way be clear, to serve as a military chaplain. His examination was sustained and he was ordained in the evening worship service.

TE David Snyder transferred his ordination credentials from the Central Carolina Presbytery to the Midwest Presbytery. He moved here as an early retirement from EPC Military Chaplaincy. His examination was sustained and his membership in the MWP was affirmed. He will serve the Clifton EPC, Clifton, OH as a transitional pastor beginning in October 2023.

TE Andrew Morton has been called by Ossian EPC, Ossian, IN. We heard his testimony and an expression of his continued fidelity to the vows he made upon his ordination some ten years ago. He will begin his ministry in Ossian, Indiana as of January 1, 2024.

Ministerial Committee also offered an Omnibus Motion. This addressed changes in calls for Chaplain B J Newman, and TEs Dustin Leimgruber, Scoff Bearer, Luke Potter and Ron Amos. The committee provided information on churches with active search committees, commissioned pastors, and clusters. In light of the dissolution of the New Heart Community Church, the members of that church were added to the membership role of the MWP until such time as they find new church homes.

The Office of Chaplain

Presented by Chaplain Mark Ingles

Chaplain Mark Ingles, who represents the Chaplain Oversight Committee of the EPC, offered a snapshot of this calling. It is the fastest growing form of ministry in the US today. Chaplains go where people are and have a ministry of presence, encouragement, comfort and care in the midst of the most challenging times of life. Chaplains offer cooperation without compromise for military personnel, seniors, athletes, prisoners, schools and Fortune 500 companies. They respond to natural disasters as well. An ideal verse

for chaplains comes from 2 Cor. 1:4 “He [God] comforts us in all our afflictions, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

Church Planting Report

Presented by TE Tom Ricks

TE Tom Ricks is the head of National Outreach. He is a mobilizer advocating a church planting movement throughout the EPC. He said that Church planting is going on in 18 states with over 50 church planters engaged. We have more opportunities than planters. Planters, Partners and Patrons are needed. The Midwest has a legacy of effective church planting. We have two church plants now and are strategizing ways to do more church planting efforts in all three states. TE Terence Gray was unable to present his report due to temporary health complications. His written report includes some of our present and future strategies.

Church Health Report

Presented by TEs Bill Teague and Andy Gilman

TE Bill Teague reminded us of two stark realities in the American Church: Dechurching and Depastoring. The news is not all bad, however. Churches in the Midwest Presbytery have come for help to the Church Health Committee. TE Andy Gilman has written five step plans for churches in search of revitalization. He has trained and sent coaches to several churches already. These efforts complement the REFOCUS overview by the GA Church Health Committee which was presented at the last presbytery meeting. In addition, 12 churches have already received grants from the Oakland Avenue Revitalization Fund and there is still \$24,000 left for churches to claim based on a clear plan for their church to engage in outreach and evangelism efforts.

Acknowledgement of the Outgoing Stated Clerk (Tribute)

Presented by RE Andy Warner

RE Andy Warner interrupted the docket to address the Stated Clerk’s completion of his ministry (December 2023). He was kind enough to speak personally and add comments from TE Scott McKee. A card including a generous love gift was presented, after which a prayer of thanksgiving to God was offered.

Program Committee

Presented by TE Aaron White

Dr. K J Drake, a professor at Indianapolis Seminary, presented two messages concerning the Sacraments in Reformed Theology. The first presentation provided an historical sketch, the second, a message about renewal in the practice of sacramental piety in the reformed tradition today. Both presentations were recorded and will be available on the MWP Website: <https://midwestpresbytery.org/>. Copies of the PPT slides also will be posted on our website.

Fellowship Dinner

Hosted by Warsaw EPC Hospitality Team

This is one of the ways we build our relationships within the presbytery. We were wonderfully served by the Warsaw catering team with a delicious meal. Thanks so much for your gracious care for us.

Evening Worship

Led by Warsaw EPC Worship Team

Our Worship included musical praise, the proclamation of the Word by RE Bruce Shown, the ordination of Matthiew Liethen as a chaplain and a communion service. Bruce’s faith is contagious, and his engagement in fulfilling the great commission is relentless. May we renew our commitment to be passionate about this one thing: The fulfillment of the Great Commission. Since Matthew has been a

member and worshipper at Warsaw EPC, this was the ideal time and place to ordain him. TEs Andrew Winter, Aaron Klein and Andrew Morton presided over this ordination. Our worship included a celebration of the Lord's Supper. TE Matthew Liethen closed the service with a benediction.

Morning Worship

Led by Warsaw EPC Worship Team

TE Tom Nelson followed the beautiful musical praise with a clear and compelling message based on James 1:12-18. Growth to maturity is James' theme. He knows that maturity comes through facing trials. Those who persevere through the tests will receive the crown of life reserved for those who love Him. How can we not love him who first loved us and who is faithful in his pledge to never leave us? He who chose to give us birth watches over us that we might be the first fruits of all he created. The Divine presence and Divine endowments form the basis for assurance of Divine hope. Knowing this, we hold each other up through the trials we face.

World Outreach

Presented by TE Adam Reasner

TE Adam Reasner introduced one of the EPC's finest world outreach trainers. SK has ministered in 73 countries and has established training centers in Europe, Africa and the Mideast. He invites us to join him next year as he meets with Egyptian pastors and then goes to the Holy Land to see what God is doing in raising living stones (believers and churches) in the presence of dead stones (historical markers).

Our Eastern European Partners reported progress in the E2025 goal of reaching Siberian Tatars. The work goes on despite the prohibition to live in the midst of Tatars.

TE Adam Reasner cast a vision for WO beyond E2025. World Outreach's three priorities include the (i) Present People Group, (ii) Places and (iii) Progeny (sons and daughters) who will take the gospel forward into the next generation. If you know of people in missions from your church, pass their names along to WO. He concluded by showcasing Jim and Sue Walker who are serving the Lord in retirement in Cyprus. Scholarship money is available to young adults who wish to attend a winter mission training conference.

Budget and Finance

Presented by RE Chris Ockerman

RE Chris Ockerman provided a review of budget income and expenses through the end of July 2023 and then presented the 2024 budget. He expressed thanks to the churches who generously contributed. Our cash position is excellent; Oakland Revitalization Fund and a Women's Ministry fund have money available. We will offer a small deficit spending budget in light of the needs to sustain committee proposals and to add new support for Next Generation ministries and to support church planting more robustly. We will maintain the PMA asking of \$13/member. When the GA transition to a percentage of income ("POI") is fully implemented in 2025 (three-year rollout) we will likely adjust the presbytery funding approach.

Next Gen Ministries

Presented by TEs Andrew Morton, David Tori and Stephanie Poblenz

A proposal from the Next Gen Team to form a new MWP Program Committee was offered as a first reading. This will be raised again at the next MWP meeting to be discussed and voted on. The Team challenged us to apply our connectional commitments to the next generation, especially to those workers engaged with children, youth, teens and college aged ministries. Networking lunches before presbytery meetings, conferences and summits are coming. They need our help in identifying all those who are working with next generation, whether paid staff or volunteers, whether in large churches or in

small churches. Please respond to the MWP office or directly to TEs David Tori, Stephanie Poblentz or Andrew Morton. (see attached flyer for additional information.)

Nominating Committee

Presented by TE Kelly Kruth

Effective ministry takes place in the presbytery when well qualified and committed TEs and REs take part in committee and council work. This year TE Kelly Kurth offered a series of names for positions within the Midwest Presbytery. Our next Moderator will be TE Rich Lanning; Moderator Elect will be RE Bob Wheelock. Many committee members agreed to second terms and additional committee members were approved at the conclusion of TE Kelly Kurth's report.

Session Records Review

Presented by RE Bob Wheelock

RE Bob Wheelock reviewed the status of the annual Session Records Review. He acknowledged the team of TEs and REs that is in place for these reviews. He also commended the MWP churches for submitting their Session Minutes/Records and highlighted several areas that could be improved in the minutes going forward.

Council Report

Presented by TE Rich Lanning

Every year in which a motion is approved at General Assembly, it is sent down to the Presbyteries for approval. This "Descending Overture" is presented in the Fall presbytery for a first reading and then voted on at the February meeting. One overture came to us, we had a first reading of it.

Stated Clerk's Report

Presented by TE Dave Brown

The Stated Clerk typically identifies a theme for his report and presents highlights. He then calls for a time of prayer by the whole assembly and then calls forth the singing of a hymn, psalm or spiritual song. This time the theme was on the responsibilities of leadership to define reality, to describe God's desired future and to direct God's people to that destination. He reminded these leaders that developing the next generation of leaders is imperative and that as servant leaders of Christ we have been called to die to ourselves so that we might live for Christ's glory alone.

The last task of leaders is to thank those who have walked with them through the ups and downs of the past season. I wish to give a big thank you to every teaching elder and ruling elder in each church. Thanks for colleagues including our Assistant Stated Clerk, our incoming Stated Clerk and Moderator, and all five Moderators, Council Members and Committee leaders and members who have served the Midwest Presbytery with me over the last five years.

After a time of prayer for those in need, we presented ourselves to our King singing "Lead On, O King Eternal" and then received His benediction.

Sincerely Yours,

David Brown,

Andy Warner

Stated Clerk of the Midwest Presbytery

Assistant Stated Clerk of Midwest Presbytery