

Third Session
Thursday, June 20, 2024

**44-32 MORNING WORSHIP –
MODERATORS COMMUNION SERVICE**

Worship began at 9:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary of Hope Church, Cordova, Tennessee. The court continued in worship as noted below:

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Today’s Music led by the Hope Church Praise Team:

House of The Lord
Goodness of God

Prayer

Shaun Lloyd

Sermon

TE Joe Kim

Moderator’s Communion

How Great Is Our God

Benediction

44-33 CALL TO ORDER

The Moderator, RE Victor Jones (Gulf South), called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

44-34 GREAT COMMISSION SHARE AND OPENING PRAYER

TE Sir Gregory Thorton (Central South) brought to the Assembly a “Great Commission Share relating to Next Gen issues and offered prayer to open the Assembly.

44-35 ANNOUNCEMENTS & ADOPTION OF DOCKET

ON MOTION The docket was adopted as follows:

1:00 pm General Assembly Business Session 3

- 3.1 Business Convenes - Moderator RE Victor Jones
- 3.2. Great Commission Share and Opening Prayer - TE Sir Gregory Thorton
- 3.3 Approval of the Docket and Announcements - TE Dean Weaver
- 3.3a Reporting on PJC Analysis regarding 44-37
- 3.4 Introduction of Chaplains - TE Mark Ingles, Chaplain Endorser
- 3.5 Nominating Committee - Partial Report -TE SJ Winter
 - a. Recommendation 44-04 - Permanent Committee Nominees 1st reading
 - b. Recommendation 44-38 - 2024-2025 Permanent Nominating Committee and BRI Chair
- 3.6 Report of the Administration Committee – TE Sean Boone
 - a. Recommendation 44-08
 - b. Recommendation 44-09
- 3.7 Report of the Church Planting Team - TE Tom Ricks
- 3.8 Report of the Disaster Relief Committee - TE Paul Becker
- 3.9 Pastoral Letter of Racial Lament and Hope -TE’s Gerrit Dawson/Joe Kim
 - a. Recommendation 44-11
- 3.10 Report from Fraternal Relations Committee -TE Walter Taylor
 - a. Introductions of Fraternal Delegates
 - b. Recommendation 44-15
- 3.11 Report from Benefits Resource Inc. - RE Michael Busch
 - a. Recommendation 44-17
- 3.12 Report from World Outreach -TE Josh Cole
- 3.13 Stated Clerk’s Report - TE Dean Weaver
Break
- 3.14 Face to Face - TE Fred Lian
- 3.15 Invitation to the 45th General Assembly - TE Terence Gray
 - a. Recommendation 44-05
- 3.16 Report from the Church Health Team - TE Bob Stauffer
- 3.17 Report from the Theology Committee - TE Aaron White (
 - a. Recommendation 44-22
 - b. Recommendation 44-24
 - c. Recommendation 44-25
- 3.18 Report from the Next Generation Council -TE Stephanie Poblenz
- 3.19 Report from the Ministerial Vocation Committee -TE Carolyn Poteet
 - a. Recommendation 44-26
 - b. Recommendation 44-28
 - c. Recommendation 44-43 -This recommendation answers the following overtures: 44-30; 44-32; 44-33; 44-34; 44-35; 44-37.
 - d. Recommendation 44-31
- 3.20 Nominating Committee - Final Report - TE SJ Winter
 - a. Recommendation 44-04 -2024-2025 Permanent Committees
 - b. Recommendation 44-38 - Permanent Nominating Committee & BRI Chair
- 3.21 Report from the Presbytery Review Committee -TE Ron Bengelink
 - a. Recommendation 44-39

- b. Recommendation 44-40
- 3.22 Omnibus Motion - Recommendation 44-41 -TE Dean Weaver
 - a. Recommendation 44-10
 - b. Recommendation 44-13
 - c. Recommendation 44-14
 - d. Recommendation 44-16
 - e. Recommendation 44-18
 - f. Recommendation 44-19
 - g. Recommendation 44-20
 - h. Recommendation 44-21
 - i. Permanent Committee Minutes (CWCC, MVC, NLT, DRC, Fraternal, Next Gen, WO)
- 3.23 Report of Memorials and Appreciations Committee - TE Todd Weiland
- 3.24 Great Commission Share and Closing Prayer - Moderator RE Victor Jones

44-36 PJC ANALYSIS REGARDING 44-37

TE Forrest Norman (Alleghanies) explained 3-C analysis: The two areas clarity & consistency of language were approved, but Constitutionality (compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution) was not. Therefore, the PJC recommended that 44-37 not be approved.

ON MOTION Receipt of the PJC Report was approved.

44-37 INTRODUCTION OF CHAPLAINS

A video highlighting the work of our Chaplains was shown as all Chaplains attending the Assembly took the platform to be recognized. TE Mark Ingles (West) Chaplain Endorser of the EPC opened with prayer and introduced our chaplains and their important work to the Assembly. TE Michael Davis offered prayer for our Chaplains.

44-38 NOMINATING COMMITTEE - PARTIAL REPORT

TE SJ Winter (Midwest) opened the report with prayer and on behalf of the Nominating Committee presented the first reading of our Permanent Committee nominations.

- a. Recommendation 44-04-Permanent Committee Nominees -1st reading
- b. Recommendation 44-38 - 2024-2025 Permanent Nominating Committee and BRI Chairman - 1st reading

44-39 REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

TE Sean Boone (Mid-America) opened the Standing Committee Report with prayer and moved the following recommendations:

- a. Recommendation 44-08 Approval of the Fiscal Year 2024 Administration Budget
- b. Recommendation 44-09 Approval of the Special Projects Budget.

ON MOTION Both recommendations were approved.

44-40 CHURCH PLANTING TEAM REPORT

TE Tom Ricks (Mid-America) National Director of Church Planting opened the report with prayer. He shared a video with the Assembly of several church plants around the country in the advancement of the Gospel.

44-41 REPORT OF THE DISASTER RELIEF COMMITTEE

TE Paul Becker (East) opened the report with prayer and a video featuring Selma, Alabama was shown to the Assembly. Report was closed with prayer for disaster areas.

44-42 PASTORAL LETTER OF RACIAL LAMENT AND HOPE

TE Gerrit Dawson (Gulf South) opened the report with prayer and moved approval of recommendation 44-11. The Ad-Interim Committee on Pastoral Letter of Racial Lament and Hope recommends that the 44th General Assembly APPROVE the Pastoral Letter of Racial Lament and Hope.

ON MOTION the Pastoral Letter of Racial Lament and Hope was approved.

44-43 FRATERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

The Fraternal Relations Committee recommends that the 44th General Assembly APPROVE that the Evangelical Presbyterian Church enter into a Fraternal Relationship with the National Union of French Protestant Reformed Churches (UNEPREF).

ON MOTION Recommendation 44-15 that the EPC enter a formal Fraternal Relationship with the National Union of Protestant Reformed Churches (UNEPREF) was approved.

44-44 BENEFITS RESOURCE INC. REPORT

RE Mike Busch (Alleghenies) opened the report with prayer and moved Recommendation 44-17. The Benefit Resources Inc., Board of Directors recommends that the 44th General Assembly APPROVE ordained ministers drawing retirement income from the EPC 403(b)(9) Defined Contribution Retirement Plan be allowed to designate up to 100% of their retirement income for housing allowance as permitted by applicable regulations adopted pursuant to the Internal Revenue Code.

ON MOTION Recommendation 44-17 was approved.

The BRI Board of Directors recommends that the 44th General Assembly APPROVE ordained ministers drawing retirement income from the EPC 403 (b)(9) Defined Contribution Retirement Plan be allowed to designate up to 100% of their retirement income for housing allowance as permitted by applicable regulations adopted pursuant to the Internal Revenue Code.

44-45 WORLD OUTREACH REPORT

TE Josh Cole (Gulf South) opened the report with prayer and welcomed RE Gabriel de Guia (Florida and Carribean), Executive Director of World Outreach who gave a World Outreach update.

44-46 STATED CLERK'S REPORT

Stated Clerk Dean Weaver opened with prayer and briefly shared the report. The Stated Clerk's full Report is contained in the Commissioner's Handbook.

Dean offered the following petitions:

1. Petition – Generous donor challenge of \$35,000. An additional \$8,265 (\$5,000 from yesterday) has been donated to date for underfunded World Outreach Workers.
2. Praise for the work in Sierra Leon.
3. TE Ed and Nan McCallum are retiring from ITEN.

Break

44-47 FACE TO FACE

TE Fred Lian (West) opened the report with prayer and gave instructions for the process.

44-48 INVITATION TO THE 45TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

TE Terence Gray (Midwest) opened the report with prayer and moved Recommendation 44-05.

ON MOTION Recommendation 44-05 the invitation from Ward Church in Northville, MI to host the 45th General Assembly. Motion approved.

44-49 CHURCH HEALTH TEAM REPORT

TE Bob Stauffer (Alleghenies) National Church Health Director relinquished his time to the docket. See the Church Health Team Report in the Commissioner's Handbook.

The Bart Hess Award

Forge Church, North Carolina is the 2024 Bart Hess Award. This award was presented during the Plenary Session during the Church Health meeting.

44-50 STANDING COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGY

TE Aaron White (Midwest) opened the report with prayer and shared his report.

ON MOTION (See Recommendations below)

44-22 The Permanent Judicial Commission recommends that the 44th General Assembly **DECLINE** amending the Book of Government 8-2 C and Book of Worship 3-3. J and that Recommendation 44-23 be answered by this action. **APPROVED**

44-24 The Permanent Judicial Commission recommends that the 44th General Assembly **DECLINE** amending the Book of Worship 3-3. I and that Recommendation 44-25 be answered by this action. **APPROVED**

44-25 The Presbytery of the Rivers and Lakes respectfully **OVERTURES** the 44th General Assembly to **APPROVE** amending the Book of Worship 3-3. I concerning explicit qualifications for admission to the sacraments of the Lord's Supper. **NOT APPROVED**

44-51 AD-INTERIM COMMITTEE ON DISABILITIES

ON MOTION Recommendation 44-44 that an Ad-interim Committee be appointed to draft a Pastoral Letter on Disability and access, especially regarding the sacraments. **APPROVED**

44-52 NEXT GEN COUNCIL REPORT

TE Stephanie Poblentz (Midwest) opened the report with prayer and shared the report of the Council. The Next Gen provides ways for youth workers to reach this Generation. 2025 Next Gen Summit is scheduled for March 15-17, 2025 at Central Presbyterian Church in St. Louis, Missouri.

44-53 MINISTERIAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

TE Carolyn Poteet (Alleghenies) opened the report with prayer and moved Recommendation 44-26 in agreement with the recommendation from our- Permanent Judicial Commission that Recommendation 44-27 be answered by this recommendation.

44-26 The Permanent Judicial Commission recommends that the 44th General Assembly DECLINE amending the Book of Government sections 9-5E and 9-11 concerning Chaplain endorsements and that Recommendation 44-27 be answered by this action.

ON MOTION Recommendation 44-26 was approved.

44-27 The Ministerial Vocation Committee recommends that the 44th General Assembly APPROVE amending the Book of Government sections 9-5E and 9-11 concerning Chaplain endorsements.

ON MOTION Recommendations 44-27 was not approved.

44-28 The Ministerial Vocation Committee recommends that the 44th General Assembly APPROVE amending the Book of Government sections 10-7 & 9.5 C.3 concerning Transitional Pastors.

ON MOTION Recommendation 44-28 (Transitional Pastors) Recommendation approved.

44-30 The Presbytery of Mid-America respectfully OVERTURES the 44th General Assembly to direct the Permanent Committee on Theology to examine the concept of sexuality as it pertains to identity/self-conception, progressive sanctification, and concupiscence.

44-32 The Presbytery of the Central South respectfully OVERTURES the 44th General Assembly seeking a moderator appointed Ad-interim Committee to study and address the items surrounding same sex attraction, as well as to update the EPC Position Paper on Human Sexuality.

44-33 The Presbytery of the Gulf South respectfully OVERTURES the 44th General Assembly seeking to direct the Permanent Committee on Theology to examine the concept of sexuality as it pertains to identity/self-conception, progressive sanctification, and concupiscence.

44-34 The Presbytery of the West respectfully OVERTURES the 44th General Assembly to direct the Permanent Committee on Theology to examine the Scriptures and the Westminster Standards with respect to the doctrines of identity progressive sanctification, and concupiscence (inclination to sin).

44-35 The Presbytery of the Alleghenies respectfully OVERTURES the 44th General Assembly to conduct a review of existing EPC positions, letters and other guidance to assess their adequacy in addressing issues of human sexuality.

44-37 The Presbytery of the New River respectfully OVERTURES the 44th General Assembly APPROVE amending Book of Government 9-3.

44-43 Proposed Consolidated Overture from Mid-America Presbytery [New River Leadership Team Concurring].

(Consolidating the Current overture 44-30 from Mid-America Presbytery with overture 44-32 from The Presbytery of the Central South, overture 44-33 from Presbytery of the Gulf South, overture 44-34 from the Presbytery of the West, overture 44-35 from Presbytery of the Alleghenies, and overture 44-37 from New River Presbytery).

Resolved that:

Whereas:

The EPC’s position paper on Human Sexuality rightly states “The Scriptures teach that human sexuality is indeed a gift for our enjoyment, its primary purpose is to glorify God. . . . [A]ll humans are obligated to glorify our Creator in our sexuality through faithful conformity to God’s design, revealed in the Scriptures.”

Whereas:

The 44th General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church is agreed that the only proper context in which human sexuality is fully and rightly expressed is in the covenant union between one man and one woman. Any expression of sexuality outside this biblical norm is sin, and this includes the unmortified corruption and disordered inclinations of original sin that give rise to homosexual desires and impulses as well as the particular acts of sin that proceed from original sin such as same-sex sexual attraction, same-sex sexual intimacy and acts of lust.

Therefore,

to clarify our witness to the world that has increasingly denied God’s design for sexuality, and to strengthen our understanding of biblical norms and standards—especially as they apply to our standards for office-bearers in the Church, the General Assembly directs the moderator to appoint a nine-member *Ad-Interim* committee made up of:

- RE Tom Werner
- TE Shelley Kral
- TE Rufus Burton
- TE Sandy Willson
- TE John Dorr
- TE Case Thorp
- RE Carol Williams
- TE Cameron Shaffer
- TE Aaron White

And charges them to study the Scriptures, The Westminster Confession of Faith, and Catechisms to bring clarity to our witness regarding:

1) Theological anthropology, with respect to human sexuality as it pertains to contemporary usage of the sexual self-conception and how such language comports with Scripture and the Westminster standards;

- 2) Progressive Sanctification and how it informs the Reformed understanding of the mortification of sin and the doctrine of repentance;
- 3) Concupiscence as it relates to a Reformed conception of the Christian's new nature in Christ and when homosexual temptation, like other temptations disqualifies one from ordained office;
- 4) The Christian hope for those who experience and flee sexual temptation, especially homosexual temptation;
- 5) How the answers to these questions might inform standards for officers who have struggled in these areas but have mortified such temptation and desire.

The Committee is further charged to review our Position Papers, Pastoral Letters, and the *Book of Order* and to recommend potential changes that will clarify, align, and strengthen our witness to the larger world.

The Committee shall make an interim report to the 45th General Assembly, and a final report and recommendations to the 46th General Assembly.

The General Assembly commits to fund this committee's work. The National Leadership Team shall review and approve any necessary expenses.

Be it further resolved that it is the opinion and wish of the 44th General Assembly that no presbytery shall take action on petitions or matters before them that might touch on these areas of inquiry and exploration until the final report is received and acted upon by the 46th General Assembly.

ON MOTION Recommendation 44-43 (detailed above) approved, answering Recommendations 44-30, 44-32, 44-33, 44-34, 44-35 and 44-37.

44-31 The Presbytery of Mid-America respectfully OVERTURES the 44th General Assembly to direct the Permanent Committee on Ministerial Vocation to make recommendations to the 45th General Assembly on how churches and Presbyteries are to promote and preserve the peace of the church as it relates to three specific questions.

ON MOTION Recommendation 44-31 was not approved.

44-54 NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

TE SJ Winter (Midwest) opened the report with prayer and on behalf of the Nominating Committee moved approval of Recommendation 44-04 and Recommendation 44-38.

- a. Recommendation 44-04-Permanent Committee Nominees (insert names)
- b. Recommendation 44-38-2024-2025 Permanent Nominating Committee and BRI Chairman. (insert names)

ON MOTION Recommendation 44-04 and Recommendation 44-38 were approved.

44-55 PRESBYTERY REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT

RE Ron Bengelink (Pacific Northwest) opened the report with prayer and moved approval of Recommendation 44-39 and 40-40.

44-39 The Presbytery Review Committee recommends that the 44th General Assembly APPROVE the exceptions requiring a response as found in the 2023 minutes of 11 of our 16 presbyteries.

44-40 The Presbytery Review Committee recommends that the 44th General Assembly APPROVE the responses of the presbyteries to those exceptions sent to them by the 43rd General Assembly.

ON MOTION Recommendation 44-39 was approved.

ON MOTION Recommendation 44-40 was approved.

44-56 OMNIBUS MOTION

Stated Clerk Dean Weaver moved approval of Recommendation 44-41 which includes:

44-10 The NLT recommends that the 44th General Assembly APPROVE the minutes of the 43rd General Assembly.

44-13 The Fraternal Relations Committee recommends that the 44th General Assembly APPROVE that the Evangelical Presbyterian Church withdraw its formal fraternal relationship with the Association of Charismatic Presbyterian Churches in Puerto Rico and that future relationships be through the World Reformed Fellowship.

44-14 The Fraternal Relations Committee recommends that the 44th General Assembly APPROVE that the Evangelical Presbyterian Church withdraw its formal fraternal relationship with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Peru.

44-16 The Fraternal Relations Committee recommends that the 44th General Assembly APPROVE that the Evangelical Presbyterian Church extend the current Articles of Agreement with the St. Andrew's Presbytery of Argentina through 2025.

44-18 The Presbyteries of the Southeast, Central Carolinas, and New River respectfully OVERTURE the 44th General Assembly to APPROVE the adjusting of boundaries between the three presbyteries.

44-19 The World Outreach Committee recommends that the 44th General Assembly APPROVE Paraclete Missions Group as an EPC World Outreach Cooperative Agency.

44-20 The World Outreach Committee recommends that the 44th General Assembly APPROVE MAF (Mission Aviation Fellowship) as an EPC World Outreach Cooperative Agency.

44-21 The World Outreach Committee recommends that the 44th General Assembly APPROVE API (Asian Partners International) as an EPC World Outreach Approved Agency.

Permanent Committee Minutes (Chaplains Work and Care, Ministerial Vocation, National Leadership Team, Disaster Relief, Fraternal Relations, Next Gen and World Outreach).

ON MOTION Recommendation 44-41 was approved.

44-57 MEMORIALS AND APPRECIATION COMMITTEE

TE Todd Weiland (Great Plains) opened the report with prayer and presented the committee report including leading the Assembly in expressing appreciation for the work done by the Hope Church Volunteers, Gospel Priority Leaders and the General Assembly Staff.

44-58 CLOSING PRAYER

Moderator RE Victor Jones gave closing remarks and led the Assembly in closing prayer.

44-59 WORSHIP

Worship began at 7:30 p.m. in the sanctuary of Hope Church.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Tonight's Music was led by the Hope Church Praise Team

Praise
Your Great Name
Trust In God

Designated Offering for the Moderator's Scholarship Fund

TE Chad Johnson

Choir Special Matthew 28

Scripture Ephesians 4:12

Sermon

TE Rufus Smith

Video in Memoriam while singing for “For All The Saints”

Closing Song

In Christ Alone

Benediction and Doxology

TE Michael Davis