



**46TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY &
GOSPEL PRIORITIES SUMMIT**



BETTER
together

**CHERRY CREEK
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
ENGLEWOOD, COLORADO
JUNE 16-18, 2026**

46th GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMISSIONER HANDBOOK

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Brothers and Sisters:

Welcome to the 46th General Assembly / Gospel Priorities Summit. Our theme this year is “*Better Together*” based on Ephesians 4:16, “From whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” We are so glad you are here!

This *Commissioner’s Handbook* includes two sections:

1. “Preliminaries,” which provides important introductory material to help familiarize you with our time together, and
2. “Matters Received and Referred.” This is the business the Assembly will address. Other documents, such as the *Rules for Assembly*, committee reports, audited financial statements, and more are available at http://www.epconnect.org/ga2026documents_

To get a good overview of the work of our beloved family of churches over the past year, read the Moderator’s Report, National Leadership Team Report, and my report. These three reports are at the end of the Preliminary section. I encourage you to read all the reports and recommendations coming before this Assembly, especially those of the Standing Committee on which you are serving.

I hope you’ll join me in praying that the God of grace and peace will pour out His power upon us during our time together. As we gather in the spirit of “Better Together,” may we be united as one body in Jesus Christ, “from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped... builds itself up in love” (Ephesians 4:16)

Coram Deo,



D. Dean Weaver
Stated Clerk

OVERVIEW OF ASSEMBLY SCHEDULE

Monday, June 15

8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.	Church Health Team Training (Invitation Only)
11:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.	World Outreach Global Worker Meeting (Invitation Only)
1:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.	Registration/Check-in/Information Open
3:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.	SSA Open Forum (Registered Commissioners Only)
4:00 p.m.-6:15 p.m.	EPC Mission Leader & Global Worker Gathering & Dinner (Invitation Only)
5:00 p.m.-6:30 p.m.	Dinner for Women Pastors and Candidates at Grace Point Community Church
5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.	Pancake Dinner at Cherry Creek Presbyterian Church
7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.	Worship and Prayer

Tuesday, June 16

7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.	Check in/Information Open
8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.	Nursery/PreK – Infants to 5yrs old
8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.	Youth (5yrs old – 11 yrs old)
8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.	Youth (11 yrs old – 17yrs old)
9:00 a.m.- 9:45 a.m.	Worship
10:00 a.m.-11:15 a.m.	Plenary Session 1: Preaching for Spiritual Formation
11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m.	Ad Interim SSA Lunch/Box Lunch Pick Up
1:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m.	Equipping Session 1
3:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.	Business Session 1
5:30 p.m.-7:00 p.m.	Ticketed Group Dinner
7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.	Worship/WO Global Worker Commissioning Service

Wednesday, June 17

7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.	Check in/Information Open
8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.	Nursery/PreK – Infants to 5yrs old
8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.	Youth (5yrs old – 11 yrs old)
8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.	Youth (11 yrs old – 17yrs old)
9:00 a.m.-9:45 a.m.	Worship
10:00 a.m.-11:15 a.m.	Plenary Session 2: Disciples Sent Together
11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m.	Ad Interim Ordination Lunch/Box Lunch Pick Up

OVERVIEW OF ASSEMBLY SCHEDULE

Continued

Wednesday, June 17

1:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m.	Business Session 2
3:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.	Business Session 3 Standing Committees
5:30 p.m.-7:00 p.m.	Ticketed Group Dinner
7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.	Worship

Thursday, June 18

7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.	Check in/Information Open
8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.	Nursery/PreK – Infants to 5yrs old
8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.	Youth (5yrs old – 11 yrs old)
8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.	Youth (11 yrs old – 17yrs old)
8:30 a.m.-9:45 a.m.	Worship / Moderator Communion Service
10:00 a.m.-11:15 a.m.	Business Session 4
11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m.	Networking Lunches/Box Lunch Pick Up
1:00 p.m.-2:45 p.m.	Business Session 5
3:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.	Business Session 6
6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.	Ticketed Group Dinner
7:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.	Worship/Memorial Service

GENERAL ASSEMBLY PERMANENT COMMITTEES

(Through the 46th General Assembly)

BENEFIT RESOURCES, INC., BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Class of 2026:	Class of 2027:	Class of 2028:
RE Michael Busch <i>Alleghenies</i>	TE Brandon Jolley <i>Midwest</i>	RE Ken Scearce <i>Alleghenies</i>
RE Bill Overcast <i>Central South</i>	RE Bob Coleman <i>Central South</i>	Michael Moore <i>Central South</i>
Cathy Scott <i>East</i>	RE Greg Sipos <i>Alleghenies</i>	RE Jeff Anderson <i>Great Plains</i>

CHAPLAINS WORK AND CARE COMMITTEE

Class of 2026:	Class of 2027:	Class of 2028:
RE Kendra Bowers <i>Central South</i>	TE Scott Kennaugh <i>Central South</i>	RE Larry Williams <i>Alleghenies</i>
TE Marty Carpenter <i>Pacific Southwest</i>	RE Jim Pleuss <i>Rivers & Lakes</i>	TE Karen Bolte <i>Pacific Northwest</i>
TE David Snyder <i>Midwest</i>	TE Daniel Kim <i>Coastal Mid-Atlantic</i>	TE Richard Evans <i>Pacific Northwest</i>

DISASTER RELIEF COMMITTEE

Class of 2026:	Class of 2027:	Class of 2028:
TE Whitney Alexander <i>Gulf South</i>	TE Paul Gibson <i>Florida and the Caribbean</i>	TE Cliff Mansley <i>West</i>
Paul Gorny <i>Florida and the Caribbean</i>	Tommy Phelps <i>Great Plains</i>	Bubba Harrel <i>Central South</i>
Toni Harris <i>Member at Large</i>	Rich Phillips <i>Pacific Northwest</i>	TE Steve Burton <i>Central South</i>

FRATERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Class of 2026:	Class of 2027:	Class of 2028:
TE David Galbraith <i>Midwest</i>	TE Brandon Addison <i>West</i>	TE Doug Kortyna <i>Pacific Northwest</i>
RE Josh Shelley <i>Central South</i>	TE Josh Hammans <i>Florida and the Caribbean</i>	RE Patti Francis <i>Pacific Northwest</i>
TE Stan Van Den Berg <i>Great Plains</i>	RE Holly Lazzaro <i>East</i>	RE Roger Rumer <i>Alleghenies</i>

MINISTERIAL VOCATION COMMITTEE

Class of 2026:	Class of 2027:	Class of 2028:
RE Richard Gash <i>Alleghenies</i>	TE Chris Curtis <i>Rivers & Lakes</i>	TE Scott Sealy <i>Central South</i>
TE Doug Resler <i>West</i>	RE Joseph Slesinski <i>East</i>	RE Charles Youther <i>Midwest</i>

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM

Class of 2026:	Class of 2027:	Class of 2028:
TE Greg Aydt <i>Central South</i>	RE George Hertensteiner <i>Great Plains</i>	TE Josh Hanson <i>Midwest</i>
RE Chris Danusiar <i>Rivers & Lakes</i>	RE Linda McDaniel <i>Central South</i>	TE Carolyn Poteet <i>Alleghenies</i>
TE Julie Hawkins <i>Pacific Northwest</i>	RE Neil Smith <i>East</i>	TE Eric Shipton <i>New River</i>
RE Joi Williams <i>Coastal Mid-Atlantic</i>	RE John Ivy <i>Central South</i>	TE Rachel Toone-Pies <i>Central Carolinas</i>

NEXT GENERATION MINISTRIES COUNCIL

Class of 2026:	Class of 2027:	Class of 2028:
TE Chrishon Ducker <i>Coastal Mid-Atlantic</i>	TE Sir Gregory Thornton <i>Central South</i>	TE Cole Lescher <i>Mid-America</i>
Faith Hampton <i>Central South</i>	TE Stephanie Poblenz <i>Midwest</i>	Geraud Bumfield <i>Pacific Southwest</i>
TE Dan Kish <i>Central South</i>	TE Ian Johnston <i>Great Plains</i>	TE Meagan Bergem <i>Pacific Southwest</i>

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Class of 2026:	Class of 2027:	Class of 2028:
TE Bob Vincent <i>Gulf South</i>	TE Nick Welch <i>Pacific Northwest</i>	RE Rob Liddon <i>Central South</i>
RE Kelli Marks <i>Rivers and Lakes</i>	RE Ann Weston <i>Mid-America</i>	RE James Bandstra <i>Alleghenies</i>
TE SJ Winter <i>Midwest</i>	RE Stacy Miller <i>Coastal Mid-Atlantic</i>	RE Richard Swedberg <i>West</i>
TE Mike Goolsby <i>Great Plains</i>	RE Christine Deane <i>Pacific Southwest</i>	TE Ron Meyer <i>East</i>
TE Juan Rivera <i>Florida and the Caribbean</i>	RE Tommy Jordan <i>Southeast</i>	TE Robert Howard <i>Central Carolinas</i>
		TE Shane Whelan <i>New River</i>

PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION

Class of 2026:	Class of 2027:	Class of 2028:
TE Zach Hopkins <i>Rivers and Lakes</i>	TE Ed McCallum <i>West</i>	RE Gordon Miller <i>Mid-Atlantic</i>
TE Barton Kimbro <i>Central South</i>	RE Bryan Wyatt <i>Pacific Southwest</i>	RE Donald Flater <i>Rivers and Lakes</i>
RE Jeff Hollingsworth <i>Southeast</i>	RE Forrest Norman <i>Alleghenies</i>	RE Tom Werner <i>Mid-America</i>

PRESBYTERY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Class of 2026:	Class of 2027:	Class of 2028:
RE Ron Bengelink <i>Pacific Northwest</i>	RE Janet Goodman <i>Pacific Southwest</i>	RE Chris Rhodes <i>Pacific Southwest</i>
TE Jason Steele <i>Midwest</i>	TE Keith Hopkins <i>Pacific Northwest</i>	RE Cheryl Followell <i>Central South</i>
RE Jim Connors <i>Pacific Northwest</i>		TE Mark Willems <i>Pacific Northwest</i>
RE Jane Bodden <i>Florida and the Caribbean</i>		

THEOLOGY COMMITTEE

Class of 2026:	Class of 2027:	Class of 2028:
RE David Buschart <i>West</i>	TE Todd Erickson <i>Central South</i>	TE Stephanie Black <i>Coastal Mid-Atlantic</i>
TE Luke Johnston <i>Great Plains</i>	RE Carol Williams <i>Alleghenies</i>	RE Joe Bingold <i>Pacific Northwest</i>

WORLD OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Class of 2026:	Class of 2027:	Class of 2028:
TE Whitney Alexander <i>Gulf South</i>	TE David Pleuss <i>Rivers and Lakes</i>	RE Randall Leonard <i>Great Plains</i>
TE Waring Porter <i>Central South</i>	TE Jeff Chadwick <i>Southeast</i>	RE Robert Longfield <i>Central South</i>
RE Wes Peterson <i>Coastal Mid-Atlantic</i>		TE Josh Cole <i>Gulf South</i>
		RE Jane Cooper <i>Gulf South</i>

OTHER COMMITTEES
(Through the 46th General Assembly)

AD-INTERIM ORDINATION STANDARDS

Appointed by the Moderator following the adjournment of the 43rd General Assembly

TE Julie Hawkins <i>Pacific Northwest</i>	TE Doug Resler <i>West</i>	RE Chris Danusiar <i>Rivers and Lakes</i>
TE Aron Gibson <i>Central Carolinas</i>	TE Zach Hopkins <i>Rivers and Lakes</i>	TE Terence Gray <i>Midwest</i>
TE Fred Lian <i>West</i>	TE Megan Kroeker <i>Pacific Southwest</i>	TE Annie Rose <i>Rivers and Lakes</i>
TE Matt Koehn <i>Southeast</i>		

AD-INTERIM SAME SEX ATTRACTION AND ORDINATION

Appointed by the Moderator following the adjournment of the 44th General Assembly

TE Rufus Burton <i>New River</i>	TE John Dorr <i>East</i>	TE Shelley Kral <i>West</i>
TE Cameron Shaffer <i>East</i>	TE Case Thorp <i>Florida and the Caribbean</i>	RE Tom Werner <i>Mid-America</i>
TE Aaron White <i>Midwest</i>	RE Carol Williams <i>Alleghenies</i>	TE Sandy Wilson <i>Central South</i>

TASK FORCE TO REVIEW BOOK OF DISCIPLINE

Appointed by the Moderator following the adjournment of the 43rd General Assembly

RE Rob Liddon <i>Central South</i>	TE Betsy Rumer <i>Alleghenies</i>	TE Marc de Jeu <i>Alleghenies</i>
TE Neil Smith <i>East</i>	RE Bob LeSuer <i>Alleghenies</i>	
TE Ed McCallum <i>West</i>	TE Bob Garment <i>Florida and the Caribbean</i>	

PASTORAL LETTER ON DISABILITY AND ACCESS

Appointed by the Moderator following the adjournment of the 44th General Assembly

TE Walter Taylor <i>Mid-Atlantic</i>	RE Michell Munger <i>Mid-Atlantic</i>	RE Katherin Anderson <i>Rivers and Lakes</i>
NO Beth Golik <i>Alleghenies</i>	TE Bill Hemming <i>Pacific Northwest</i>	TE Josh Cole <i>Gulf South</i>
TE Cameron Smith <i>New River</i>		NO Daniel Harris <i>Central South</i>
TE Rob Eyman <i>Midwest</i>		

2025-2026 EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

MODERATOR'S REPORT

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

STATED CLERK'S REPORT

Moderator
Executive Summary Report
to the 46th General Assembly



Dave Strunk, Moderator
45th General Assembly

Greetings to you in the name of our risen Lord, Jesus Christ!

This year as your 45th GA moderator has been the vocational privilege of a lifetime, as well as one filled with the many joys and challenges in our denomination.

In the Fall, I was able to attend a few presbytery meetings and greet many friends old and new. Given that I'm a teaching elder and rooted in my local church, traveling to other presbyteries is a rare treat, and I always get to learn more about how different presbyteries do things differently, taking a few best practices with me as I return home. Thank you for the hospitality that many of you have shown me.

As a National Leadership Team participant, I led a few task forces to research a few items. One task force, made up of NLT members and OGA staffers, was designed to aid our Executive Director of BRI Carolee Richendollar, as we brainstormed different potential solutions to bring benefits costs down or increase enrollment in the plan. Another task force, made up of EPC teaching and ruling elders with a counseling background, was designed to aid the Task Force on the Book of Discipline as we researched the topic of abuse, and offered a potential definition pending GA approval from an NLT recommendation.

In October, I traveled with Stated Clerk Dean Weaver and Chief Financial Officer Pat Coelho to the Pacific Northwest at Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church where we met with several church leaders in the Pacific Northwest presbytery to discuss and agree to ideas on how we can improve our financial reporting in the EPC. The fruit of that meeting was our joint statement found here.

In November, I got to jump in on some Zoom sessions with your presbytery stated clerks. These stated clerks have immense and diverse responsibilities, as well as a deep love for the EPC. In many ways, they are the 'engine' of what gets done at a regional level in our

denomination, and I am impressed by the scope of what they do.

In January, I had the great privilege to co-lead our annual presbytery moderators training and meeting at the OGA in Orlando. Meeting with your presbytery moderators was truly one of the highlights of my year, as I continue to learn so much about the entire EPC when I participate more in ‘wide-angle lens’ meetings like that. Plus, given my own detailed study of Robert’s Rules to become your GA moderator, it was nice to get to share some more of that arcane knowledge. I have learned that I enjoy ‘how the presbyterian sausage gets made,’ as a beloved colleague quipped to me last year.

While I listened to your presbytery moderators, one of the convictions I developed is that being a presbytery moderator is one of the more challenging jobs in the EPC: they are on the receiving end of much conflict and floor debates, while there is little remuneration or honor attached to it. So, if you think of it in the next year, thank your presbytery moderator personally. And even if you disagree with various rulings they’ve made regarding certain points of order, you should still add them to your prayer list.

In addition to that, my year was filled with routine NLT meetings, some meetings with various national committees, and regular meetings with your GA stated clerk Dean Weaver for mutual support and encouragement.

Now, the last thing I say here may be the most important. I have heard many GA moderators before me talk about a ‘theme’ that they wanted for their moderator year. Some moderators spent additional time personally mentoring other pastors. Other moderators spent their time spurring the NLT to take evangelism more seriously in the EPC. There have been many wonderful themes: right moderators for the right time in the EPC.

By mid-Fall of 2025, I think God had revealed to me what he wanted my ‘theme’ to be: prayer. For instance, in every meeting where people talked about strategy, the Lord led me to be the guy saying, ‘Can we pray about that?’ Or, similarly, I’d be the guy saying, ‘Let’s add that to our prayer list.’ To really emphasize this even further, by December I had identified one person in all 16 presbyteries who would join me in my prayers for the EPC. From that moment, I sent a prayer list with specific EPC prayer requests every other week to that prayer group. Many of us fasted from meals while we prayed, as we leaned earnestly into our vows for the peace and purity of the EPC.

And so, may the Lord do with us as He wills. It has been a privilege to be your moderator. Thank you, with all sincerity.



Grace and peace,
Respectfully Submitted,
Dave Strunk, Moderator
45th General Assembly

June 2026

www.epconnect.org/2026report-moderator

National Leadership Team
Executive Summary Report to
the 46th General Assembly



Victor Jones
Chairman

Grace and Peace to you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I look forward to gathering with you in Denver as we celebrate the many blessings God has given us. It is evident to me that His church is For us, not About us. May all our gatherings culminate in the true worship that our Lord desires from us. We are Better Together when we do this.

Office of the General Assembly

We celebrated our CFO Pat Coelho’s ten years with the EPC. It was fitting to recognize the faithful service Pat has given as he takes care of an important area in reliable fashion. Pat is also a very nice person to work with. We look forward to more of these celebrations as we continue to recognize the other dedicated folks that staff the OGA. They truly are about serving the EPC. Be sure to thank them when you see them at GA.

This year we reviewed the big decision that was made years ago to move the office to Orlando. I appreciate the thoughtful work that was involved in that process. We have confirmed that the community and location are still serving our best interests. We will extend the lease at our present office.

General Assembly Committees

Committee meetings are where the rubber meets the road and the work is done. I am so encouraged by the servant leaders coming from churches across this denomination doing the work of the church. We are blessed by the efforts of so many who seek to be true to our constitution while Glorifying God in all things. The roster of participants continues to grow, and the “bench” is deep. The local sessions who encourage their Teaching Elder to



A global movement of
evangelistic presbyterians

participate while helping them cover the responsibilities at the local congregation are blessings to the whole church. Ruling Elders, we have a high calling in all the courts of the church. Thank you for your service.

We should appreciate the solid theological work done by our ad interim committees. I believe they undertook the difficult tasks with grace and excellence. We have the opportunity to be informed and equipped to fulfill our role as commissioners to the 46th General Assembly because of their faithful labor on our behalf.

National Leadership Team

This three-year commitment is coming to an end for me. I have witnessed the servant leadership culture embraced by individuals from across this family of churches in the EPC. They are the best example of Unity without contrived Uniformity. This is a feature that added to the joy of serving on the NLT. It is also attractive to the mission-minded Kingdom workers who are coming to be a part of this Reformed, Evangelical, Presbyterian and Missional Denomination.

Most of us have seen the results of the un-Godly spirit of fear, control and worry that distracts us. I leave this group of leaders knowing they are focused on the Gospel Priorities identified in the EPC. God has blessed us with the opportunity to Glorify Him and Enjoy Him Forever “together” because it is “better” that way! Please join me in regular prayer for this team who will continue to lead us into the next year.

Gathering in Denver

You have plenty of material to read in preparation for the 46th General Assembly. I would encourage you to listen to the “In All Things” Podcast and videos found at epconnect.org. The best use of our annual meeting is to take something home to your local congregation that will help make more and better disciples of Jesus Christ.

It has been an absolute privilege to serve alongside the leaders in The Evangelical Presbyterian Church. I will cherish the relationships I have made with the people who love this church.

In Christ,
Respectfully submitted,

Victor Jones

Victor R. Jones JR
Chairman, NLT

June 2026
www.epconnect.org/2026report-nlt

Stated Clerk

Executive Summary Report to the 46th General Assembly



Dean Weaver
Stated Clerk

Maybe it's my age, season of life or the calling I have received, but I have spent a lot of time in the last few months reflecting on unity in the Body of Christ. Anchored in our text for this 46th General Assembly, I have gone deeper into Ephesians 4 to mine its heavenly treasures. It was the heart of King David (Psalm 133); the focus of much the Apostle Paul's pastoral letters (I Corinthians 12) and of course the very prayer of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (John 17). The reality is, we live in a fallen world, and the Church of Jesus Christ is not immune to the ravages of the Fall. Much, too much, like the societies in which we live, we are fractured and that divided witness does not reflect well to the fallen, fractured world. Our witness is diminished, and the heart of God weeps. I weep.

Twice in Ephesians 4 the Apostle Paul calls his beloved church at Ephesus to unity. First, he exhorts them to "maintain" unity and then later he calls his listeners to "attain" unity. Interesting does he instruct us to create, build or work at unity. For Paul, as for Jesus, unity of the Body of Christ was a gift, anchored in the unity of the Triune God. Jesus prayed that we would be one, as He and the Father were one. He prayed this knowing our fallen and sinful propensity to pull apart -for a myriad of reasons all seemingly right and righteous to us as we pull away from one another. Paul said this gift of unity is something we are called to maintain.

For years, our motto, "In the essentials unity; in non-essentials liberty and in all things charity" has been a rallying cry of unity that has held us together. Today those bonds are being sorely tested. This is not to diminish the seriousness of the debate we are currently having, for the sake of unity; the concern being a "unity at the expense of theological fidelity." That is not the kind of unity I am speaking of, nor the kind Paul exhorted or for which Jesus prayed. We have had difficult conversations before, and we will again in the future. That is the nature of things in our fallen world. But I am convinced, my beloved, that as Paul concludes in Ephesians 4, that we are *better together!*



A global movement of
evangelistic presbyterians

This has been a very full and challenging year in many ways. My pastor, Doug Walker of RiverCity EPC in DeBary, FL preached through the book of Ecclesiastes this year. That's a heavy lift. One verse, among many that has been shaping me is Ecclesiastes 7:14 – *“In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider God has made the one as well as the other...”* This year has been filled with both wonderful blessings and considerable adversity.

I was blessed to preach thirteen times this year. Something I have really missed since leaving pastoral ministry. Some were wonderful celebrations like the 200th Anniversary of the Hanover EPC Church in southwest Pennsylvania and the high energy multi-generational worship of Manoa Community Church (former Bart Hess Award winner) outside of Philadelphia and others more difficult like speaking at the memorial services of dear pastor friends Rob Sparr and Scott McKee who graduated to glory. Preaching at the historic Hamilton Road Presbyterian Church in Bangor, Ireland and then the prolific church planting Orangefield Presbyterian Church in Belfast, were definitely highlights. I'll long cherish the memory of singing “Be Thou My Vision” at Hamilton Road -that was truly special.

I attended seven presbytery meetings this year and now have visited all 16 presbyteries at least once and some multiple times since becoming Stated Clerk 5 years ago. Witnessing the alignment of our Gospel Priorities in each of our presbyteries has been a great encouragement in watching our family of churches on mission together. I cherish the annual meetings of our presbytery Stated Clerks (1 in person and now another via zoom) and presbytery Moderators (also 1 in person and 1 online). The fellowship of these groups is sweet, and the unity is thick. What a gift. Other highlights would be our World Outreach Family Gathering in Cyprus last summer, our annual Small Church Summit and preaching at the commencement ceremony of our partner Knox Theological Seminary this Spring.

Perhaps above all else, I have been richly blessed to serve alongside the faithful and talented brothers and sisters of National Leadership Team and staff in the Office of the General Assembly. In all the years I have served on the NLT as a member, Moderator and now Stated Clerk, I have never worked with such a strong, dedicated and sacrificial group of servant leaders. Living in Florida has enabled me to be in the office every week (unless I am traveling) and allowed me to really get to know and help grow our staff. Our mission in the OGA is to “Serve those who carry out the Great Commission” and nobody does it better. Perhaps the greatest joy of being on these two teams is that they are together fully unified in our love of the Lord, commitment to His Word and dedication to our mission. There is much more to celebrate this year. Please be sure to explore the reports of our nine permanent committees, three ad-interim committees and of course our Gospel Priorities to see the many ways we are on mission to join the Holy Spirit in carrying out the Great Commission. While numbers don't tell the whole story, they do point the way. Here are a few numbers to praise God for His faithfulness among us.



A global movement of
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A few important “measurables” for this past year might include the following:

Metric	2024-2025	2025-2026	% Change / Notes
EPC Total Membership	125757	126282	0.3% up
Congregations	626	619	1.1% down
Dismissals	6	16	
Received	6	18	
Dissolved	4	7	
Church Plants	47	45	
Baptisms Adults	870	1122	29% up
Adult Professions of Faith (18+)	2285	2453	7.4% up
Baptisms Children	1629	1850	13.6% up
Professions of Faith (under 18)	1339	1440	7.5% up
POI	\$2,206,564	\$2,292,473	Up 3.9% from same time last year (end of April)
Cash Reserves	\$644,456	\$718,849	Unrestricted and designated cash reserve total:
Operating Reserves	1.6 months	2.42 month	
Rolling Average	\$207,880	\$223,942	7.7% improvement (end of April)

As a Stated Clerk, who is also a pastor, I am going into our 46th General Assembly praying for unity among our family of churches. Both because it is a gift given to us by God, but also because it is essential to our witness to those who don’t know Christ. And after all, our mission is to Carry out the Great Commission. When I look at all the Lord has been doing in and through us this past year, I am humbled and hopeful. One thing, I know in reflecting on God’s Word and God’s faithfulness, is that in carrying out the Great Commission, we are much ***Better Together!***

Blessings,
Coram Deo!
Respectfully submitted,

D. Dean Weaver

June 2026

www.epconnect.org/2026report-statedclerk

Churches Received, Dissolved, Dismissed

May 1, 2025 – April 30, 2026

Received:

Presbytery of the Alleghenies

Church	City	State	Received	From
Grace & Peace Presbyterian Church	Pittsburgh	PA	Sept 2025	PCUSA
Hebron Church	Pittsburgh	PA	Sept 2025	PCUSA
Faith Community EPC	Hermitage	PA	Feb 2026	PCUSA

Presbytery of the Central South

Church	City	State	Received	From
Church of the Cross Birmingham	Vestavia	AL	Aug 2025	Church Plant
First Presbyterian Church	Brownsville	TN	April 2026	PCUSA
The Way City Church	Birmingham	AL	April 2026	Church Plant

Presbytery of Coastal Mid-Atlantic

Church	City	State	Received	From
Harvest Church	Garner	NC	Sept 2025	PCUSA
Bunnlevel Presbyterian Church	Bunnlevel	NC	April 2026	PCUSA

Presbytery of the East

Church	City	State	Received	From
Church of the Gunks	Montgomery	NY	Jan 2026	Church Plant
City Line Church	Bala Cynwyd	PA	May 2025	PCA
First PC of South Amboy	Amboy	NJ	Nov 2025	PCUSA

Presbytery of Great Plains

Church	City	State	Received	From
First Presbyterian Church	Derby	KS	Sept 2025	PCUSA

Presbytery of Midwest

Church	City	State	Received	From
First Presbyterian Church	Harrison	OH	Jan 2026	PCUSA

Presbytery of New River

Church	City	State	Received	From
Berry Hill Presbyterian Church	South Boston	VA	PCUSA	PCUSA

Presbytery of the Rivers and Lakes

Church	City	State	Received	From
First Presbyterian Church	Holland	MN	Sept 2025	PCUSA
First PC of Oostburg	Oostburg	WI	April 2026	ECC

Presbytery of the West

Church	City	State	Received	From
Open Door PC	Richardson	TX	May 2025	Church Plant

Dismissed and Dissolved:

Presbytery of the Alleghenies

Church	City	State	Received	Dismissed
Friendship Avenue Church	Pittsburgh	PA	Sept 2008	Dec 2025
Slickville PC	Slickville	PA	May 2015	May 2025

Presbytery of the Central Carolinas

Church	City	State	Received	Dismissed
Grace Haven PC	Lexington	SC	Oct 2011	Feb 2026
Indian Hill PC	Stanfield	NC	Nov 2013	Sept 2025
Grace Haven PC	Irmo	SC	Oct 2011	Feb 2026
House of Mercy	Asheville	NC	Unknown	Sept 2025

Presbytery of the Central South

Church	City	State	Received	Dismissed
Sylvania PC	Ward	AR	Jan 2002	Dec 2025

Presbytery of the Central South

Church	City	State	Received	Dissolved
Covenant PC	Columbus	MS	Dec 1988	May 2025
First Presbyterian Church	Tallasse	AL	Feb 2010	May 2025

Presbytery of the Great Plains

Church	City	State	Received	Dismissed
Mt. Pleasant PC	Abilene	KS	April 2025	Jan 2026

Presbytery of the Gulf South

Church	City	State	Received	Dismissed
Memorial PC	San Augustine	TX	Oct 2012	Jan 2026

Presbytery of the New River

Church	City	State	Received	Dismissed
Piedmont PC	Callaway	VA	Oct 2013	Oct 2025

Presbytery of the New River

Church	City	State	Received	Dissolved
New Hope Community	Lynchburg	VA	Jan 2020	Mar 2026

Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest

Church	City	State	Received	Dismissed
Sanger Community Church	Sanger	CA	Jan 2003	May 2025

Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest

Church	City	State	Received	Dissolved
The Table Church	San Francisco	CA	Oct 2018	Jun 2025

Presbytery of the Rivers and Lakes

Church	City	State	Received	Dismissed
Faith PC of Quincy	Quincy	IL	Jan 2011	July 2025
Christ Alone Church	Green Bay	WI	Jan 2011	Jun 2025

Presbytery of the West

Church	City	State	Received	Dismissed
Mountain Road Church	Fruit Heights	UT	Dec 2013	July 2025
First Church of Artesia	Artesia	NM	Feb 2014	May 2025

Presbytery of the West

Church	City	State	Received	Dissolved
First PC of Hagerman	Hagerman	NM	Feb 2014	Feb 2026

Summary of Action Items

(Communications, Overtures, and Resolutions)

- 46-01 The **Nominating Committee** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **ELECT** RE Jack Cathey as Moderator of the 46th General Assembly.
- 46-02 The **Nominating Committee** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **ELECT** TE Joshua Brown as Moderator-elect of the 46th General Assembly.
- 46-03 The **Ad-Interim Committee on Disabilities and the Sacraments** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** a 1-year extension to allow for the work on the Pastoral Letter to gather feedback and input from our presbyteries, bringing the Pastoral Letter on Disability and Accessibility to the Sacraments to the 47th General Assembly.
- 46-04 The **Ad-Interim Committee on Disabilities and the Sacraments** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** members of the Ad-Interim Committee be invited to presbyteries for discussion and feedback on the proposed Pastoral Letter.
- 46-05 The **Ad-Interim Committee on Disabilities and the Sacraments** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** the expansion of the current Ad-Interim Committee's work to include the creation of a Position Paper on the EPC and Disability. This paper would come to the 48th General Assembly for a vote. The committee also seeks the committee to expand from nine to twelve members to accomplish this work.
- 46-06 The **Nominating Committee** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **ELECT** the slate of nominees for the 46th EPC General Assembly permanent committees (except the Nominating Committee) and boards.

- 46-07 The **Moderator of the 45th General Assembly** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** the 2026-2027 Chairman for the BRI Board of Directors, the slate of nominees to fill vacancies of the Permanent Nominating Committee, the chair of the Nominating Committee.
- 46-08 The Stated Clerk recommends that the 46th General Assembly **RATIFY** an amendment to the *Book of Government* 11-2
- 46-09 The Stated Clerk recommends that the 46th General Assembly **RATIFY** an amendment to the *Book of Government* 18-3.E
- 46-10 The Stated Clerk recommends that the 46th General Assembly **RATIFY** an amendment to the *Book of Government* 19-4.B
- 46-11 The Stated Clerk recommends that the 46th General Assembly **RATIFY** an amendment to the *Book of Government* 21-2.D.1
- 46-12 The **Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** revisions to **G. 11-2.G**.
- 46-13 The **Permanent Judicial Commission** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** revisions to **G. 11-2.G**.
- 46-14 The **Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** a new section titled **G. 11-2.H**.
- 46-15 The **Permanent Judicial Commission** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** a new section titled **G. 11-2.H**.
- 46-16 The **Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** revisions to **G. 12-2**
- 46-17 The **Permanent Judicial Commission** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** revisions to **G. 12-2**.

- 46-18 The **Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** the Criteria for Ordination Requirements and Education as an Act of Assembly.
- 46-19 The **Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** a sunset provision for the Candidate’s Educational Equivalency Program (CEEP).
- 46-20 The **Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **DIRECT THE** National Leadership Team (NLT) conduct a thorough review of the Ministerial Vocation Committee’s job description and respective responsibilities and bring potential revisions to the 47th General Assembly.
- 46-21 The **Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** amendments to the *Rules for Assembly* 10-1.C.
- 46-22 The **Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **DIRECT THE** Ministerial Vocation Committee (MVC) to conduct a thorough study of licensure as a potential category in the denomination’s credentialing process.
- 46-23 The **Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **DIRECT** the National Leadership Team to review the function and purpose of the *Acts of Assembly* and consider archiving those no longer in effect.
- 46-24 The **Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **DISMISS** with gratitude the Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards.

- 46-25 **Second Presbyterian Church, Memphis, TN INVITES** the 46th General Assembly to hold the 47th General Assembly on its campus June 15-17, 2027.
- 46-26 The **Ad-Interim Committee on Same Sex Attraction and Ordination Standards** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** the amendments to the EPC’s Position Paper on Human Sexuality.
- 46-27 The **Ad-Interim Committee on Same Sex Attraction and Ordination Standards** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** the amendments to the section “Same Sex Attraction” in the EPC’s Pastoral Letter on Human Sexuality.
- 46-28 The **Ad-Interim Committee on Same Sex Attraction and Ordination Standards** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** the amendments of the two sections of the *Book of Government* 9-3 (9-3A, 9-3B) to clarify character requirements of EPC officers pertinent to sexual ethics.
- 46-29 The **Permanent Judicial Commission** recommends that the General Assembly **CONSIDER** its reported findings of the AIC Amendments.
- 46-30 The **Ad-Interim Committee on Same Sex Attraction and Ordination Standards** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** the amendments of the four sections of the *Book of Government* 12 (12-2B, 12-3A, 12-3.B.1, 12-6) to add requirements to examine nominees to all EPC offices in the area of Christian character.
- 46-31 The **Presbytery of the East** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to approve the formation of an Ad-Interim Committee to draft a position paper on Digital Discipleship and Ethical Engagement in a Technological Age, and to explore the formation of a permanent committee.

- 46-32 The **Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to approve to re-affirm the position paper on Homosexuality and the Position Paper on the Sanctity of Marriage as the position of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and restore to the EPC website.
- 46-33 The **Fraternal Relations Committee** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** entering into a formal Fraternal Relationship with Synod of the Nile.
- 46-34 The **Benefit Resources Inc., Board of Directors** recommends that the 46th 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.
- 46-35 The **Ministerial Vocation Committee** recommends the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** a new endorsement policy superseding *Acts of Assembly 20-10*.
- 46-36 The **Presbytery of Florida and the Caribbean** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to amend the *Book of Government 12-2.C*.
- 46-37 The **Permanent Judicial Commission** recommends that the General Assembly answer the Florida and the Caribbean 12-2 Overture (46-36) with reference to the Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards, which, among other things, has also proposed to amend Section **G. 12-2C**.
- 46-38 The **Presbytery of Rivers and Lakes** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to **APPROVE** the proposed amendments to the *Book of Government 9-5*.

- 46-39 The **Permanent Judicial Commission** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** Recommendation 46-38, River and Lakes Presbytery **G. 9-5 Overture**.
- 46-40 The **Permanent Judicial Commission's** report and recommendation that the 46th General Assembly considers it in deciding whether to accept or decline Recommendation 46-41, Pacific Northwest Presbytery **G. 9-3A Overture**.
- 46-41 The **Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to amend the *Book of Government 9-3A*.
- 46-42 The **Permanent Judicial Commission's** report and recommendation that the 46th General Assembly considers it in deciding whether to accept or decline Recommendation 46-43, Central Carolinas Presbytery **G. 9-3A Overture**.
- 46-43 The **Presbytery of Central Carolinas** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to amend the *Book of Government 9-3A*.
- 46-44 The **Permanent Judicial Commission's** report and recommendation that the 46th General Assembly considers it in deciding whether to accept or decline Recommendation 46-45, Florida and the Caribbean Presbytery **G. 9-3A Overture**.
- 46-45 The **Presbytery of Florida and the Caribbean** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to amend the *Book of Government 9-3A*.
- 46-46 The **Permanent Judicial Commission's** report and recommendation that the 46th General Assembly considers it in deciding whether to accept or decline Recommendation 46-47, New River Presbytery **G. 9-3A Overture**.
- 46-47 The **Presbytery of New River** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to amend the *Book of Government 9-3A*.

- 46-48 The **Permanent Judicial Commission's** report and recommendation that the 46th General Assembly considers it in deciding whether to accept or decline Recommendation 46-49, West Presbytery **G. 9-3A Overture**.
- 46-49 The **Presbytery of the West** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to amend 2545the *Book of Government* 9-3A.
- 46-50 The **Presbytery of Florida and the Caribbean** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to adjust the presbytery boundaries to include Spain.
- 46-51 The **Permanent Judicial Commission** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** recommendation 46-50 to adjust the Florida and the Caribbean Presbytery boundaries to include Spain.
- 46-52 The **Presbytery of Rivers and Lakes** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to approve the proposed amendments to the *Book of Government* 5-10.
- 46-53 The **Permanent Judicial Commission** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** Recommendation 46-52 Rivers and Lakes Presbytery **G. 5-10**.
- 46-54 The **Presbytery of Rivers and Lakes** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to approve the proposed amendments to the *Book of Government* 19-3.
- 46-55 The **Permanent Judicial Commission** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** Recommendation 46-54 River and Lakes Presbytery **G. 19-3**.
- 46-56 The **World Outreach Committee** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** amending *Rules for Assembly* to expand committee members from nine (9) to twelve (12).

- 46-57 The **National Leadership Team** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** the FY27 Administrative Budget.
- 46-58 The **National Leadership Team** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** the FY27 Special Projects
- 46-59 The **National Leadership Team** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** that the purchase of a new Data Management System “Site Stacker” for the General Assembly be made available to all the courts of the church (at no additional charge) which expresses the unity and relatedness of all its parts as described in EPC. **G. 20-1.**
- 46-60 The **National Leadership Team** recommends that the 46th General Assembly
- A: WAIVE** the requirements for the report to be read in its entirety (*Rules for Assembly 14-2*)
- B: SUSPEND** *Rules for Assembly 14-3* so that the report may be adopted as a whole.
- C. APPROVE** the revised *Book of Discipline* and send it to the Presbyteries as a descending overture.
- 46-61 The **Permanent Judicial Commission** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** the recommendations of the *Book of Discipline* Task Force to amend the *Book of Discipline*.
- 46-62 The **National Leadership Team** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** all ecclesiastical judicial procedures in process on the date the revised Book of Discipline is ratified continue to be processed under the provisions of the current (2026) Book of Discipline.
- 46-63 The **Presbytery of the Midwest** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to instruct the Office of the General Assembly to not charge an admission fee to future General

Assembly meetings, with the exception of meals and childcare, for non-voting spouses and dependents of voting presbyters, and that the Office of the General Assembly to publish a complete overview of the cost of each future General Assembly meeting.

- 46-64 The **Presbytery of Rivers and Lakes** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to direct the National Leadership Team (NLT) to study the current state of the preservation, cataloging, and accessibility of the historical records of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.
- 46-65 The **National Leadership Team** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** the 45th General Assembly Minutes.
- 46-66 The **Presbytery Review Committee** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** Exceptions, requiring a response as found in the 2025 minutes of 14 of our 16 Presbyteries.
- 46-67 The **Presbytery Review Committee** recommends that the 46th General Assembly recognize the **APPROVAL** of the responses from the Presbyteries to those exceptions sent to them by the 45th General Assembly.
- 46-68 The **Permanent Judicial Commission** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **SUSTAIN** the findings of the Permanent Judicial Commission in the matter of New Albany vs. the Presbytery of the Alleghenies.
- 46-69 The **Permanent Judicial Commission** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **SUSTAIN** the findings of the Permanent Judicial Commission in the matter of TE McClelland vs. the Presbytery of Central Carolinas.
- 46-70 **Omnibus items from the Standing Committees**

46-01 *(to the Floor)*
From the Nominating Committee

Nominee for Moderator of the 46th General Assembly
RE Jack Cathey



Jack Cathey is a Ruling Elder at Lake Forest Church in Huntersville, NC, where he and his wife Anne have been involved as founding members. Jack and Anne have two adult married children who reside in the greater Charlotte area. Jack is a graduate of Wake Forest University, where he completed his undergraduate degree in accounting. He also graduated from Virginia Tech, where he earned both a Master's and Doctoral degrees in accounting. After graduate school, Jack joined the faculty of the Turner School of Accountancy at the University of North Carolina, where he has been a member of the faculty for the past 36 years.

Jack grew up in a Christian home and committed his life to Christ at Windy Gap (a Young Life Camp) in 1975. Jack was first called and elected to serve as a Ruling Elder at Forest Hill Church in Charlotte, NC. During a time of significant growth, the Forest Hill Session voted to begin church planting. Jack voted in favor of this motion, and much to his surprise, he found himself in a skating rink in Huntersville, NC, stacking chairs two years later. Being a part of starting and establishing Lake Forest has been a very fulfilling experience. He has served on the active session many times and has been a part of many search committees that hired staff as the church grew.

When the Lake Forest Session felt the time was right to begin their own church planting work, Jack was appointed as a co-leader of the Church Multiplication Commission along with Teaching Elder Mike Moses. To date, Lake Forest has planted five new churches, including Storyhill Church, Lake Forest Westlake, Lake Forest El Buen Samaritano (a Spanish-speaking plant), Lake Forest UCity (a multi-ethnic plant), and Lake Forest Cabarrus.

For the past 12 years Jack has served as a member of the EPC's National Church Planting Team. He has focused on helping the team organize its work and develop a national approach for church planting including the work of the National Director and the Regional Directors. He has also been a part of planning and attending the annual EPC Church Planter's Retreat.

www.epconnect.org/2026report-nominating

46-02 *(to the Floor)*
From the Nominating Committee

Nominee for Moderator-elect of the 46th General Assembly
TE Joshua Brown



For the past twelve years, Josh has served as the Lead Pastor at Bellefield Presbyterian Church, located in the heart of the university and medical communities of Pittsburgh. He works closely with CCO student ministries at the University of Pittsburgh, Chatham University, Carnegie Mellon University, and Duquesne University Law School. Josh is also a board member of PRISM (Pittsburgh Region International Student Ministries) and engages regularly with their work. He is a past Moderator and the current Chair of the Ministerial Committee of the Presbytery of the Alleghenies. Josh leads Directed Studies in Reformed Theology at Trinity Anglican Seminary, and his ongoing doctoral work is focused on workplace theology, ethics, and leadership.

A fifth generation Pittsburgher, Josh grew up in the church and comes from a long line of Presbyterian pastors and elders. He and his wife, Bethany, met while doing missions work in Jamaica together during their time as students at Penn State University. After graduation, Josh taught English in Sichuan, China, before he and Bethany were married—at which point they moved to Boston and both began their studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Though initially interested in overseas biblical translation, they soon discerned the Lord’s call to local congregational ministry. Following seminary, Josh served as the Pastor at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Washington, PA, for six years, before being called to serve at Bellefield.

When Josh isn't preaching, leading, or engaging in collaborative community outreach, he's probably reading, running, mountain biking, or hanging out with his wife, sons (Malcolm and Jameson), and Bernese Mountain Dog (Big Papi).

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46-03 *(to the floor)*

From the Ad-Interim Committee on Disability and Sacraments

Proposed request for a 1-year extension to allow for the work on the Pastoral Letter on Disability and Access

The Ad-Interim Committee on Disabilities and the Sacraments recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** a 1-year extension to allow for the work on the Pastoral Letter to gather feedback and input from our presbyteries, bringing the Pastoral Letter on Disability and Accessibility to the Sacraments to the 47th General Assembly.

Rationale: The subject is so important and our desire to be sure this pastoral letter is as comprehensive as possible caused us to realize we were not quite ready. This extension will allow us to engage with our presbyteries and create a resource that will truly be helpful.

www.epconnect.org/2026report-AIC-Disability

46-04 *(to the floor)*

From the Ad-Interim Committee on Disability and Sacraments

Proposed Presbytery Visits by Ad-Interim on Disability and Access Committee members

The Ad-Interim Committee on Disability and the Sacraments recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** members of the Ad-Interim Committee be invited to presbyteries for discussion and feedback on the proposed Pastoral Letter.

Rationale: An in-person visit with our presbyteries to present our work would provide an opportunity to hear responses and would be the most effective means of gathering input.

www.epconnect.org/2026report-AIC-Disability

46-05 *(to the floor)*

From the Ad-Interim Committee on Disability and Sacraments

Proposed expansion of the current Ad-Interim Committee's work to include the creation of a Position Paper on the EPC and Disability

The Ad-Interim Committee on Disabilities and the Sacraments recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** the expansion of the current Ad-Interim Committee's work to include the creation of a Position Paper on the EPC and Disability. This paper would come to the 48th General Assembly for a vote. The committee also seeks the committee to expand from nine to twelve members to accomplish this work.

Rationale: During the course of our work, we realized there were many important concepts concerning Disability and the Church that really needed to be acknowledged and yet fell beyond the scope of our original task. An expansion of this committee to create a position paper would communicate to the general public that the EPC acknowledges and cares about this demographic.

www.epconnect.org/2026report-AIC-Disability



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46-06 (to the floor)

From the Nominating Committee

Slate of Nominations – Permanent Committees and Boards

*Some nominees had not confirmed acceptance of their nomination at press time
and will be announced at the 46th General Assembly*

Note: ^second term; *pending Session or Presbytery endorsement; +expansion

Benefit Resources, Inc., Board of Directors

Class of 2028	TBD	
Class of 2029	RE Mike Busch^	Alleghenies
Class of 2029	RE Bill Overcast^	Central South
Class of 2029	Cathy Scott^	East

Chaplains Work and Care Committee

Class of 2029	RE Kendra Bowers^	Central South
Class of 2029	TE Jennifer Cooper	Central Carolinas
Class of 2029	TE David Snyder^	Midwest

Disaster Relief Committee

Class of 2029	TE Whitney Alexander^	Gulf South
Class of 2029	Efrain Sanches Crespo	FL / Caribbean
Class of 2029	Toni Harris^	Central South

Fraternal Relations Committee

Class of 2029	TE Julien de Leiris	Great Plains
Class of 2029	RE Josh Shelley^	Central South
Class of 2029	TBD	

Ministerial Vocation Committee

Class of 2029	TE Doug Ashley	West
Class of 2029	TE Joel Keen	Mid-America

National Leadership Team

Class of 2029	TE Greg Aydt^	Central South
Class of 2029	RE Chris Danusiar^	Rivers & Lakes
Class of 2029	TE Julie Hawkins^	Pacific Northwest
Class of 2029	RE Joi Williams^	Coastal Mid-Atlantic



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Next Generation Ministries Council

Class of 2029	TE Chrishon Ducker^	Coastal Mid-Atlantic
Class of 2029	TE Dan Kish^	Central South
Class of 2029	Torie Smith	Great Plains

Permanent Judicial Commission

Class of 2029	TE Zach Hopkins^	Rivers and Lakes
Class of 2029	TE Barton Kimbro^	Central South
Class of 2029	RE Sean McKee	Great Plains

Presbytery Review Committee

Class of 2029	TE David Horner	Midwest
Class of 2029	RE Doris Houck	FL / Caribbean
Class of 2029	RE Geri McFall	Great Plains
Class of 2029	TE Dana Opp	Alleghenies

Theology Committee

Class of 2027	TE Todd Erickson	Central South
Class of 2028	TE Ben Ray	Great Plains
Class of 2029	RE David Buschart^	West
Class of 2029	TE Aaron White	Midwest

World Outreach Committee

Class of 2027	Adam Reasner *+	
Class of 2027	RE David VanValkenburg+	West
Class of 2029	TE Ken Ferguson	Pacific Southwest
Class of 2029	RE Chris Hallam+	Pacific Northwest
Class of 2029	April Hubbard	Coastal Mid-Atlantic
Class of 2029	RE Cindy Zimmerman	FL / Caribbean

<https://epconnect.org/2026report-nominating>

46-07 (to the floor)
Communication

The Moderator of the 45th General Assembly recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** the 2026-2027 Chairman for the BRI Board of Directors and the slate of nominees to fill vacancies on the Permanent Nominating Committee.

June 2026
Dr. Dean Weaver, Stated Clerk
Evangelical Presbyterian Church
5850 T.G. Lee Blvd., Suite 510
Orlando, FL 32822

Dear Dean,

The *Rules for Assembly* 11-3 stated that the Moderator is to appoint a Chairman for the Nominating Committee, and to nominate persons to fill vacancies on the Nominating Committee. The Moderator is also to nominate the Chairman for the BRI Board of Directors for the forthcoming Assembly. I am pleased to offer the following individuals:

1. Appointments: 2026-2027 Chairman Nominating Committee
TE Mike Goolsby (Presbytery of the Great Plains)

2. Nominations: Nominating Committee

Name	Presbytery	Class
TE Bill Crawford	Gulf South	2029
RE Kelli Marks	Rivers & Lakes	2029
TE SJ Winter	Midwest	2029
TE Silver Feliz	FL / Caribbean	2029

3. Nominations: 2026-2027 Chairman, BRI Board of Directors
RE Michael Busch Alleghenies 2029

It is my blessing and privilege to place these names before the Assembly and in so doing to commend these fine people for service to our denomination and to our Lord.



Dave Strunk
Moderator, 45th General Assembly

46-08 (to the floor)
From the Stated Clerk

The Stated Clerk recommends that the 46th General Assembly **RATIFY** an amendment to the *Book of Government* 11-2. Overture 45-A (16 Presbyteries voted to approve).

Descending Overture 45-A

Presbytery	Overture 45-A - YES	Overture 45-A - NO
Alleghenies	139	2
Central Carolinas	100	0
Central South	67	0
Coastal Mid-Atlantic	54	0
East	87	1
Florida & Caribbean	28	0
Great Plains	62	0
Gulf South	78	0
Mid-America	19	0
Midwest	41	0
New River	52	5
Pacific NW	67	0
Pacific SW	35	1
Rivers & Lakes	39	0
Southeast	86	0
West	54	0
TOTAL	1008	9

RECOMMENDATION 46-08

Descending Overtures from the 45th General Assembly Evangelical Presbyterian Church

DESCENDING OVERTURE 45-A

That the *Book of Government* 11-2 be amended.

Rationale: G.11-2.A - Applicant refers to the one petitioning to become a Candidate. Since church members are subject to the jurisdiction of the Session, the process of seeking the Session’s endorsement is described prior to the Applicant submitting their name to the Presbytery.

G.11-2.C – The Applicant becomes a Candidate under care upon declaration of the Moderator.

G.11-2.D – Since Candidates remain members of the local church during their preparation for ordination, a Liaison between the Candidate and the Session provides fuller care for the Candidate.

G.11-2.E – This provision would give the Presbytery freedom to assign a Candidate’s Pastor as the Advisor when deemed appropriate. It also clarifies that the spiritual nurture and oversight of a Candidate lies with the Session and not solely with the Pastor.

G.11-2.F – The supervision of a Candidate may determine that the Candidate has ceased preparation for ordination or is in some other manner failing in the needed preparation for office. The details for this evaluation are included the Procedural Manual for Ministerial Committees (p. 43).

G.11-2.G – This clarifies that there are two educational pathways toward ordination: a Master of Divinity degree, and education equivalent to a Master of Divinity degree. For a description of “equivalent” see: Acts of Assembly 82-07; 12-12; and 14-08.

Deletion of present G.11-2.I – This would eliminate the ambiguous and often confusing third “extraordinary” pathway toward ordination.

Current Language: G.11-2	Proposed Language: <i>additions</i>, noted in <i>bold italics</i>, deletions
<p>11-2 Preparation for ordained ministry as a Teaching Elder</p> <p>Since the office of Teaching Elder is seen as the first office in the Church both for dignity and usefulness, special preparation is required.</p> <p>A. A person desiring to become a Teaching Elder shall first become a Candidate under the care of the Presbytery of which that person’s church is a member. That person begins this process by seeking the endorsement of the Session of the local church where the person’s membership has been held for at least six months. When the Session has approved the Candidate, application shall be made to the appropriate Committee of Presbytery.</p>	<p>11-2 Preparation for ordained ministry as a Teaching Elder</p> <p>Since the office of Teaching Elder is seen as the first office in the Church both for dignity and usefulness, special preparation is required.</p> <p>A. A person desiring to become a Teaching Elder shall first <i>seek the endorsement of the Session of the local church where the person’s membership has been held, ordinarily for at least six months. After receiving the endorsement of the Session, the Applicant shall submit their name and record of endorsement to the appropriate Committee of the Presbytery. The Session shall assign an active Ruling Elder to serve as a Liaison between the Applicant and the Session throughout the Applicant’s preparation for office once the Applicant is approved for candidacy.</i></p>

B. The Presbytery Committee charged with the oversight of Candidates shall make whatever tests of gifts and abilities, as well as of sincerity of purpose, it deems necessary. If the Candidate is approved, the Committee shall recommend to Presbytery the approval of candidacy.

C. The Presbytery shall make public examination of the Candidate as to Christian experience and growth, the motive for seeking ordination by a Presbytery of the EPC, and a statement regarding the person's call to the Ministry. If approved, the Presbytery shall proceed as follows.

The Candidate shall respond affirmatively to the following questions to be put by the Moderator of the Presbytery:

1. As you understand God's working in your heart and life, do you continue to believe yourself called to the office of Teaching Elder?
2. Do you now submit yourself to the care and supervision of this Presbytery as you prepare yourself for this office?
3. Do you renew your commitment as a Christian, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, to live as becomes a follower of Jesus?

The Moderator, or someone appointed by the Moderator, shall offer a prayer of thanksgiving and a blessing for the Candidate.

A charge shall be given to the Candidate by someone appointed by the Moderator. The Moderator shall then declare the person received as a Candidate; the person's name shall be placed on the Candidate roll of the Presbytery and welcomed in an appropriate manner.

D. The Candidate continues to be a member of the local church and subject to the Session. But with regard to the Candidate's training for the ministry, the Candidate is under the oversight of the Presbytery. It is appropriate for the home church of the Candidate to have a service of recognition.

E. The Presbytery shall assign a Teaching Elder in the Presbytery, ordinarily not the Candidate's Pastor, to serve as advisor to the Candidate. The advisor and the Candidate's Pastor shall submit regular reports to the appropriate committee on the progress of the Candidate.

E. The Presbytery shall have some Committee to which the oversight of Candidates is assigned. This Committee shall oversee the training of the Candidate, giving encouragement and pastoral attention, and making an annual report to the Presbytery of the progress of the Candidate.

B. The Presbytery Committee charged with the oversight of Candidates shall make whatever tests of gifts and abilities, as well as of sincerity of purpose, it deems necessary. If the Applicant is approved, the Committee shall recommend to Presbytery the approval of candidacy.

C. The Presbytery shall make public examination of the Applicant as to Christian experience and growth, the motive for seeking ordination by a Presbytery of the EPC, and a statement regarding the person's call to the Ministry. If approved, the Presbytery shall proceed as follows.

The Applicant shall respond affirmatively to the following questions to be put by the Moderator of the Presbytery:

1. As you understand God's working in your heart and life, do you continue to believe yourself called to the office of Teaching Elder?
2. Do you now submit yourself to the care and supervision of this Presbytery as you prepare yourself for this office?
3. Do you renew your commitment as a Christian, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, to live as becomes a follower of Jesus?

The Moderator, or someone appointed by the Moderator, shall offer a prayer of thanksgiving and a blessing for the new Applicant.

A charge shall be given to the Applicant by someone appointed by the Moderator. The Moderator shall then declare the person received as a Candidate; the person's name shall be placed on the Candidate roll of the Presbytery and welcomed in an appropriate manner.

D. The Candidate continues to be a member of the local church and subject to the Session which shall continue to follow the preparation of the Candidate by means of the Ruling Elder Liaison. ~~But~~ With regard to the Candidate's training for the ministry, the Candidate is under the oversight of the Presbytery. It is appropriate for the home church of the Candidate to have a service of recognition.

E. The Presbytery shall assign a Teaching Elder in the Presbytery, ~~ordinarily not the Candidate's Pastor~~, to serve as advisor to the Candidate. The advisor and the Candidate's ~~Pastor~~ Session shall submit regular reports to the appropriate committee on the progress of the Candidate.

F. The Presbytery shall have some Committee to which the oversight of Candidates is assigned. This Committee shall oversee the training of the Candidate, giving encouragement and pastoral attention, and making an annual report to the Presbytery of the progress of the Candidate and, if

<p>G. A Candidate shall pursue a course of study that leads to a Master of Divinity degree from an accredited seminary approved by the Presbytery, and such other standards as may be determined by Acts of the General Assembly. Academic work that is equivalent to a Master of Divinity degree may be completed by those means designed for Candidates under extraordinary status (G.11-2I).</p> <p>H. Ordinarily, a Candidate must be under care for a minimum of one year prior to ordination. A Candidate, for reasons acceptable to the Presbytery, may request transfer to another Presbytery. The Candidate's membership must also be transferred to an EPC congregation within that Presbytery.</p> <p>I. A Presbytery, for reasons it judges adequate, may receive a Candidate under extraordinary circumstances for whom it may waive part or all of the total educational requirements for ordination. This action requires a two-thirds vote by the Presbytery. When such a Candidate is received, it is appropriate to assign courses of independent study or study under some appropriate person.</p> <p>J. A Candidate from another Reformed denomination who has been under care for at least one year in that denomination, has met EPC educational requirements for ordination, and is pursuing a call from an EPC congregation shall be examined in the manner prescribed in G.12-2. Any Candidates from outside the Reformed Tradition follow the procedures of G.11-2.</p>	<p><u>the Candidate fails to make appropriate progress, recommend termination of candidacy.</u></p> <p>G. A Candidate shall pursue a course of study that leads to a Master of Divinity degree from an accredited seminary approved by the Presbytery, and such other standards as may be determined by Acts of the General Assembly. <u>Academic work that is equivalent to a Master of Divinity degree may be completed by those means designed for Candidates under extraordinary status (G.11-2I). For reasons it deems appropriate, the Presbytery may authorize a Candidate's completion of academic work that it deems equivalent to such a Master of Divinity.</u></p> <p>H. Ordinarily, a Candidate must be under care for a minimum of one year prior to ordination. A Candidate, for reasons acceptable to the Presbytery, may request transfer to another Presbytery. The Candidate's membership must also be transferred to an EPC congregation within that Presbytery.</p> <p>I. A Presbytery, for reasons it judges adequate, may receive a Candidate under extraordinary circumstances for whom it may waive part or all of the total educational requirements for ordination. This action requires a two-thirds vote by the Presbytery. When such a Candidate is received, it is appropriate to assign courses of independent study or study under some appropriate person.</p> <p>J. I. A Candidate from another Reformed denomination who has been under care for at least one year in that denomination, has met EPC educational requirements for ordination, and is pursuing a call from an EPC congregation shall be examined in the manner prescribed in G.12-2. Any Candidates from outside the Reformed Tradition follow the procedures of G.11-2.</p>
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46-09 *(to the floor)*
From the Stated Clerk

The Stated Clerk recommends that the 46th General Assembly **RATIFY** an amendment to the *Book of Government* 18-3.E. Overture 45-B (16 Presbyteries voted to approve).

[Descending Overture 45-B](#)

Presbytery	Overture 45-B - YES	Overture 45-B - NO
Alleghenies	139	2
Central Carolinas	100	0
Central South	67	0
Coastal Mid-Atlantic	54	0
East	83	2
Florida & Caribbean	29	0
Great Plains	62	0
Gulf South	78	0
Mid-America	21	0
Midwest	48	0
New River	53	4
Pacific NW	68	0
Pacific SW	36	0
Rivers & Lakes	40	0
Southeast	92	0
West	54	0
TOTAL	1024	8

RECOMMENDATION 46-09

Descending Overtures from the 45th General Assembly Evangelical Presbyterian Church

DESCENDING OVERTURE 45-B

That the *Book of Government* 18-3 be amended.

Rational: G.18-3.E - The Session retains immediate jurisdiction over both the Applicant and the Candidate during the ordination process. These three responsibilities expand upon the Session’s role in the preparation of Applicant/Candidate for ordination.

Current Language: G.18-3	Proposed Language: <u>additions</u> , noted in <u>bold italics</u> , deletions
<p>18-3 Authority and Responsibilities of the Session</p> <p>In maintaining the spiritual supervision of the local church, the Session has the following authority and responsibilities:</p> <p>A. To oversee the worship of the congregation in accordance with the Book of Worship, including the time and place of worship, special services, the music program, and the celebration of the sacraments. This shall not infringe on the responsibility of the Pastor in the selection of hymns, Scriptures, sermon, administration of the sacraments, or other duties that are incumbent on the office of Pastor.</p> <p>B. To organize itself within the bounds of this Constitution and lawful acts of the higher Church courts for the advancement of the gospel and the mission of that congregation.</p> <p>C. To initiate the ministry of evangelism as the first business of the Church, and to seek to lead persons to an acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.</p> <p>D. To oversee the discipleship ministries of the church, leading members to maturity in Christ.</p> <p>E. To monitor the spiritual conduct of the members, and to take action when appropriate according to procedures set forth in <i>The Book of Discipline</i>.</p> <p>F. To remind parents of the responsibility of presenting their children for baptism and to provide</p>	<p>18-3 Authority and Responsibilities of the Session</p> <p>In maintaining the spiritual supervision of the local church, the Session has the following authority and responsibilities:</p> <p>A. To oversee the worship of the congregation in accordance with the Book of Worship, including the time and place of worship, special services, the music program, and the celebration of the sacraments. This shall not infringe on the responsibility of the Pastor in the selection of hymns, Scriptures, sermon, administration of the sacraments, or other duties that are incumbent on the office of Pastor.</p> <p>B. To organize itself within the bounds of this Constitution and lawful acts of the higher Church courts for the advancement of the gospel and the mission of that congregation.</p> <p>C. To initiate the ministry of evangelism as the first business of the Church, and to seek to lead persons to an acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.</p> <p>D. To oversee the discipleship ministries of the church, leading members to maturity in Christ.</p> <p>E. <u>To oversee church members seeking ordination as Teaching Elders.</u></p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">1. <u>By examining Applicants prior to endorsing them.</u></p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">2. <u>By assigning an active Ruling Elder as Session Liaison to guide and nurture the Applicant throughout Candidacy until ordained as a Teaching Elder or until removed from candidacy.</u></p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">3. <u>By submitting a request to the Presbytery to consider the Applicant to come under care as a Candidate.</u></p> <p>F. To monitor the spiritual conduct of the members, and to take action when appropriate according to procedures set forth in <i>The Book of Discipline</i>.</p>

<p>instruction as indicated in <i>The Book of Worship</i>, Section 3-2.G. To this end, Sessions should establish and conduct under their authority Sunday schools and Bible classes and adopt such other methods as may be found helpful. The Session shall encourage the parents of the Church to guide their children in the catechizing and disciplining of them in the Christian religion.</p> <p>G. To receive, dismiss, restore, grant affiliation, remove members, and keep rolls in accordance with G.8-1, 8-2, and 8-3. The Session may establish a minimum age for the active roll and to vote in congregational meetings.</p> <p>H. To determine and oversee the finances of the local church including the budget and the benevolence objectives of the congregation.</p> <p>I. To oversee the educational program of the congregation and to approve its literature.</p> <p>J. To oversee the work of the Board of Deacons and to review its minutes at least semi- annually unless otherwise provided for by the Session. It is also desirable for the Session to call a joint meeting at least semi-annually to discuss matters of common interest, although each body must act separately on matters under its charge.</p> <p>K. To fulfill its obligations to train and examine those elected to the office of Ruling Elder or Deacon as set forth in Sections 12-3 and 13-8, 9, and 10.</p> <p>L. To determine policies regarding the use of the property and facilities of the congregation.</p> <p>M. When there is no Pastor, to convene the people for worship on the Lord's Day, offering prayers, praise, reading the Scriptures and teaching thereof. It is also appropriate for a Ruling Elder to preach or to read a sermon by some Minister of the Word of the Church.</p> <p>N. To overture Presbytery on matters it believes vital or helpful to the whole Church and to observe and carry out the injunctions and instructions of the higher courts. The Session shall elect commissioners to Presbytery and shall hear a subsequent report on that court.</p> <p>O. To order special offerings, special days of prayer and fasting, special days of worship, and other matters that benefit the spiritual life of the people.</p> <p>P. To do whatever else may be necessary for the spread of the gospel, the edification of the members, the wellbeing of the Church, the advancement of the Kingdom, and the growth in grace of all.</p>	<p>G. To remind parents of the responsibility of presenting their children for baptism and to provide instruction as indicated in <i>The Book of Worship</i>, Section 3-2.G. To this end, Sessions should establish and conduct under their authority Sunday schools and Bible classes and adopt such other methods as may be found helpful. The Session shall encourage the parents of the Church to guide their children in the catechizing and disciplining of them in the Christian religion.</p> <p>H. To receive, dismiss, restore, grant affiliation, remove members, and keep rolls in accordance with G.8-1, 8-2, and 8-3. The Session may establish a minimum age for the active roll and to vote in congregational meetings.</p> <p>I. To determine and oversee the finances of the local church including the budget and the benevolence objectives of the congregation.</p> <p>J. To oversee the educational program of the congregation and to approve its literature.</p> <p>K. To oversee the work of the Board of Deacons and to review its minutes at least semi- annually unless otherwise provided for by the Session. It is also desirable for the Session to call a joint meeting at least semi-annually to discuss matters of common interest, although each body must act separately on matters under its charge.</p> <p>L. To fulfill its obligations to train and examine those elected to the office of Ruling Elder or Deacon as set forth in Sections 12-3 and 13-8, 9, and 10.</p> <p>M. To determine policies regarding the use of the property and facilities of the congregation.</p> <p>N. When there is no Pastor, to convene the people for worship on the Lord's Day, offering prayers, praise, reading the Scriptures and teaching thereof. It is also appropriate for a Ruling Elder to preach or to read a sermon by some Minister of the Word of the Church.</p> <p>O. To overture Presbytery on matters it believes vital or helpful to the whole Church and to observe and carry out the injunctions and instructions of the higher courts. The Session shall elect commissioners to Presbytery and shall hear a subsequent report on that court.</p> <p>P. To order special offerings, special days of prayer and fasting, special days of worship, and other matters that benefit the spiritual life of the people.</p> <p>Q. To do whatever else may be necessary for the spread of the gospel, the edification of the members, the wellbeing of the Church, the advancement of the Kingdom, and the growth in grace of all.</p>
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46-10 *(to the floor)*
From the Stated Clerk

The Stated Clerk recommends that the 46th General Assembly **RATIFY** an amendment to the *Book of Government* 19-4.B. Overture 45-C (16 Presbyteries voted to approve).

[Descending Overture 45-C](#)

Presbytery	Overture 45-C - YES	Overture 45-C - NO
Alleghenies	138	3
Central Carolinas	99	0
Central South	67	0
Coastal Mid-Atlantic	54	0
East	88	1
Florida & Caribbean	29	0
Great Plains	62	0
Gulf South	78	0
Mid-America	21	0
Midwest	50	0
New River	56	1
Pacific NW	66	0
Pacific SW	37	0
Rivers & Lakes	41	1
Southeast	90	0
West	54	0
TOTAL	1030	6

RECOMMENDATION 46-10

Descending Overtures from the 45th General Assembly Evangelical Presbyterian Church

DESCENDING OVERTURE 45-C

That the *Book of Government* 19-4.B be amended.

Rational: These proposed amendments, which emerge from previously proposed amendments to G.11-2 (See: Recommendation 45-10), are offered for the sake of clarity and consistency.

Current Language: G.19-4.B	Proposed Language: <u>additions, in bold italics,</u> deletions
<p>19-4.B With respect to Teaching Elders</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To establish the required Ministerial Committee. 2. To examine Ministers and Candidates, to receive and dismiss Ministers and Candidates. 3. To ordain and install, to dissolve pastoral relationships, to approve calls, and to grant permission to labor outside the bounds of Presbytery. 4. To establish a Ministerial Obligation record to which all Ministers must subscribe before being received into membership. This obligation shall consist of the ordination vows for Ministers to which shall be added a subscription as follows: "I do receive and adopt the above vows as a true statement of my faith, commitment, and obligation, and I do resolve and promise to exercise my calling to the gospel ministry in obedience to those vows." 5. To retire and to place on Inactive Status member Ministers. 6. To take disciplinary action according to <i>The Book of Discipline</i>. 7. To decide judicial cases brought before it in accordance with <i>The Book of Discipline</i>. 	<p>19-4.B With respect to Teaching Elders</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To establish the required Ministerial Committee. 2. To examine <u>Applicants, Candidates, and Teaching Elders</u>, and to receive and dismiss <u>Applicants, Candidates, and Teaching Elders</u>. 3. To ordain and install, to dissolve pastoral relationships, to approve calls, and to grant permission to labor outside the bounds of Presbytery. 4. To establish a Ministerial Obligation record to which all <u>Teaching Elders</u> must subscribe before being received into membership. This obligation shall consist of the ordination vows for <u>Teaching Elders</u> to which shall be added a subscription as follows: "I do receive and adopt the above vows as a true statement of my faith, commitment, and obligation, and I do resolve and promise to exercise my calling to the gospel ministry in obedience to those vows." 5. To retire and to place on Inactive Status member <u>Teaching Elders</u>. 6. To take disciplinary action according to <i>The Book of Discipline</i>. 7. To decide judicial cases brought before it in accordance with <i>The Book of Discipline</i>.

46-11 *(to the floor)*
From the Stated Clerk

The Stated Clerk recommends that the 46th General Assembly **RATIFY** an amendment to the *Book of Government* 21-2.D. Overture 45-D.1 (16 Presbyteries voted to approve).

[Descending Overture 45-D](#)

Presbytery	Overture 45-D - YES	Overture 45-D - NO
Alleghenies	138	3
Central Carolinas	100	0
Central South	67	0
Coastal Mid-Atlantic	54	0
East	91	0
Florida & Caribbean	29	0
Great Plains	62	0
Gulf South	78	0
Mid-America	22	0
Midwest	51	0
New River	55	2
Pacific NW	69	0
Pacific SW	37	0
Rivers & Lakes	40	0
Southeast	90	0
West	54	0
TOTAL	1037	5

RECOMMENDATION 46-11

Descending Overtures from the 45th General Assembly Evangelical Presbyterian Church

DESCENDING OVERTURE 45-D

That the *Book of Government* 21-2.D.1 be amended.

Rational: The Ministerial Committee or other designated Committee of the Presbytery has the responsibility for Applicants seeking to come under Care of the Presbytery. This proposed amendment, which emerges from previously proposed amendments to G.11-2 (See: Recommendation #45-10), is offered for the sake of clarity and consistency.

Current Language: G.21-2.D.1	Proposed Language: <u>additions, in bold italics</u> deletions
<p>21-2 The Ministerial Committee</p> <p>D.1 Authority and Responsibilities</p> <p>1. With regard to Teaching Elders and Candidates</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a. It shall have the oversight of Candidates for the gospel ministry of the Presbytery, although the Presbytery may assign this function to some other committee.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">b. It shall confer with each Teaching Elder desiring to become a member of the Presbytery or Candidate desiring ordination.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">c. It shall conduct any examination and assessment it deems necessary in order to make a decision for its recommendation to the Presbytery concerning the application.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">d. It shall conduct the examination by the Presbytery of the applicant according to the Book of Government.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">e. It shall report annually on the work of the Teaching Elders to the Presbytery, along with any recommendations it might have. This includes an annual report from those Teaching Elders approved for labor outside the bounds of Presbytery.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">f. The Committee shall be responsible for an annual review of the remuneration of Teaching Elders, shall consult with Sessions if deemed necessary concerning such remuneration, and may recommend to the Presbytery minimum terms for the call of Teaching Elders. Requests to the Presbytery for a change in the terms of call shall come through this committee.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">g. It shall review each request for dissolution of a pastoral relationship and make a recommendation to Presbytery.</p>	<p>21-2 The Ministerial Committee</p> <p>D.1 Authority and Responsibilities</p> <p>I. With regard to <u>Applicants, Candidates, and Teaching Elders</u></p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a. It shall have the oversight of Candidates for the gospel ministry of the Presbytery, although the Presbytery may assign this function to some other committee.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">b. It shall confer with each Teaching Elder desiring to become a member of the Presbytery <u>as well as Applicants</u> or Candidates desiring ordination.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">c. It shall conduct any examination and assessment it deems necessary in order to make a decision for its recommendation to the Presbytery concerning the application.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">d. It shall conduct the examination by the Presbytery of the applicant according to the Book of Government.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">e. It shall report annually on the work of the Teaching Elders to the Presbytery, along with any recommendations it might have. This includes an annual report from those Teaching Elders approved for labor outside the bounds of Presbytery.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">f. The Committee shall be responsible for an annual review of the remuneration of Teaching Elders, shall consult with Sessions if deemed necessary concerning such remuneration, and may recommend to the Presbytery minimum terms for the call of Teaching Elders. Requests to the Presbytery for a change in the terms of call shall come through this committee.</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">g. It shall review each request for dissolution of a pastoral relationship and make a recommendation to Presbytery.</p>

46-12 (to the floor)
From the Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards
Proposed Amendments to the *Book of Government* 11-2.G

Current Language: G. 11-2.G	Proposed Language: G.11-2.G <i>additions, in bold italics,</i> deletions
<p>11-2.G A Candidate shall pursue a course of study that leads to a Master of Divinity degree from an accredited seminary approved by the Presbytery and such other standards as may be determined by Acts of the General Assembly. Academic work that is equivalent to a Master of Divinity degree may be completed by those means designed for Candidates under extraordinary status (G.11-2I).</p>	<p>11-2.G A Candidate shall pursue a course of study that leads to a <i>graduate theological</i> Master of Divinity degree from an accredited <i>institution</i> seminary approved by the Presbytery and such other <i>requirements</i> standards as may be determined by Acts of the General Assembly. Academic work that is equivalent to a Master of Divinity degree may be completed by those means designed for Candidates under extraordinary status (G.11-2I).</p> <p><i><u>11-2.H The Candidate shall present evidence of satisfactory completion of the Criteria for Ordination Requirements and Education to the Presbytery. This evidence shall include:</u></i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i><u>Graduate coursework substantiated by a transcript</u></i> 2. <i><u>Participation in the EPC candidate assessment</u></i> 3. <i><u>Demonstration of pastoral competencies</u></i>
<p>11-2.H Ordinarily, a Candidate must be under care for a minimum of one year prior to ordination. A Candidate, for reasons acceptable to the Presbytery, may request transfer to another Presbytery. The Candidate’s membership must also be transferred to an EPC congregation within that Presbytery.</p>	<p>11-2.H <u>I</u> Ordinarily, a Candidate must be under care for a minimum of one year prior to ordination. A Candidate, for reasons acceptable to the Presbytery, may request transfer to another Presbytery. The Candidate’s membership must also be transferred to an EPC congregation within that Presbytery.</p>
<p>11-2.I Currently descending from GA45 to STRIKE]</p> <p>A Presbytery, for reasons it judges adequate, may receive a Candidate under extraordinary circumstances for whom it may waive part or all of the total educational requirements for ordination. This action requires a two-thirds vote by the Presbytery. When such a Candidate is received, it is appropriate to assign courses of independent study or study under some appropriate person.</p>	<p>11-2.I <u>J</u> [Currently descending from GA45 to AMEND]</p> <p>A Candidate from another Reformed denomination who has been under care for at least one year in that denomination, has met EPC educational requirements for ordination, and is pursuing a call from an EPC congregation shall be examined in the manner prescribed in G.12-2. Any Candidates from outside the Reformed Tradition follow the procedures of G.11-2.</p>



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11-2.I [Currently descending from GA45 to AMEND]

A Candidate from another Reformed denomination who has been under care for at least one year in that denomination, has met EPC educational requirements for ordination, and is pursuing a call from an EPC congregation shall be examined in the manner prescribed in G.12-2. Any Candidates from outside the Reformed Tradition follow the procedures of G.11-2.

Rationale: Due to changes in the accreditation of the Masters of Divinity degree over the years, the degree is no longer standard among seminaries. Some seminaries still maintain the traditional 90+ credit hour degree while others have reduced the required credit hours to the minimum 72+ credit hour threshold. This results in a significant variance when it comes to the preparation and training of our Candidates. Furthermore, we have many Candidates who have already achieved a graduate level theological degree and simply need to add a few more classes rather than pursue a different degree. Additionally, we recognize the need for a uniform standard which is why we are proposing a standard “Criteria for Ordination Requirements and Education” that all Candidates must meet. The new criteria will include 72 hours of transcribed, graduate level coursework, including original languages. It will also include a new assessment process for Candidates modeled after our current church planter and world outreach worker assessments. Finally, it will include some kind of demonstration of pastoral competencies and skills in a local ministry context.

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46-13 *(to the floor)*
From the Permanent Judicial Commission

The Permanent Judicial Commission recommends that the 46th General Assembly
APPROVE revisions to **G. 11-2**

Rationale:

The PJC finds the proposed amendment meets the standards of clarity and consistency of language and for compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

www.epconnect.org/2026report-pjc

[Report of the PJC G. 11-2.G](#)



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46-14 (to the floor)
From the Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards
Proposed Amendments to the *Book of Government* 11-2.H

Current Language: G. 11-2.G	Proposed Language: G.11-2.G <i>additions, in bold italics, deletions</i>
<p>11-2.G A Candidate shall pursue a course of study that leads to a Master of Divinity degree from an accredited seminary approved by the Presbytery and such other standards as may be determined by Acts of the General Assembly. Academic work that is equivalent to a Master of Divinity degree may be completed by those means designed for Candidates under extraordinary status (G.11-2I).</p> <p>11-2.H Ordinarily, a Candidate must be under care for a minimum of one year prior to ordination. A Candidate, for reasons acceptable to the Presbytery, may request transfer to another Presbytery. The Candidate’s membership must also be transferred to an EPC congregation within that Presbytery.</p> <p>11-2.I Currently descending from GA46 to STRIKE] A Presbytery, for reasons it judges adequate, may receive a Candidate under extraordinary circumstances for whom it may waive part or all of the total educational requirements for ordination. This action requires a two-thirds vote by the Presbytery. When such a Candidate is received, it is appropriate to assign courses of independent study or study under some appropriate person.</p>	<p>11-2.G A Candidate shall pursue a course of study that leads to a <i>graduate theological</i> Master of Divinity degree from an accredited <i>institution</i> seminary approved by the Presbytery and such other <i>requirements</i> standards as may be determined by Acts of the General Assembly. Academic work that is equivalent to a Master of Divinity degree may be completed by those means designed for Candidates under extraordinary status (G.11-2I).</p> <p><i>11-2.H The Candidate shall present evidence of satisfactory completion of the Criteria for Ordination Requirements and Education to the Presbytery. This evidence shall include:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Graduate coursework substantiated by a transcript</i> 2. <i>Participation in the EPC candidate assessment</i> 3. <i>Demonstration of pastoral competencies</i> <p>11-2.H I Ordinarily, a Candidate must be under care for a minimum of one year prior to ordination. A Candidate, for reasons acceptable to the Presbytery, may request transfer to another Presbytery. The Candidate’s membership must also be transferred to an EPC congregation within that Presbytery.</p> <p>11-2.I J [Currently descending from GA46 to AMEND] A Candidate from another Reformed denomination who has been under care for at least one year in that denomination, has met EPC educational requirements for ordination, and is pursuing a call from an EPC congregation shall be examined in the manner prescribed in G.12-2. Any Candidates from outside the Reformed Tradition follow the procedures of G.11-2.</p>



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11-2.I [Currently descending from GA46 to AMEND]

A Candidate from another Reformed denomination who has been under care for at least one year in that denomination, has met EPC educational requirements for ordination, and is pursuing a call from an EPC congregation shall be examined in the manner prescribed in G.12-2. Any Candidates from outside the Reformed Tradition follow the procedures of G.11-2.

Rationale: Due to changes in the accreditation of the Masters of Divinity degree over the years, the degree is no longer standard among seminaries. Some seminaries still maintain the traditional 90+ credit hour degree while others have reduced the required credit hours to the minimum 72+ credit hour threshold. This results in a significant variance when it comes to the preparation and training of our Candidates. Furthermore, we have many Candidates who have already achieved a graduate level theological degree and simply need to add a few more classes rather than pursue a different degree. Additionally, we recognize the need for a uniform standard which is why we are proposing a standard “Criteria for Ordination Requirements and Education” that all Candidates must meet. The new criteria will include 72 hours of transcribed, graduate level coursework, including original languages. It will also include a new assessment process for Candidates modeled after our current church planter and world outreach worker assessments. Finally, it will include some kind of demonstration of pastoral competencies and skills in a local ministry context.

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46-15 (to the floor)
From the Permanent Judicial Commission

The Permanent Judicial Commission recommends that the 46th General Assembly
APPROVE a new section titled **G. 11-2.H**.

Rationale:

The PJC finds the proposed amendment meets the standards of clarity and consistency of language and for compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

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[Report of the PJC G. 11-2.H](#)

REPORT OF THE PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION

The Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards (the “**AIC**”) has submitted to the 46th General Assembly certain proposed amendments to Sections 11-2G and 12-2 of the *Book of Government*, as well as the addition of a new Section 11-2H of the *Book of Government*, together with conforming re-numbering of subsequent sections (collectively, the “**AIC Amendments**”). The Permanent Judicial Commission of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (the “**PJC**”) subsequently examined the AIC Amendments for clarity and consistency of language and for compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, in each case as required by Section G.21-3D.2.a.¹

The PJC understands the categories “clarity,” “consistency,” and “compatibility” to have particular meanings. *Clarity* asks whether the language of the amendment is sufficiently precise that a reasonably informed reader of the Constitution could determine what the provision requires, permits, or forbids without reference to the debate that produced it. *Consistency* examines whether the amendment employs language in a manner consistent with the vocabulary, terminology, and logic used in the Constitution and within the amendment itself. *Compatibility* asks whether the amendment integrates coherently into the broader constitutional framework without creating conflict with other provisions or with the structure of the Constitution as a whole.

After due consideration, the PJC determined as follows regarding the AIC Amendments:

Question Presented	PJC Determination
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of clarity of language?	Yes. Vote: 8-0, with one abstention.
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of consistency of language?	Yes. Vote: 8-0, with one abstention.
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of compatibility with other provisions of the EPC Constitution?	Yes. Vote: 8-0, with one abstention.

Accordingly, the PJC respectfully and prayerfully recommends that the General Assembly accept and adopt the AIC Amendments.

¹ The PJC’s task was limited. We did not determine the wisdom, necessity, or pastoral desirability of the AIC Amendments, but rather evaluated whether the proposed language is prepared for integration into the Constitution. Our evaluation of the “three-C” criteria helps the General Assembly determine whether the AIC Amendments are constitutionally serviceable in their present form, apart from the merits of the proposals themselves.



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46-16 (to the floor)
From the Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards
Proposed Amendments to the *Book of Government* 12-2

Current Language: G. 12-2	Proposed Language: G.12.2 <i>additions, in bold italics,</i> deletions
<p>12.2 The examination of a Candidate for ordination as a Teaching Elder</p> <p>A. The Candidate shall present evidence of competency in the original languages of Scripture, including transcripts of coursework taken, along with the required exegesis.</p> <p>B. The Candidate shall be examined in the Christian experience of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ and progress in spiritual growth.</p>	<p>12.2 The examination of a Candidate for ordination as a Teaching Elder</p> <p><i><u>The examination of a Candidate for ordination to the office of Teaching Elder shall proceed in three phases: denominational written examinations, examination before the appropriate committee of the Presbytery, and before the floor of the Presbytery.</u></i></p> <p><i><u>A. Denominational Written Examinations</u></i></p> <p><i><u>1. Prior to sitting for oral examination before a Presbytery, every Candidate shall complete the written examinations approved by the General Assembly through its appropriate Permanent Committee in accordance with the Rules for Assembly.</u></i></p> <p><i><u>2. The written examinations shall test competency in the following areas:</u></i></p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;"><i><u>a. Bible content</u></i></p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;"><i><u>b. Theology, Sacraments and the Reformed Tradition</u></i></p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;"><i><u>c. EPC Polity</u></i></p> <p><i><u>B. Presbytery Committee Examination</u></i></p> <p><i><u>1. Following the successful completion of written examinations, the Candidate shall appear before the appropriate committee of the Presbytery for examination.</u></i></p> <p><i><u>2. This examination shall include:</u></i></p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;"><i><u>a. Testimony to the Christian experience of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ, and progress in spiritual growth and holiness, with attention to the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.</u></i></p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;"><i><u>b. Articulation of the motives for seeking ordination, including the Candidate's sense of inward call.</u></i></p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;"><i><u>c. Demonstration of knowledge of Christian doctrine according to</u></i></p>

<p>C. The Candidate shall be examined in writing and orally in the following areas: Theology and Sacraments, the English Bible, the Book of Order, the history of the Church and the Reformed tradition, and the nature of the office of Teaching Elder.</p> <p>D. The Candidate shall preach a sermon to the Presbytery to demonstrate the ability to expound the Word of God effectively.</p> <p>E. If the Presbytery has previously received a Candidate and has not required the stipulated work of college and/or seminary, the requirements for language shall be omitted. However, every other part of the examination shall be given. The examination must be approved by a two-thirds majority of the Presbytery.</p>	<p><i><u>the following categories:</u></i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i><u>i. Bible content</u></i> <i><u>ii. Reformed Theology</u></i> <i><u>iii. Sacraments</u></i> <i><u>iv. Church History with emphasis on the Reformed Tradition.</u></i> <i><u>v. Office of Teaching Elder</u></i> <i><u>vi. EPC Polity</u></i> <i><u>vii. Westminster Standards</u></i> <p>3. <i><u>The Committee shall report its findings and recommendation to the Presbytery.</u></i></p> <p>C. <i><u>Presbytery Floor Examination</u></i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i><u>1. The Candidate shall preach a sermon before the Presbytery, on a text assigned by the appropriate committee, demonstrating ability to expound and apply the Word of God.</u></i> <i><u>2. The Candidate shall be examined orally before the Presbytery to demonstrate knowledge of Christian doctrine according to the same categories outlined above.</u></i> <p><i><u>The examination must be sustained by a two-thirds majority of the Presbytery.</u></i></p>
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Rationale: Due to the confusion that often surrounds our examination process at the Presbytery level, we believe it important to clarify in detail what the EPC requires. Much of what is listed here is already found in various places such as the Procedure Manual for Ministerial and Candidates Committees, but we believe the expectations are best spelled out in the Book of Government for the sake of consistency and clarity across presbyteries. One important change to note is the elimination of the written exegesis exam. Should our recommendations pass, we believe a passing grade in Biblical Languages and Biblical Exegesis from an accredited seminary is sufficient to meet our standard.

46-17 (to the floor)
From the Permanent Judicial Commission

The Permanent Judicial Commission recommends that the 46th General Assembly
APPROVE revisions to **G. 12-2**.

Rationale:

The PJC finds the proposed amendment meets the standards of clarity and consistency of language and for compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

www.epconnect.org/2026report-pjc

[Report of the PJC G. 12-2](#)

REPORT OF THE PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION

The Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards (the “**AIC**”) has submitted to the 46th General Assembly certain proposed amendments to Sections 11-2G and 12-2 of the *Book of Government*, as well as the addition of a new Section 11-2H of the *Book of Government*, together with conforming re-numbering of subsequent sections (collectively, the “**AIC Amendments**”). The Permanent Judicial Commission of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (the “**PJC**”) subsequently examined the AIC Amendments for clarity and consistency of language and for compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, in each case as required by Section G.21-3D.2.a.¹

The PJC understands the categories “clarity,” “consistency,” and “compatibility” to have particular meanings. *Clarity* asks whether the language of the amendment is sufficiently precise that a reasonably informed reader of the Constitution could determine what the provision requires, permits, or forbids without reference to the debate that produced it. *Consistency* examines whether the amendment employs language in a manner consistent with the vocabulary, terminology, and logic used in the Constitution and within the amendment itself. *Compatibility* asks whether the amendment integrates coherently into the broader constitutional framework without creating conflict with other provisions or with the structure of the Constitution as a whole.

After due consideration, the PJC determined as follows regarding the AIC Amendments:

Question Presented	PJC Determination
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of clarity of language?	Yes. Vote: 8-0, with one abstention.
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of consistency of language?	Yes. Vote: 8-0, with one abstention.
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of compatibility with other provisions of the EPC Constitution?	Yes. Vote: 8-0, with one abstention.

Accordingly, the PJC respectfully and prayerfully recommends that the General Assembly accept and adopt the AIC Amendments.

¹ The PJC’s task was limited. We did not determine the wisdom, necessity, or pastoral desirability of the AIC Amendments, but rather evaluated whether the proposed language is prepared for integration into the Constitution. Our evaluation of the “three-C” criteria helps the General Assembly determine whether the AIC Amendments are constitutionally serviceable in their present form, apart from the merits of the proposals themselves.

46-18 (to the floor)
From the Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards
Proposed Core Curriculum

<p>BIBLE (36 graduate credit hours)</p> <p>Old Testament (18)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - OT Survey - Hebrew - Hebrew Exegesis <p>New Testament (18)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NT Survey - Greek - Greek Exegesis <p>THEOLOGY (24 graduate credit hours)</p> <p>Systematic Theology (9)</p> <p>Biblical Theology (6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hermeneutics - Covenant Theology <p>Historical Theology (9)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre & Post-Reformation - Reformed Theology <p>APPLIED THEOLOGY (12 graduate credit hours)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Homiletics (6) - Pastoral Care & Counseling (6) 	<p>CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT</p> <p>A denominational assessment for candidates, incorporating the required psychological evaluation and providing a written report to the appropriate committee of the Presbytery that includes insight into the candidate’s character formation and leadership skills.</p> <p>PASTORAL COMPETENCIES</p> <p>Skills will be assessed and approved by the Ministerial Committee and/or Care of Candidates Committee of the presbytery in consultation with the Advisor and Session Liaison. Potential options for fulfillment include internships, employment, and professional ministry experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local Missions - Global Missions - Evangelism - Leadership - Ethics - Discipleship - Conflict Resolution - Governance & Polity - Administration & Finance - Liturgical - Ceremonial
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Rationale: Because of the changes to the Master of Divinity degree, we believe the EPC needs to create her own standard. To that end, we are proposing the following standard criteria for all Candidates that includes academic coursework, character assessment, and field work in a local church and/or ministry setting where Candidates can learn organizational leadership and pastoral skills. Please note our current Candidate’s Educational Equivalency Program requires 66 credit hours of graduate level work with 12 hours in Old Testament, New Testament, and Theology respectively (Biblical Languages optional). Our new standard requires 72 credit hours of graduate level work with 18 hours in Old Testament and New Testament respectively (Biblical Languages required), and 24



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hours in Theology with an emphasis on Covenant and Reformed Theology. We also believe courses in Homiletics and Pastoral Care and Counseling are also essential for those seeking to be ordained to the office of Teaching Elder. Additionally, we believe the denomination should create an assessment weekend modeled after the church planter and world outreach assessments for our Candidates. Finally, we believe strongly that the local church is the best pipeline to train and equip future Teaching Elders in the necessary organizational leadership and pastoral skills.

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46-19 (to the floor)

From the Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards

Proposed sunset provision for the Candidate's Educational Equivalency Program (CEEP)

To APPROVE a sunset provision for the Candidate's Educational Equivalency Program (CEEP).

Effective Date: The requirements of the Criteria shall take effect upon adjournment of the 47th General Assembly. (Provided this is adopted by the 46th General Assembly and ratified by the 47th General Assembly.)

Allowances for Current Candidates: Any candidate received by a Presbytery prior to the effective date of the Criteria shall be permitted to complete their preparation under the standards of the 2025-2026 edition of the Book of Order.

Sunset Provision: The option for ordination under prior standards shall expire three (3) years from the effective date. Any Candidate not ordained by that time must meet the Criteria for Ordination Requirements and Education of the current Book of Order.

Rationale: The Criteria for Ordination Requirements and Education will eliminate the need for the Candidate's Educational Equivalency Program (CEEP) as it provides a uniform standard for all Candidates to meet while providing the Presbytery some measure of flexibility in order to customize the standard to each individual Candidate and their background. At the same time, the committee recognizes the need to provide some time for Candidates currently under care in the CEEP process to complete their work. We believe three years from the effective date (47th General Assembly) is sufficient.

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46-20 (to the floor)
From the Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards

The Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards and Process recommends that the 46th General Assembly **DIRECT** the National Leadership Team (NLT) to conduct a thorough review of the Ministerial Vocation Committee’s job description and respective responsibilities and bring potential revisions to the 47th General Assembly.

Rationale:

The growth of the EPC in recent years necessitates a review of the committee’s responsibilities to make sure they best serve the purpose for which the committee was originally formed. The size and scale of the EPC has dramatically increased since the Ministerial Vocation Committee was first constituted and we believe the makeup as well as the responsibilities of the committee may need to be revised in order to best serve our denomination in the future.

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46-21 (to the floor)
From the Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards
Proposed Amendments to the *Rules for Assembly 10-1.C*

Current Language: <i>Rules for Assembly 10-1.C</i>	Proposed Language: <i>Rules for Assembly 10-1.C</i> <i>additions, in bold italics, deletions</i>
<p>C. Committee on Ministerial Vocation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Membership to be six members; chairman elected by committee. 2. Monitors and aids ministerial committees of local presbyteries. 3. Assists in the placement of pastors and helps churches to find pastors. 4. Provides information on colleges and seminaries. 5. Interviews Candidates for seminary equivalent educational programs 6. Oversees the four national written examinations. 7. Exercises authority over all standardized national forms for the Ordination Process. 	<p>C. Committee on Ministerial Vocation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Membership to be six members; chairman elected by committee. 2. Monitors and aids ministerial committees of local presbyteries. 3. Assists in the placement of pastors and helps churches to find pastors. <i>To oversee the Opportunities List with the assistance of the Office of the General Assembly.</i> 4. Provides information on colleges and seminaries. 5. Interviews Candidates for seminary equivalent educational programs. 6. Oversees the four national written examinations. 7. Exercises authority over all standardized national forms for the Ordination Process.

Rationale:

The only role the Ministerial Vocation Committee plays in assisting in the placement of pastors and helping churches find pastors is to oversee the Opportunities List with the assistance of the Office of the General Assembly as well as facilitate time during General Assembly for churches searching for pastors to make their needs known. We believe the language in the Rules of Assembly should reflect this reality so as to avoid creating unrealistic expectations.



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46-22 (to the floor)
From the Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards

The Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards and Process recommends that the 46th General Assembly **DIRECT** the Ministerial Vocation Committee (MVC) to conduct a thorough study of licensure as a potential category in the denomination's credentialing process, report back to the 47th General Assembly regarding the theological, constitutional, and pastoral implications, and present any recommendations.

Rationale:

There is a history of licensure in the EPC. Though it was eliminated in 1984, we believe it is worth considering bringing back as a regular practice. Many of our sister denominations use licensure to great effect in the training and equipping of their Candidates and it also provides presbytery endorsement for Candidates to preach the Word within their bounds. The EPC's lack of licensure or a similar category has resulted in a limited pool of presbytery-endorsed preachers which potentially results in local churches not being well-served in the ministry of the Word. We also believe it could potentially impact the training and equipping of Commissioned Pastors. Members of our committee are willing to assist the MVC in this study.

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46-23 (to the floor)
From the Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards

The Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards and Process recommends that the 46th General Assembly **DIRECT** the National Leadership Team to review the function and purpose of the Acts of Assembly and consider archiving those no longer in effect.

Rationale:

The Acts of Assembly, as they are currently organized, are difficult to navigate, creating confusion over which provisions are in effect. We believe it is worth reviewing and revising the Acts of Assembly with the goal of re-organizing them into a clearer, more functional format and archiving those no longer in effect to eliminate any confusion. Members of our committee are willing to assist the NLT in this work.

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46-24 (to the floor)
From the Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards

The Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards and Process recommends that the 46th General Assembly **DISMISS** with gratitude the Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards – saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Rationale:

We believe our work is concluded.

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46-25 *(to the floor)*
Communication

Second Presbyterian Church, Memphis, TN, INVITES the 46th General Assembly to hold the 47th General Assembly on its campus June 15-17, 2027.

[Invitation Letter from Second Presbyterian Church](#)



SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
4055 POPLAR AVENUE
MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE 38111
(901) 454-0034
FAX (901) 327-1204
WWW.2PC.ORG

May 19, 2026

Dean Weaver, Stated Clerk
Evangelical Presbyterian Church
5850 R.G. Lee Blvd., Suite 510
Orlando, FL 32822

Dear Dean,

Please consider this letter as formal invitation to the General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church to be our guests at Second Presbyterian Church in Memphis, Tennessee, in June 15-17 of 2027 as unanimously approved by our Session on May 18, 2026.

We are eager to worship our Lord together and experience rich fellowship as we adhere to our responsibilities of caring well for our flocks.

Blessings,

George Robertson
Senior Pastor

John Alexander
Clerk of the Session



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46-26 (to the floor)

From the Ad-Interim Committee Same-Sex Attraction and Ordination Standards

Proposed Amendments to the Position Paper on Human Sexuality

Current Language: Human Sexuality	Proposed Language: Human Sexuality <i>additions, in bold italics, deletions</i>
<p>In a time when views of human sexuality and marriage are rapidly changing, we believe it is necessary and helpful to state clearly and compassionately to the church and the world our beliefs about God’s design for human sexuality. We wish to do so with love toward all as we attempt to imitate God’s love for us. We long for the Church as well as society to conform to biblical standards of sexuality; but our ultimate desire is that, through the gospel, all may come to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of their lives and receive His gift of eternal life. We also know that, having come to believe in Him, we enjoy His blessing by walking with Him according to His Word. We believe the Bible to be God’s Word and that to understand and obey His will leads to the greatest human flourishing. What follows is what we believe the Scriptures teach and the Christian Church has held to be true since the time of the apostles, and what therefore holds the greatest prospects for human happiness and well-being, even as we strive and long for a time when God will make all things new.</p> <p>The Divine Origin and Purpose of Human Sexuality</p> <p>Human sexuality is a gift from God. Being made in the likeness of God as male and female, we reflect the loving complementarity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Scriptures present a grand vision of husband and wife mirroring the intimate fellowship of the Trinity through union with a covenant partner who is both similar (human) and different (opposite gender), leading to fruitful procreation of humanity. In this profound mystery, we discover God’s purposes for our sexuality and His will for how we are to express our sexuality.</p>	<p>In a time when views of human sexuality and marriage are rapidly changing, we believe it is necessary and helpful to state clearly and compassionately to the eChurch and the world our beliefs about God’s design for human sexuality. We wish to do so with love toward all as we attempt to imitate God’s love for us. We long for the Church as well as society to conform to biblical standards of sexuality; but our ultimate desire is that, through the gospel, all may come to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of their lives and receive His gift of eternal life. We also know that, having come to believe in Him, we enjoy His blessing by walking with Him according to His Word. We believe the Bible to be God’s Word and that to understand and obey His will leads to the greatest human flourishing. What follows is what we believe the Scriptures teach and the Christian Church has held to be true since the time of the apostles, and what therefore holds the greatest prospects for human happiness and well-being, even as we strive and long for a time when God will make all things new.</p> <p>The Divine Origin and Purpose of Human Sexuality</p> <p><i>All men and women are made in the image of God and</i> human sexuality is a gift from God. Being made in the likeness of God as male and female, we reflect the loving complementarity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Scriptures present a grand vision of husband and wife mirroring the <i>who are to have</i> intimate fellowship of the Trinity through union with a covenant partner who is both similar (human) and different (opposite gender <i>sex</i>), leading to fruitful procreation of humanity. In this profound mystery, we discover God’s purposes for our sexuality and His <i>how He wills it to be expressed in our union and communion with him.</i> for how we are to express our sexuality.</p>



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At the fall of humankind, recorded in Genesis 3, we began to distort and misuse the gifts of God to our own demise, but through His gracious redemptive work in Jesus Christ, God is leading us from brokenness and rebellion to a full and beautiful restoration of our relationship with Him and of our human dignity and purpose.

Because God made us and redeems us, He alone has sovereign authority to define us and to regulate our sexual practice.

~~At~~ ~~†~~ ~~The~~ fall of humankind, recorded in Genesis 3, ***corrupted our nature, and this corrupted nature made us utterly indisposed, disabled, opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil.*** ~~✠~~ We began to distort and misuse the gifts of God to our own demise; ***and entered into the conditions of sin and misery: we desire the good things the wrong way and also desire the wrong things. All of our sinful transgressions emerge from this corrupted nature and this corruption of our hearts, along with all its impulses, is itself sin. The Fall also broke our world and everything in it, including our relationships, bodies, and affections, such that we suffer by facing many weakness and temptations to sin.*** ~~but through His gracious redemptive work in Jesus Christ, God is leading us from brokenness and rebellion to a full and beautiful restoration of our relationship with Him and of our human dignity and purpose.~~

Therefore, Bbecause God made us and redeems us, He alone has sovereign authority to define us and to regulate ***the right ordering of our desires and*** our sexual practice, ***and empowers us to align with his good will.***

Our Father does this through the gracious redemptive work of His Son, Jesus Christ, and the provision of His Holy Spirit, by which He leads us from brokenness and rebellion to a full and beautiful restoration of our relationship with Him and of our human dignity and purpose. In our union with Christ, our transgressions are pardoned, our corrupted nature is being mortified; we are enabled by His Spirit to recognize, confess, repent, and mortify our sins and flee temptation. By faith we enjoy now a taste of the consummation for God's purpose: the experience of union and communion with God through the redemption of Jesus and indwelling of the Holy Spirit as the children of the Father. This present inbreaking of the kingdom of God into our lives brings restoration from our condition of sin which includes both an affirmation of marriage and sex along with the validation of the single life. Redeemed sexuality is grounded in God's good creation and looks forward to its eschatological consummation in union and communion with God.

We, therefore, must resist every temptation and renounce every attempt to subvert God’s purposes and His commandments concerning our sexuality.

At the same time, we, as evangelical Presbyterians, readily and sorrowfully confess our manifold violations of His Word: as a people, we have engaged in premarital sex, adultery, ungodly divorce, and sexual lusts of every sort, not only before coming to faith in Christ, but also afterward. As churches, we have at times sanctioned unbiblical marriages, violating the expressed will of God revealed in the Scriptures; and we sometimes have self-righteously condemned others for their sexual sins while committing our own. We stand in need of God’s forgiveness and of His power to live holy lives. Our churches desperately need revival and a humble return to godly sexual practice. And so, with humble and repentant hearts, we return to the Lord, and we invite those both inside and outside the Church to join us in seeking God’s blessing in our sexual lives.

We believe that the fundamental problems with most contemporary views of sexuality are, first, that the focus is limited to individual pleasure,

Until Christ returns, the corrupt nature remains in the regenerate during this life and while pardoned, the corruption itself and all motions proceeding from it remain truly and properly sin. As our king, Jesus corrects us in our sin and supports us in our temptations and sufferings. Both our corrupted hearts and our fallen world tempt us to sin: being tempted is an appeal to engage the desires of our hearts to commit sin. We, therefore, must *continually repent of our sin*, resist every temptation and renounce every attempt to subvert God’s purposes and His commandments concerning our sexuality. *We must not enter into temptation, but rather repent of our corrupted hearts, sinful lusts, and indulging temptation. We have been made alive in Christ by His Spirit, by whom Christ sanctifies us and raises our affections to Himself; therefore we must keep in step with the Spirit, mortifying the passions of the flesh. We acknowledge that any sexual desires apart from God’s design for marriage are sinful, arise from our sinfully corrupted nature, and we must repent of them all. We also acknowledge that any temptations to fulfill sexual desire apart from God’s design for marriage must be resisted, regardless of how persistent or seemingly innate the temptation or desire is.*

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relational intimacy, and self-fulfillment; and, second, that biblical marriage is rejected as the exclusive context for sexual intimacy. While the Scriptures teach that human sexuality is indeed a gift for our enjoyment, its primary purpose is to glorify God. Whether young or old, male or female, single or married, whether attracted to the same, the opposite, or both sexes, all humans are obligated to glorify our Creator in our sexuality through faithful conformity to God's design, revealed in the Scriptures.

We desire to adhere fully to biblical sexuality. Out of love we share with others the message of God's judgment upon all forms of sexual immorality. We also believe that there is no place for any form of cruelty, hate or denigration of those who either disagree with these positions or hold to other positions. We unequivocally condemn all injustices, sinful intimidation, and physical violence perpetrated against anyone because of sexual attraction or practice.

The Single Life

The New Testament commends the single life. As followers of Jesus, we are bound in spiritual union with Him as Bridegroom, in Whom we are to be complete and content. By expressing our maleness or femaleness, even apart from romantic relationships, we enrich human community and contribute to the well-being of society. Single men and women are also given the opportunity to serve the Lord with undivided devotion. They are free, in a particular way, to dedicate their entire lives to the Lord and find their greatest fulfillment in pleasing Him. This was true for our Lord Jesus and for the Apostle Paul, who exemplified and elevated the godly single life. God intends both married and single men and women to live in vibrant community together, rather than isolation and loneliness. In this sacred community of deep and committed friendships, we encourage single persons to live out loving, holy, celibate lives. We, in the EPC, encourage all of our churches to nurture holy and missional community among and with single members.

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The Married Life

When God created us male and female, He also instituted the ordinance of marriage in which one man and one woman are bound together for life in a solemn covenant, which beautifully illustrates God's covenantal relationship with His chosen people. God directs His people who marry to wed only fellow believers—those who trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation and have joined His Church. It is within the covenant of marriage alone that God—for His own glory, the mutual encouragement of the spouses, procreation, the strengthening of the family, and the welfare of humankind—has instructed husbands and wives to engage in regular, intimate sexual love. In this uniquely sexual relationship, the married couple seeks to remember, celebrate, and model Christ's love for His Church and His Church's devotion to her Lord and to serve one another with godly affection.

A Call to Holiness

We believe God has called us to live holy lives. The Christian believer's body is a temple of God's Spirit; therefore rather than stealing sexual privileges from one another outside of marriage, we are called to edify one another in multiple ways that we may all become more like Christ. Those who are married must avoid every temptation that would diminish the loving faithfulness they vowed in their marriage covenant. Those who are unmarried, regardless of sexual attraction, must seek to honor God through diligently avoiding temptation, restraining ungodly sexual impulses, focusing their energies on serving Christ and neighbor, and eagerly anticipating the new heavens and the new earth, when all things will be restored and every godly human longing beautifully fulfilled. Those who find themselves desiring to be a person of the opposite gender face painful emotions and weighty consequences. With heartfelt sympathy and a deep desire to love and encourage them in their circumstances, we believe they must find their contentment in Christ alone, accepting His wise and gracious providence, and looking to Him for strength to glorify Him and to serve his or her neighbor through the gender given at conception.

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It is encouraging to remember that our Lord Jesus suffered every human temptation without sinning and that God always provides His people a way of escape from every sin. Unrepentant sinful behavior is incompatible with the confession of Jesus as Lord required of all members of the EPC. Additionally, it is required of ordained officers in the EPC that they believe, practice, and teach the moral standards contained in the Scriptures and Constitution of the EPC and reflected in this position paper.

Recovering from Sexual Brokenness

Because of universal human corruption emanating from the fall of Adam and Eve, we are all broken sexually in one or more ways and to varying degrees. We have all sinned. While we call upon fellow sinners everywhere to repent of their sins, as followers of Christ we are also committed not to condemn others for their brokenness—their sexual attractions, sexual dysfunctions, or sexual addictions. Since we all are disoriented by sin in one form or another, it is right and good for us to live in continual personal and corporate repentance, humbly seeking God’s help for ourselves and for our neighbor. Through repentance and faith in the crucified and resurrected Jesus, we are forgiven all our sexual sins, washed from their impurity, and given the power of the Holy Spirit to live lives worthy of the gospel, setting an example for the watching world and inviting them to join us in walking with Jesus.

Those in and out of the Church struggling with various forms of sexual disorientation or gender dysphoria should experience from God’s people a deep desire to identify with them in their

It is encouraging to remember that our Lord Jesus *sympathizes with us in our weaknesses because he both suffered when tempted and was tempted in every respect like us, yet without sin. Extended seasons of bodily weaknesses and sexual temptation may weaken our sense of God’s grace and assurance of salvation, yet God’s Spirit never abandons his children and our Father* ~~suffered every human temptation without sinning and that God~~ always provides His people a way of escape from every sin *and temptation*. Unrepentant sinful behavior *and unrepentant lusts are* is incompatible with the confession of Jesus as Lord required of all members of the EPC. Additionally, it is required of ordained officers in the EPC that they believe, practice, and teach the moral standards contained in the Scriptures and Constitution of the EPC *which are* ~~and~~ reflected in this position paper.

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Because of universal human corruption emanating from the fall of Adam and Eve, we are all broken sexually in one or more ways and to varying degrees. We have all sinned, *live in a world full of sin and temptation, and yet have been saved by the sheer grace of God in Christ. Therefore,* ~~While~~ we call upon fellow sinners everywhere to repent of their sins, *we must do so in a spirit of gentleness, acknowledging* as followers of Christ we are also ~~committed not to condemn others for their brokenness—their sexual attractions, sexual dysfunctions, or sexual addictions. Since we all are disoriented by sin in one form or another,~~ it is right and good for us to live in continual personal and corporate repentance, humbly seeking God’s help for ourselves and for our neighbor. Through ~~repentance and~~ faith in the crucified and resurrected Jesus, we are forgiven all our sexual sins, washed from their impurity, and given the power of the Holy Spirit to live lives worthy of the gospel, setting an example for the watching world and inviting them to join us in walking with Jesus.

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struggles, to walk lovingly with them, and to invite them to join us in following the Lord. Together as a people, we must all seek healing for our own lives and for each other's lives, discovering what it means to be godly men and women in the circumstances decreed by His providence. Glorifying God in our sexual lives will at times entail suffering or persecution of various sorts, but, by God's empowering grace, we aspire to obey Him with joy.

The Ministry of the Church

The Church belongs to God. He called us out of the dominion of darkness with its sin and degradation into the glorious light of His love. He has called us to reflect His glory by displaying His character and proclaiming His Word to ourselves and the world. As repentant and forgiven sinners, we in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church resolve to teach the biblical truths of godly sexuality to our members and to all who will listen, with compassion and with courage, regardless of the cost to ourselves. To do otherwise would be a failure of love. We will strive by God's grace to discipline our personal lives and our local churches in accordance with God's Word. God helping us, we shall continue, within our churches and in the public arena, to teach against and to refuse to condone or participate in any sinful form of sexual practice—including sexual abuse, pornography, sexual lust, extra-marital sex, adultery, polygamy, unbiblical divorce and remarriage, homosexual conduct, same-sex union and marriage, and gender reassignment. At the same time, we resolve to continue to love those who have committed these sins and/or suffered from them. And we shall wait with eager longing for the day of our Savior's return, when all shall be made right with us and the world. In the name of Jesus, our compassionate Savior, we tenderly welcome all—regardless of their beliefs or lifestyles—to attend our churches. Further, we invite into the membership of our churches all those who—bruised and broken by the fall—seek now, through sincere faith and genuine repentance, to live in obedience to the Scriptures and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

To God's Name be glory forever.

[Position Paper on Human Sexuality](#)

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46-27 (to the floor)

From the Ad-Interim Committee Same-Sex Attraction and Ordination Standards

Proposed Amendments to the Pastoral Letter on Human Sexuality

Current Language: Same-Sex Attraction	Proposed Language: Same-Sex Attraction <i>additions, in bold italics,</i> deletions
<p style="text-align: center;">Same-Sex Attraction</p> <p>Biblical/ Theological Foundations</p> <p>We know from the Scriptures that God made the first man, Adam, from the dust of the ground and formed the first woman, Eve, from the rib of Adam. He bound them together in a marriage covenant intended to endure as long as they both lived. From that primeval union, God has willed that all marriages would consist of one man and one woman in a lifelong commitment. In marriage, the two genders were made to be mutually compatible—spiritually and physically—and also to have the potential for conceiving, bearing, and rearing children. God has explicitly forbidden sexual intimacy outside the bounds of this marriage covenant.</p> <p>After the fall of humankind, many perverse distortions of God’s order were conceived and practiced by men and women. Among these sinful distortions was the practice of sexual relations between persons of the same gender. The Scriptures mention this phenomenon in seven different texts, all of which speak negatively of homosexual conduct.</p> <p>The men of Sodom sought to have intercourse (perhaps by force) with the angels who visited Lot, and this was one demonstration of the</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Homosexuality and Same-Sex Attraction</p> <p><i>We begin by defining the terms we are using. The terms “gay” and “homosexuality” are umbrella terms used here to describe homoerotic worldview, lifestyle, conduct, and desires. The term “same-sex attraction” (SSA) is used in this paper to describe one’s inward desires or proclivities. Additionally, we speak of “latent propensity,” which applies to persons who know themselves to be especially vulnerable to homosexual temptations but who are repentant of all their homosexual lusts.</i></p> <p>Biblical/ Theological Foundations</p> <p>We know from the Scriptures that God made the first man, Adam, from the dust of the ground and formed the first woman, Eve, from the rib of Adam. He bound them together in a marriage covenant intended to endure as long as they both lived. From that primeval union, God has willed that all marriages would consist of one man and one woman in a lifelong commitment. In marriage, the two genders sexes were made to be mutually compatible—spiritually and physically—and also to have the potential for conceiving, bearing, and rearing children. God has explicitly forbidden sexual intimacy outside the bounds of this marriage covenant.</p> <p>After the fall of humankind, many perverse distortions of God’s order were conceived and practiced by men and women. Among these sinful distortions was the practice of sexual relations between persons of the same gender sex. The Scriptures mention address this phenomenon in seven different multiple texts, all of which speak negatively of homosexual conduct.</p> <p>The men of Sodom sought to have intercourse (perhaps by force) with the angels who visited Lot, and this was one demonstration of the depravity of</p>

depravity of that city. The Mosaic Law explicitly forbade homosexual intercourse in two places. And in Romans, Paul mentioned homosexual acts among both men and women as evidence of God’s abandoning them to their sin. In 1 Corinthians, Paul included those engaged in same-sex relations in a list of those who will not inherit the Kingdom of God. (It should be noted, however, that this statement was not simply a word of condemnation, but rather an invitation to live in the reality of being “washed,... sanctified,... justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”¹²) Similarly, in 1 Timothy, Paul mentioned homosexual men among those who are doing things which are contrary to the gospel. Finally, Jude pointed to the sexual immorality of Sodom and Gomorrah as an example to warn us of God’s judgment. Although Jesus is not quoted on this specific topic in the gospel accounts, He repeatedly endorsed the sexual standards as well as the law as a whole given in the Old Testament, which includes a ban on all homosexual conduct.

Contemporary Challenges

Biblical teaching on homosexual practice has come under severe attack in recent decades. It is important, therefore, for the church to be prepared to respond to these several objections.

Exegetical Challenges

The objections to historic biblical teaching which may well have the most insidious long-term effect upon the church are the so-called “revisionist interpretations” of Scripture. In seeking to justify homosexual behavior, these revisionists employ innovative exegetical methods to avoid the intended meanings of multiple biblical texts. Their methodology not only undermines the biblical sexual ethic, but also the clarity and authority of the Scriptures themselves. They suggest that Sodom was not judged for homosexual conduct but for lack of hospitality, that Levitical laws against homosexual conduct no longer apply in our New Testament age, that Jesus’ lack of specific mention of homosexuality is an implied approval of it, that Paul’s explicit condemnations

that city. The Mosaic Law explicitly **twice** forbade homosexual intercourse ~~in two places~~. And in Romans, Paul mentioned homosexual acts among both men and women as **shameless and contrary to nature**, evidence of God’s abandoning them to their sin **and a debased mind**. In 1 Corinthians, Paul included those engaged in same-sex relations in a list of those who will not inherit the Kingdom of God. (It should be noted, however, that this statement was not simply a word of condemnation, but rather an invitation to live in the reality of being “washed,... sanctified,... justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”¹²) Similarly, in 1 Timothy, Paul mentioned ~~homosexual~~ men **who practice homosexuality** among those who are doing things which are contrary to the gospel. Finally, Jude pointed to **Sodom and Gomorrah’s indulging in the sexual immorality and pursuing of unnatural desires** ~~Sodom and Gomorrah~~ as an example to warn us of God’s judgment. Although Jesus is not quoted on this specific topic in the gospel accounts, He repeatedly endorsed the sexual standards as well as the law as a whole given in the Old Testament, which includes a ban on all homosexual conduct.

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of homosexual behavior are culturally conditioned and linguistically ambivalent. All of these interpretations are contrary to a good faith reading of the texts. Those who use their intellectual prowess to deceive others through revisionist reinterpretation fall under the same severe condemnation as those who did the same during the age of the apostles. Integrity requires that someone who disagrees with biblical teaching simply say so rather than attempt to distort the plain meaning of Scripture. As Jesus warned the churches of Pergamum and Thyatira, He will not condone or tolerate such behavior by His Church. Evangelical scholars have written excellent exegetical analyses of relevant Scripture texts that help guide those who are genuinely seeking the truth from God's Word. Pastors and elders must be proactive in countering these deceptive teachings, especially because the revisionism appeals to a view of truth based upon individual happiness that is pervasive among younger people, as well as increasingly among older believers. We must call our people back to the truth of God's Word.

Scientific Challenges

In 1973, the American Psychiatric Association declassified homosexuality as a disorder, thus normalizing it among American physicians and psychologists. Arguments are often made that same-sex attraction is genetic and no different from simply being left-handed. The Christian's response is that regardless of what social scientists may declare as "normal," we believe that the Scriptures are the only infallible rule of faith and practice. Furthermore, we are all born with many innate tendencies which must be resisted or controlled—the tendency toward anger, greed, lust, and pride all can be inherited, but that does not make them acceptable. The nature/nurture debate should not alter the ethical assessment of homosexual behavior, except that by these studies we are made more deeply sympathetic toward those struggling with the temptations and sins involved. In instances where there has been childhood sexual abuse or other environmental influences, these need to be compassionately recognized and taken into account in counseling the SSA person. The thrust of the Christian

culturally conditioned and linguistically ambivalent. All of these interpretations are contrary to a good faith reading of the texts. Those who use their intellectual prowess to deceive others through revisionist reinterpretation fall under the same severe condemnation as those who did the same during the age of the apostles. Integrity requires that someone who disagrees with biblical teaching simply say so rather than attempt to distort the plain meaning of Scripture. As Jesus warned the churches of Pergamum and Thyatira, He will not condone or tolerate such behavior by His Church. ~~Evangelical~~ **Christian** scholars have written excellent exegetical analyses of relevant Scripture texts that help guide those who are genuinely seeking the truth from God's Word. Pastors and elders must be proactive in countering these deceptive teachings, especially because the revisionism appeals to a view of truth based upon individual happiness that is pervasive among younger people, as well as increasingly among older believers. We must call our people back to the truth of God's Word.

Scientific Challenges

In 1973, the American Psychiatric Association declassified homosexuality as a disorder, thus normalizing it among American physicians and psychologists. Arguments are often made that same-sex attraction is genetic and no different from ~~simply being left-handed~~ **any other fixed physical trait**. The Christian's response is that regardless of what social scientists may declare as "normal," we believe that the Scriptures are the only infallible rule of faith and practice. Furthermore, we are all born with many innate tendencies which must be resisted or controlled—the tendency toward anger, greed, lust, and pride all can be inherited, but that does not make them acceptable. The nature/nurture debate should not alter the ethical assessment of homosexual behavior **sexual lust, desires to sin, or the duty to flee temptation**, except that by these studies we are made more deeply sympathetic toward ~~those~~ **any** struggling with the temptations and sins involved. In instances where there ~~has~~ **have** been childhood sexual abuse or other environmental influences, these need to be compassionately recognized and taken into account in counseling ~~the~~ **those who experience**



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concern is not with one's sexual orientation, but rather with one's sexual beliefs, attitudes, thoughts, and actions as they reveal one's attitude toward God.

Social Challenges

In 2015, the United States Supreme Court ruled that same-sex marriages must be allowed and recognized in all 50 states. This highly controversial action by the United States' highest court was the culmination of many years of growing dissent among those who believed the prohibition was discriminatory against those of the LGBTQ community, including (for example) violence and housing discrimination. The Christian response should begin with our whole-hearted endorsement of granting all legitimate civil rights equally to all citizens of our country. We should be grateful when true injustice is addressed. At the same time, we believe that sexual conduct is a moral issue for individuals, churches, and nations. Therefore the church would be unfaithful to her mission were she not to speak out clearly and boldly. We live in a strongly secularized, human-centered, morally relativistic culture, and we should, therefore, expect many challenges from our society to our belief system, our standards of conduct, and our views on healthy public policy. To those who say that the evangelical church is on the wrong side of history, we would say that our hope is in the Lord and not in human approval.

Missional Challenges

In recent years, the evangelical church has experienced a growing concern that our historic theological and ethical beliefs regarding homosexual conduct have marginalized us in our culture and minimized our ability to reach the LGBTQ community for Christ. As a result, a

~~SSA. person. The thrust of the Christian concern is not with one's sexual orientation, but rather with one's sexual beliefs, attitudes, thoughts, and actions as they reveal one's attitude toward God~~ ***Christian's primary concern is about their relationship to God, and their need for his grace to save them from their sexual sin, sinful lusts and behaviors, and deliverance from temptation and evil, whether these arise from their corrupted nature or the fallenness of creation. Love for and loyalty to our Lord Jesus Christ compel us to flee temptation and rely upon the life of his Spirit within us.***

Social Challenges

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number of former evangelicals have announced a change in their views and have led some churches openly to endorse same-sex marriage and to invite unrepentant, practicing homosexuals to join those churches and even to serve in positions of leadership. Many have questioned whether the evangelical church will survive in our times without adapting its beliefs on sexual morality. The Christian response is that we believe we must adhere faithfully to the Scriptures, no matter what it costs us, no matter whether we grow or shrink, and no matter how the world will view us. Furthermore, we must insist to those former evangelicals that the Scriptures place our sexual conduct at the core of our ethical behavior as Christians. To believe otherwise is to put one's self outside the boundaries of historic orthodox Christianity. We believe ultimately that the only ones who can effectively reach this generation are those who radically and sacrificially follow the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that our very marginalization gives us a prophetic stance for a faithful, biblically compassionate ministry to our LGBTQ neighbors.

Pastoral Guidance

Our counsel to those who are same-sex attracted (SSA)

Our commitment to same-sex attracted people, both within the church and without, is that we shall love them as God loves them, and God helping us, we promise them our unequivocally loyal friendship. We want them to know that we believe that we are all sinners, bruised and broken by the fall, and in need of God's pardoning and transforming grace. We have all violated the Seventh Commandment—and every other commandment. None of us has the right to condemn another, but rather to encourage each other to find forgiveness, healing, and guidance

whether the Evangelical church will survive in our times without adapting its belief on sexual morality.

As a result, a number of former evangelicals have announced a change in their views and have led some churches openly to endorse same-sex marriage and to invite unrepentant, practicing homosexuals to join those churches and ~~even be eligible~~ to serve in positions of leadership. ***This is a rejection of the lordship of Jesus Christ which requires faithful adherence*** ~~Many have questioned whether the evangelical church will survive in our times without adapting its beliefs on sexual morality. The Christian response is that we believe we must adhere faithfully to the Scriptures, no matter what it costs us, no matter whether we the church grows or shrinks, and no matter how the world will view us. Furthermore, we must insist to those former evangelicals that the Scriptures place our sexual conduct at the core of our ethical behavior as Christians. To believe otherwise is to put one's self outside the boundaries of historic orthodox Christianity. We believe ultimately that the only ones who can effectively reach this generation are those who radically and sacrificially follow the Lord Jesus Christ. Many Christians who experience SSA are committed to the biblical sexual ethic, while continuing to experience SSA. We stand alongside them offering support as each of us seeks to die to ourselves and live to Christ. We believe rather than marginalization being our missional undoing,~~ We believe that our very marginalization gives us a prophetic stance for a faithful, biblically compassionate ministry to our LGBTQ neighbors.

Pastoral Guidance

Our e-Counsel to ~~†~~Those who ~~are~~ Experience-~~s~~Same-~~s~~Sex ~~attracted~~ Attraction (SSA)

Our commitment to ***those who experience*** same-sex ~~attracted attraction~~ people, both within the church and without, is that we shall love them as God loves them¹, and God helping us, we promise them our unequivocally loyal friendship. We want them to know that we believe that we are all sinners, bruised and broken by the ~~f~~Fall, and in need of God's pardoning and transforming grace. We have all violated the Seventh Commandment—and every other commandment. None of us has the right to condemn another, but rather to encourage each other to find forgiveness, healing, and guidance from the

from the Lord Jesus Christ. But one aspect of the gospel message is to remind ourselves and others that a rejection of Christ's lordship leads to eternal misery.

We believe that an individual should not condemn himself or herself because of his or her sexual attractions or orientations; rather he or she should concern himself or herself with one's affections, beliefs, attitudes, and deeds. Without exception, we all must continually repent of our lusts and sinful desires and turn in faith and obedience to the Lord. It is important that we all find our true identity as human beings solely in our relationship with God; therefore, we are not ultimately gay or straight, but rather sons and daughters of God. Those who make their SSA tendencies their primary identity are not comprehending and embracing their full identity as image bearers of God.

Lord Jesus Christ. But one aspect of the gospel message is to remind ourselves and others that a rejection of Christ's lordship leads to eternal misery.

~~We believe that an individual should not condemn himself or herself because of his or her sexual attractions or orientations; rather he or she should concern himself or herself with one's affections, beliefs, attitudes, and deeds.~~ ***All of the Christian life is one of repentance, and we are called to compassionately urge all our neighbors to such radical obedience.*** Without exception, we all must continually repent of our lusts and sinful desires and turn in faith and obedience to the Lord. ~~It is important that we all find our true identity as human beings solely in our relationship with God; therefore, we are not ultimately gay or straight, but rather sons and daughters of God. Those who make their SSA tendencies their primary identity are not comprehending and embracing their full identity as image bearers of God.~~ ***The human heart is sinfully corrupt and gives rise to disordered desires, which are also sin. Consequently, the corrupt heart, its lusts, and desires, including unbidden sinful thoughts, are to be repented of, mourned, and mortified. Same-sex sexual lusts and desires are an example of such sin. Both our corrupted hearts and our fallen world tempt us to sin: being tempted is an appeal to engage the desires of our hearts to commit sin. We must not enter into temptation, but rather flee all temptation to same-sex sexual desires and carefully guard against any latent propensity to that temptation. It is encouraging to remember that our Lord Jesus sympathizes with us in our weaknesses because he both suffered when tempted and was tempted in every respect like us, yet without sin. As our king, Jesus corrects us in our sin and supports us in our temptations and sufferings. As a follower of Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me — and the life we now live in the body we live by faith in the Son of God who loved us and gave himself for us. Any other identities or loyalties we have are subordinate to and must be understood relative to our union with Jesus through and with whom we are now sons and daughters of God. The dominion of sin has been broken and now grace reigns — we are being made new! We who are redeemed must identify sin remaining in us as that which must be repented of,***

renounced, and expunged. Our bodies, desires, temperaments, personalities, emotions are all being sanctified, and though not all the miseries of sin with which we are afflicted will be healed in this life, those broken conditions will eventually pass away and our union with the resurrected Christ will remain.

Any experience of same-sex attraction then must be subordinated to our identity in union with Christ: our besetting sin may be same-sex lust, but we need to be repenting of that and seeking growth in sanctification as we turn away from it to Christ in a new obedience. A persistent temptation to same-sex lust may be our on-going struggle, but we are united to Christ, who has empowered us by his Spirit to mortify the flesh and he will ultimately deliver us from even that misery. How we think of ourselves matters, and shapes the way we go about our lives. And we must first and foremost think of ourselves as dead to sin, with it having no dominion over us because we are alive in Christ Jesus our Lord.

There are some who view the experience of SSA, excluding the temptation to sexual sin, as something that comes with additional blessings. We must be clear here: since SSA is a result of the fall into sin, it is never inherently accompanied by any advantage to the individual that is pleasing to God. Any experience or affection that is good and pleasing to God (close friendships, hobbies, personalities, interests, etc.) that appears to be connected to SSA or LGBTQ, is not a product of that experience, but rather is a good gift from God independent of the brokenness of SSA. Any experience or affection that seems good, but enables or encourages same-sex lust or temptation must be fled and mortified, respectively. Same-sex friendships are good and a blessing from God; however, formalizing such friendships with unique intimacy or assumption of vows (beyond those taken as church members) is inappropriate. We rather encourage same-sex friendships be lived in the context of the church as the covenant family of God.

Yet even in our experience of SSA we must be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. In our union with Christ, we have fellowship with him in his

God has provided His church as the community in which we all must give and receive affection, encouragement, and accountability. SSA persons should exercise great care and wisdom when it

sufferings. Because of this, God uses our experience of sorrow and temptation to conform us more and more into the image of Jesus. That does not make the sufferings good, but what we and the world mean for evil, God can use as he works all things together for the good of those who love him. God can sanctify to us even our deepest distress as we cast ourselves upon the grace of our Father. The denial of self and our deep-seated desires when we repent of same-sex sexual lusts and flee from same-sex temptations for the sake of Christ are the sufferings of taking up our cross to follow Jesus. And if we suffer with him, we have fellowship with Jesus in his life.

That means that how someone who experiences SSA describes themselves requires the exercise of wisdom in light of who they are in Christ. Consider for example the language of “gay Christian”. Someone who experiences SSA may want to use the term “gay Christian” in order for the church and world to more readily understand their experience of a persistent, latent pull towards same-sex sexual temptation, even as they make every effort by God’s grace to think and act according to His will. In light of this, the church should exercise patient sympathy rather than reflexive condemnation when Christians who experience SSA self-describe as a “gay Christian”.

However, in our culture, the term “gay” is normally understood as affirming or engaging in homosexual practice. Although the term “gay” may refer to more than sexual activities and attractions to persons of the same sex, it does not communicate less than that. It is sinful to intentionally approve of sin and missionally foolish to invite that misunderstanding. Our identity is in Christ as his new creation, and we should not inadvertently communicate to the world that Jesus approves of sin. It is inappropriate to use terminology, including “gay Christian”, that welcomes confusion from the church and world.

Our Counsel to the Body of Christ

God has provided His church as the community in which we all must give and receive affection, encouragement, and accountability. ~~SSA persons~~ ***Christians who experience SSA*** should exercise

comes to disclosing their sexual orientation publicly. They are well-advised to share initially only with trusted, wise advisers including godly friends, pastors, and counselors. The culturally-shaped process of “coming out” is often complicated by motives such as seeking same-sex partners, relieving guilty consciences, or publicly pronouncing the rejection of biblical ethics. During a time period of wrestling with same-sex attraction and the Bible’s teachings, it is not dishonest to wait and be discerning in how and to whom one discloses one’s struggles. In some cases, after receiving wisdom from godly counselors, it could be helpful for some Christians to make known publicly their ongoing, largely fruitful struggle with same-sex attraction or gender dysphoria.

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One of the pressing questions of the church concerns expectations for change. What expectations of change (if any) should be presented to Christians who experience SSA, to their families, to their churches? God’s design for marriage and sex in creation is good, and healing from the misery of the Fall in this life may include godly desires for biblical marriage and sex. But God promises that ultimate and true healing from the misery of the Fall is only found in the return of Christ; Jesus is the yes and amen to God’s promises, and we rest our hope upon him, not in the change of our broken condition now. The absence of opposite-sex sexual desires is not evidence of lack of sanctification. God promises that in this life he will, by his Spirit, grow us in holiness in conformity to Christ. Whether we continue to experience SSA, enter into a biblical marriage, or are single all our life, God promises we will grow in grace and that Jesus will never leave nor forsake us.

With this in mind, through the promised presence of the sanctifying Holy Spirit:

- 1) We can expect ongoing growth in righteousness and holiness as our fellowship with Christ deepens. Though we often stumble and fall, we can expect increased strength in resisting sin, including same-sex lusts.***
- 2) We who are united to Christ and growing in grace should expect increased intensity in***

In some cases, SSA persons experience a transformational healing of orientation. While this should not be held out as a universal expectation for all (since God does not always grant it), we should not fail to invite God to do so. We can fervently pray and seek such healing, but must do so in a way that helps rather than harms and in a way that is open but without suggesting it is the norm.

There can be a peculiar and intense loneliness that accompanies SSA Christians who have committed themselves to a life of celibacy. It can be a loneliness more intense than that of the celibate heterosexual, who may someday have opportunity and choose to marry. The church must grant special understanding and sympathy toward those who bear this burden, while at the same time confidently calling all her members to sacrifice all things joyfully for the sake of Christ, knowing that we shall all one day be rewarded beyond our most extravagant dreams, and that we even now experience the pleasure of His presence and favor. Like the Apostle Paul, by God's grace we can learn to be content in all circumstances *in Christ*.²

Our counsel to family and friends of those who are SSA

With the increasing frequency, openness, and popularity of homosexual relationships, evangelical Christians are confronted with some difficult decisions to make: how shall we relate to our

satanic assaults of temptation. The latent pull toward SSA may continue as a providential thorn in the flesh; but in our weakness, the Lord's grace is sufficient. The ongoing experience of temptation and weakness is not necessarily a sign of sin or lack of sanctification. Yet, we are enabled by the Spirit to flee every temptation, including the temptation to same-sex lusts, and are able to rest our weakness upon the power of Christ.

3) ~~In some cases, SSA persons experience a transformational healing of orientation. those who experience SSA will not only grow in resisting same-sex desires, but may be open to biblical marriage and/or develop opposite-sex sexual desires.~~ While this should not be held out as a universal expectation for all (since God does not always grant it), we should not fail to invite God to do so. We can fervently pray and seek such ~~healing~~ **change** but must do so in a way that helps rather than harms. ~~and in a way that is open but without suggesting it is the norm.~~

There can be a peculiar and intense loneliness that accompanies SSA Christians who **experience SSA and who** have committed themselves to a life of celibacy. It can be a loneliness more intense than that of the celibate heterosexual, who may someday have opportunity and choose to marry. The ~~€~~Church must **confidently proclaim the good news of repentance while** granting special understanding and sympathy toward those who bear this burden, while at the same time confidently calling all her members **to turn from sin, grow in holiness, and** to sacrifice all things joyfully for the sake of Christ. ~~We~~ knowing that we shall all one day be rewarded beyond our most extravagant dreams, and that we even now experience the pleasure of His presence and favor. Like the Apostle Paul, by God's grace we can learn to be content in all circumstances *in Christ*.

Our ~~€~~Counsel to ~~f~~Family and ~~f~~Friends of ~~€~~Those who ~~are~~ Experience SSA

With the increasing frequency, openness, and popularity of homosexual relationships, evangelical Christians are confronted with some difficult decisions to make: how shall we relate to our

our sexually active homosexual family member? Shall we invite his or her partner to dinner? ...to spend the night? ...to holidays and family vacations? Shall we attend his or her wedding to a same-sex partner? Do we celebrate births and adoptions of same-sex partners and marriages of friends, family members, and co-workers? In making these decisions we want to be fully faithful to the Scriptures in our words, actions, and attitudes, while at the same time expressing genuine love and acceptance to our SSA family member or friend. This can be a challenge.

Perhaps the place to begin is with our mental framework. We must be rigorously gracious. We must communicate love consistently to our loved ones, letting them know that nothing they believe or do will ever quench our love for them. In fact, our love for them demands that we urge them to make Jesus Christ Savior and Lord over every aspect of their lives so that they may enjoy eternal life. We also want to continue to enjoy their company and be involved in their lives. At the same time, they will need to be fair to us and understand that our differences of belief and practice about sexual morality will mean that, at times, we will be unable to participate with them in ways that would compromise our own convictions. We should freely ask them to accept us in the same way that we strive to accept them. For those who would say that any disagreement with their view of sexuality is inherently hateful, we would say that no one should be coerced into following Christ and that we are committed to a common civic life with all who are willing to live peaceably with one another.¹

What are ways that our participation in the lives of SSA family and friends could compromise our commitment to Christ? In general, anything that communicates, either explicitly or implicitly, support for sexual immorality of any sort would be inappropriate for the Christian. Surely, there is room for discussion and debate on how to handle various situations pastorally, but generally speaking, we advise the following.

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What are ways that our participation in the lives of **SSA LGBTQ** family and friends could compromise our commitment to Christ? In general, anything that communicates, either explicitly or implicitly, support for sexual immorality of any sort would be inappropriate for the Christian. Surely, there is room for discussion and debate on how to handle various situations pastorally, but generally speaking, we advise the following.



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When people are old enough to be on their own, their parents, siblings, and friends should not presume to have the authority over their moral decisions; but neither should the ones in immoral relationships seek to manipulate the moral decisions of their parents, siblings, or friends. It is the Christian's moral obligation to respond appropriately to the sin in other people's lives, and the closer our relationship to the one sinning, the greater the obligation. If, for example, a family member chooses to date someone of the same gender, we must love both the family member and his or her partner with Christian love, but we should be sure to lovingly and appropriately communicate to our family member our disagreement with the romantic, sexual, and marital aspects of the relationship and not participate in any way that would signal our approval of it. If a family member chooses to marry someone of the same gender, once again we would love both people in the relationship but should strongly consider excluding ourselves from participating in the immoral union, including attending or participating as a guest in the wedding ceremony. In no way should we officiate the service or actively give sanction to the union (The same would be true of a wedding involving heterosexual individuals who were not biblically suited for marriage.) We cannot endorse the marriage after the ceremony, for example, in allowing them to share the same bed while hosting them in our home (any more than we would allow an unmarried heterosexual couple to do so). Making these detailed decisions is very challenging, subject to misunderstanding, and must be done within the context of clearly affirming our love for all involved and so these decisions are not be made lightly or done thoughtlessly.

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We know the pain of loved ones holding our relationships hostage, demanding affirmation of their lifestyle as a condition for continued contact. We lament the effects sin has on our relationships and encourage followers of Jesus to remain faithful. Do not be the one to cut off contact and do not allow relational extortion to compel you to abandon your stated belief in Christ's teachings. Remind your loved ones who experience SSA that you are always ready to have a relationship with them. And above all, remember through the pain



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When minor children or youth express homosexual desires or tendencies, we should listen carefully and sympathetically to their feelings and experiences. We should thank them for sharing with us and reassure them that we shall always love and support them. At the appropriate moments, we should also help them understand what God’s Word says to all of us—that we are to be chaste in all of our relationships (with males *and* females) and remain celibate unless married to a biblically suited spouse. Our children may experience transient SSA as well as gender dysphoria which may be more related to developmental issues, assertion of independence, peer influences, and other factors. Discerning this requires patience and wisdom. But if children and/or youth are convinced of their homosexual orientation and show no interest in potential opposite gender romance, we should help them to understand that they can live very faithful Christian lives as single persons. We would probably also advise them to disclose their struggle only to those who would edify them and to demonstrate modesty and restraint in their public lives. And we should pledge our lifelong support to walk with them in their weakness just as we hope from them in our own.

Our counsel to pastors, elders, and congregations

It is incumbent upon the local church to minister faithfully in situations involving LGBTQ issues. We advise church Sessions explicitly to endorse the EPC “Position Paper on Human Sexuality” as well as this Pastoral Letter to provide a general theological, ethical, and pastoral framework for its ministry. While we welcome anyone to attend our churches and to participate in our various ministries, it is essential that our churches admit into their membership and into positions of leadership only those who have a credible testimony of repentant faith in Jesus Christ. One involved in unrepentant homosexual or heterosexual misconduct does not have such a

that our hope is in Christ and his kingdom, which is good and endures forever.

When minor children or youth express ~~homosexual~~ **same-sex** desires or tendencies, we should listen carefully and sympathetically to their feelings and experiences. We should thank them for sharing with us and reassure them that we shall always love and support them. At the appropriate moments, we should also help them understand what God’s Word says to all of us—that we are to be chaste in all ~~of~~ our relationships (with ~~males~~**boys and females**~~girls~~) and remain celibate unless married to a biblically suited spouse. Our children may experience transient SSA as well as gender dysphoria which may be more related to developmental issues, assertion of independence, peer influences, and other factors. Discerning this requires patience and wisdom. But if children and/or youth are convinced of **the persistence of their homosexual orientation SSA** and show no interest in potential opposite ~~genders~~ **sex** romance, we should help them to understand that they can live very faithful Christian lives as single persons. We would probably also advise them to disclose their struggle only to those who would edify them and to demonstrate modesty and restraint in their public lives. And we should pledge our lifelong support to walk with them in their weakness just as we hope **to receive** from them in our own.

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credible testimony.

When same-gender marriage couples become believers and desire to join the local church and baptize their children, each case must be carefully assessed; but normally we believe that those who genuinely receive Jesus Christ will want their repentance to be more notable than their sin. This would mean that a same-sex couple who commits themselves to following Christ would come to acknowledge their marital union was contrary to His will, would take steps to renounce all inappropriate conduct, and seek to remove even the appearance of evil. In the case of children, when the parents become believers, one of the parents would assume parental custody and the other would continue to be an influence for good in the children's lives. Only the parent who assumed custody of the child would present the child for baptism and assume the parental vows.

promote sexual behaviors or desires in direct contradiction to biblical teaching and show no evidence of repentance does not have such a credible testimony. ***Such persons are to be loved and ministered to with pastoral care, but they are not eligible for either church membership or ordination.***

People who struggle with temptation and may, at times, sin sexually, but who grieve those failures, show ongoing repentance, and are progressing in sanctification, may be welcomed as members. They are to be shepherded pastorally and held accountable as they grow in holiness.

When same-gender ~~sex~~ marriage couples ***who are legally married*** become believers and desire to join the local church and baptize their children, each case must be carefully assessed; but normally we believe that those who genuinely receive Jesus Christ will want their repentance to be more notable than their sin. This would mean that a same-sex couple who commits themselves to following Christ would come to acknowledge their ~~marital~~ union was contrary to His will, would take steps to renounce all inappropriate conduct, and seek to remove even the appearance of evil. In the case of children, when the parents become believers, one of the parents would assume parental custody and the other would continue to be an influence for good in the children's lives. Only the parent who assumed custody of the child would present the child for baptism and assume the parental vows.

In examining candidates for membership on Boards of Deacons, Sessions, and in Presbyteries, we believe examining courts should exercise their authority in a spirit of gentleness, compassion, and understanding. The courts of the church should always listen charitably and consider carefully the testimony of those who experience SSA and are seeking office in the church. We urge Sessions to consult with the Ministerial Committee of their Presbytery when considering candidates to the Board of Deacons or Session who experience SSA.

All courts will do well to ensure that candidates are "above reproach, sound in the faith, wise in the things of God, and discreet in all things." (BoG 9-3.A-B) The Scriptures teach that "an overseer, as

God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it." (Titus 1:7-9)

Only those who conform to the biblical requirement of chastity and sexual purity in their descriptions of themselves, their convictions, character, and conduct should be considered for leadership. (WLC 138-139) If candidates for office have disclosed that they experience SSA, the examining elders must first confirm that the candidates have a long record of living chaste sexual lives in their identity, behavior, desires, and attitudes. Ordination is not appropriate while habitual or unresolved sexual sin persists; discernment on the part of the court should be exercised in light of repentance, fruit of sanctification, and proven character over time. Courts may consider for ordination candidates whose ongoing experience of SSA is a corrupted sin nature unindulged, repented of, and mortified; a temptation not entered into, but rather fled; a weakness not embraced, but rather mourned as they rest upon the grace and strength of the Lord.

All Sessions and Presbyteries exercise judgment in how they examine candidates. After confirming the proven record of chastity for candidates who experience SSA, we believe it wise and helpful for ordaining courts to ask question of the candidates in the following areas: 1) their grasp of their identity in Christ as new creatures in communion with the Lord, 2) their ethical views concerning homosexual desires and practice, 3) their experience of God's transforming grace in their own sexual lives and affections, along with progress they have made in their walk with Christ, 4) their manner of counseling and discipling others who struggle with sexual sin and dysfunction, 5) their rationale regarding their suitability, as those experiencing SSA, to serve as officers within the church, 6) the mistakes they have made and the lessons they have learned in the past in this area, and 7) their ability and strategy, as those who experience SSA, whether single or married, to appropriately model godly relationships. These are

<p>Recommended Reading</p> <p>Allberry, Sam. <i>Is God Anti-Gay?: and Other Questions About Homosexuality, the Bible, and Same-Sex Attraction</i>. Epsom, UK: The Good Book Company, 2015.</p> <p>Barr, Adam T. and Ron Citlau. <i>Compassion Without Compromise: How the Gospel Frees Us to Love Our Gay Friends Without Losing the Truth</i>. Bloomington, MN: Bethany House, 2014</p> <p>Butterfield, Rosaria Champagne. <i>The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert: Expanded Edition</i>. Pittsburgh, PA: Crown & Covenant Publications, 2014.</p> <p>———. <i>Openness Unhindered: Further Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert on Sexual Identity and Union with Christ</i>. Pittsburgh, PA: Crown & Covenant Publications, 2015.</p>	<p><i>not the only questions that may be asked, but are recommendations we believe will help ordaining courts. Similar questions should not only be asked of candidates who experience SSA, but of all candidates for church office.</i></p> <p><i>Church officers who experience SSA must continually honor their ordination vow to promise subjection to their fellow presbyters. When Sessions and Presbyteries provide wise guidance on how officers within their jurisdictions publicly describe their experience of SSA and how they shepherd others who experience SSA, those officers should have a posture of humility, seeking the peace, unity, and edification of the Church.</i></p> <p>Recommended Reading</p> <p>Allberry, Sam. <i>Is God Anti-Gay?: and Other Questions About Homosexuality, the Bible, and Same-Sex Attraction</i>. Epsom, UK: The Good Book Company, 2015.</p> <p>Barr, Adam T. and Ron Citlau. <i>Compassion Without Compromise: How the Gospel Frees Us to Love Our Gay Friends Without Losing the Truth</i>. Bloomington, MN: Bethany House, 2014</p> <p>Beeke, Joel R and Paul M. Smalley. <i>One Man & One Woman: Marriage and Same-Sex Relations</i>. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2016.</p> <p>Butterfield, Rosaria Champagne. <i>Five Lies of Our Anti-Christian Age</i>. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2023.</p> <p>———. <i>Openness Unhindered: Further Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert on Sexual Identity and Union with Christ</i>. Pittsburgh, PA: Crown & Covenant Publications, 2015.</p> <p>———. <i>The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert: Expanded Edition</i>. Pittsburgh, PA: Crown & Covenant Publications, 2014.</p>
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46-28 (to the floor)

From the Ad-Interim Committee on Same-Sex Attraction and Ordination Standards

Proposed Amendments to the *Book of Government* 9-3

Current Language: G. 9-3.A and B	Proposed Language: G. 9-3.A and B <i>additions, in bold italics, deletions</i>
<p>A. According to Scripture, those who bear office in the Church should exhibit certain characteristics of life. This includes being above reproach, sound in the faith, wise in the things of God, and discreet in all things. Persons who fill this office should exhibit a lifestyle that is an example to all, both in and outside the Church. A congregation preparing to elect persons to this holy office should carefully study appropriate passages of Scripture relating to the Ruling Elder and be very prayerful in selecting persons to this office.</p> <p>B. As the law of love places certain duties upon each Christian, Church Officers are especially bound by their calling to fulfill them and to be an example to all.</p>	<p>A. According to Scripture, those who bear office in the Church should shall exhibit certain characteristics of life. This includes being above reproach, sound in the faith, wise in the things of God, and discreet in all things. Persons who fill this office should shall exhibit a lifestyle that is an example to all, both in and outside the Church. <i>Whether single or married, officers must conform to the biblical requirement of chastity and sexual purity (see Westminster Larger Catechism Q&A 138-139) in their descriptions of themselves, their convictions, character, and conduct.</i> A congregation preparing to elect persons to this these holy offices should shall carefully study appropriate passages of Scripture relating to the these offices Ruling Elder and be very prayerful in selecting persons to them this office.</p> <p>B. As the law of love places certain duties upon each Christian, Church Officers are especially bound by their calling to fulfill them and to be an example to all. <i>Officers in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church must be above reproach in their walk and Christlike in their character. While office bearers will see spiritual perfection only in glory, they will continue in this life to confess and to mortify remaining sins in light of God’s work of progressive sanctification. Therefore, to be qualified for office, they must affirm the sinfulness of fallen desires, the reality and hope of progressive sanctification, and be committed to the pursuit of Spirit empowered victory over their sinful temptations, inclinations, and actions.</i></p>

46-29 (to the floor)
From the Permanent Judicial Commission

On the recommendations from the Ad-Interim Committee on Same Sex Attraction and Ordination Standards, proposing amendments to G.9-3A, G.9-3B, G.12-2B, G.12-3A, G.12-3B, and G.12-6, the Permanent Judicial Commission found that the proposals satisfy the standard for Clarity (7-2), Consistency (8-1), and Compatibility (8-1). The PJC has prepared a Report on its findings, included herein. The Permanent Judicial Commission respectfully and prayerfully recommends that the 46th General Assembly consider its reported findings in deciding whether to accept or decline the amendments.

Rationale:

The PJC finds the proposed amendment meets the standards of clarity and consistency of language and for compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

www.epconnect.org/2026report-pjc

[Report of the PJC on AIC Amendments](#)

REPORT OF THE PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION

The Ad-Interim Committee on Same-Sex Attraction and Ordination Standards (the “**AIC**”) has submitted to the 46th General Assembly certain proposed amendments to Sections 9-3A, 9-3B, 12-2.B, 12-3A, 12-3B.1, and 12-6 of the *Book of Government* (collectively, the “**AIC Amendments**”). The Permanent Judicial Commission of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (the “**PJC**”) subsequently examined the AIC Amendments for clarity and consistency of language and for compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, in each case as required by Section G.21-3D.2.a.

The PJC understands the categories “clarity,” “consistency,” and “compatibility” to have particular meanings. *Clarity* asks whether the language of the amendment is sufficiently precise that a reasonably informed reader of the Constitution could determine what the provision requires, permits, or forbids without reference to the debate that produced it.¹ *Consistency* examines whether the amendment employs language in a manner consistent with the vocabulary, terminology, and logic used in the Constitution and within the amendment itself. *Compatibility* asks whether the amendment integrates coherently into the broader constitutional framework without creating conflict with other provisions or with the structure of the Constitution as a whole.

After due consideration, the PJC determined as follows regarding the AIC Amendments:

Question Presented	PJC Determination
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of clarity of language?	Yes. Vote: 7-2.
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of consistency of language?	Yes. Vote: 8-1. ²
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of compatibility with other provisions of the EPC Constitution?	Yes. Vote: 8-1.

The PJC’s task was limited. We did not determine the wisdom, necessity, or pastoral desirability of the AIC Amendments, but rather evaluated whether the proposed language is prepared for integration into the Constitution. Our evaluation of the “three-C” criteria helps the General Assembly determine whether the AIC Amendments are constitutionally serviceable in their present form, apart from the merits of the proposals themselves.

¹ In many instances, constitutional language is designed to confer discretion on church courts. In such cases, a provision does not fail the clarity test merely because it allows a range of outcomes, since the granting of discretion is the very function the text is intended to serve. The clarity concern arises only where the language does not make clear, in the mind of a reasonably informed reader, the scope or object of that discretion.

² The PJC vote on “consistency of language” was contingent on certain non-substantive conforming changes being made to the text, which changes were subsequently approved and incorporated by the AIC in its final report.

This constitutes our report and recommendation to the General Assembly.³

I. Clarity

The AIC Amendments address the life and character of church officers and the examination of candidates for office. In doing so, they employ language drawn from familiar biblical and confessional categories, including chastity, sexual purity, repentance, mortification of sin, and progressive sanctification, as reflected in the Westminster Standards.

Some members of the PJC noted that certain phrasing in the proposal may allow for differing interpretations if read in isolation. Moreover, the requirement that officers conform to biblical standards “*in their descriptions of themselves, their convictions, character, and conduct*” is not presently used elsewhere in the Constitution. Similarly, expressions such as “*faithful conformity to his character*” and “*steady progress in spiritual growth*” are not reducible to precise measurement.

The question, however, is not whether each phrase could be further refined, but whether the language, taken as a whole, provides sufficient guidance for those charged with its application. The proposal operates primarily as a framework for examination rather than as a bright-line qualifying or disqualifying rule.

The AIC Amendments direct attention to categories already familiar within the Constitution and the church’s confessional standards. The Constitution itself requires that candidates for office be examined and approved prior to installation (G.12). This reflects an established process in which presbyteries evaluate doctrine, manner of life, and fitness for office.

It is also significant that the AIC Amendments direct attention to how a candidate speaks of himself or herself (“*officers must conform to the biblical requirement of chastity and sexual purity... in their descriptions of themselves*”) and of his or her beliefs (“*they must affirm the sinfulness of fallen desires, the reality and hope of progressive sanctification, and be committed to the pursuit of Spirit-empowered victory over their sinful temptations, inclinations, and actions*”). The AIC language largely avoids the difficulty of discerning internal or subjective states by focusing on matters that are outwardly expressed and capable of examination.

To the extent questions may arise in application, the PJC believes those questions fall within the ordinary exercise of ecclesiastical judgment rather than indicating a failure of clarity in the text itself. Read as a whole, the proposal provides sufficient guidance for evaluating candidates for office.

The AIC Amendments therefore satisfy the requirement of “clarity of language.”

II. Consistency

The AIC Amendments introduce phrasing not presently found in the Constitution, including references to “*descriptions of themselves*,” “*faithful conformity to his character*,”

³ See G.21-3D.2.b.

“obedience to him as Lord,” and “steady progress in spiritual growth.” However, the introduction of new language is not itself a defect. The General Assembly is entitled to develop and refine the Constitution over time.

The AIC Amendments also fit neatly within the Constitution’s established framework for the examination of candidates. That framework focuses on doctrine, manner of life, and fitness for office. Those provisions already require the applicable court to “*assure itself of the competency of the individual being ordained to serve*” and to examine the candidate not only in doctrine but also in the “*Christian experience of the saving grace of God*,” prior to approval and installation.⁴

In addition, the AIC Amendments are appropriately distributed across the sections of the *Book of Government* corresponding to the offices and processes addressed, rather than concentrated in a single provision. This approach is consistent with the structure and logic of the Constitution.

Finally, the AIC Amendments do not appear to create internal inconsistency within their provisions.

For the reasons stated above, the AIC Amendments satisfy the requirement of “consistency of language.”

III. Compatibility

The AIC Amendments integrate the church’s teaching on human sexuality within the framework of the Westminster Standards, including the doctrine of sanctification and the teaching of the Larger Catechism on the Seventh Commandment, which identifies both conduct and desires contrary to biblical sexual ethics as sinful.

At the same time, the proposal reflects the confessional teaching regarding the ongoing presence of sin in the life of the believer. *Westminster Confession of Faith* 13.2 teaches that sanctification “*works in the whole person, but not completely or perfectly in this life*,” and that “*the old sinful nature retains some of its control in body, mind, and spirit*,” even as it is progressively weakened and mortified. The *Westminster Larger Catechism* similarly teaches that believers “*retain some remnants of sin throughout their whole being*” and are “*continually plagued with desires of their old sinful nature that are contrary to the spirit*.”⁵

This pairing of a normative standard (i.e., the requirement of holiness) with the recognition of continuing sin is not a contradiction, but the ordinary Reformed articulation of sanctification: the law establishes the rule, while the doctrine of sanctification recognizes that believers do not attain that standard perfectly in this life.⁶

⁴ G.12-1; G.12-2B.

⁵ Westminster Larger Catechism 78.

⁶ The confessional standards do not present these teachings in tension. Rather, they hold together both the requirement of purity in body, mind, and inclination (*Westminster Larger Catechism* 138 & 139) and the continuing presence of sinful corruption and disordered desires in the believer (*Westminster Confession of Faith* 13.2 & *Westminster Larger Catechism* 77 & 78), which are to be repented of and mortified. (See also, e.g., Colossians 3:5.)

Within that framework, the AIC Amendments do not treat the mere presence of a sinful desire, without more, as disqualifying for office. Rather, they direct attention to the candidate's acknowledgment of sin, commitment to repentance, and manner of life in pursuing holiness. This approach aligns the evaluation of candidates with the confessional understanding.

The AIC Amendments do not conflict with other constitutional provisions governing the examination and qualification of officers, but supplement them by identifying areas of inquiry within the established doctrinal structure.

For these reasons, the majority concluded that the AIC Amendments satisfy the requirement of "compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution."

IV. Conclusion

The AIC Amendments satisfy the "three-C" requirements of clarity and consistency of language and compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

The Permanent Judicial Commission respectfully and prayerfully recommends that the General Assembly consider these conclusions in determining whether to accept or decline the AIC Amendments.



A global movement of
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46-30 (to the floor)

From the Ad-Interim Committee on Same-Sex Attraction and Ordination Standards

Proposed Amendments to the *Book of Government* 12

Current Language: G. 12-2, 3, 6	Proposed Language: G. 12-2, 3, 6 <i>additions, in bold italics, deletions</i>
<p>G. 12-2.B The Candidate shall be examined in Christian experience of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ and progress in spiritual growth</p> <p>G. 12-3.A Examination of an EPC Teaching Elders seeking to transfer into a Presbytery EPC Teaching Elders shall be examined on views of the areas indicated in G.12-2 and they shall relate their experience of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ and progress in spiritual growth.</p> <p>G. 12-3.B.1 Examination of an ordained Minister from another Reformed denomination: A Minister seeking to become a Teaching Elder in a Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church from another denomination from within the Reformed family shall present credentials of education required by those seeking ordination in the EPC. The Minister shall be examined on views and beliefs and may be examined on knowledge.</p> <p>G. 12-6 The Session shall confer with each person elected to office in the local church to determine if that person feels called to office and is willing to serve faithfully. The Session shall examine candidates for ordination to the office of Ruling Elder or Deacon on 1) personal experience of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ and progress in spiritual growth, 2) theology and Sacraments of the Church, 3) the government, discipline, worship, and history of the Church, and 4) an understanding of the office to which one is elected.</p>	<p>G. 12-2.B The Candidates shall be examined in Christian experience of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ, <i>faithful conformity to his character, obedience to him as Lord,</i> and <i>steady</i> progress in spiritual growth.</p> <p>G. 12-3.A Examination of an EPC Teaching Elders seeking to transfer into a Presbytery EPC Teaching Elders shall be examined on views of the areas indicated in G.12-2 and they shall relate their experience of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ, <i>faithful conformity to his character, obedience to him as Lord,</i> and <i>steady</i> progress in spiritual growth.</p> <p>G. 12-3.B.1 Examination of an ordained Minister from another Reformed denomination: A Minister seeking to become a Teaching Elder in a Presbytery of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church from another denomination from within the Reformed family shall present credentials of education required by those seeking ordination in the EPC. The Ministers shall be examined on views and beliefs and may be examined on knowledge <i>and shall relate experience of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ, faithful conformity to his character, obedience to him as Lord, and steady progress in spiritual growth.</i></p> <p>G. 12-6 The Session shall confer with each person elected <i>nominated</i> to office in the local church to determine if that person feels called to office and is willing to serve faithfully. The Session shall examine candidates for ordination to the office of Ruling Elder or Deacon on 1) personal experience of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ <i>their faithful conformity to his character, obedience to him as Lord,</i> and <i>steady</i> progress in spiritual growth, 2) theology and Sacraments of the Church, 3) the government, discipline, worship, and history of the Church, and 4) an understanding of the office to which one is elected.</p>

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46-31 *(to the Theology Standing Committee)*
Overture from the Presbytery of the East

The **East Presbytery** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to approve the formation of an Ad-Interim Committee to draft a position paper on Digital Discipleship and Ethical Engagement in a Technological Age, and to explore the formation of a permanent committee.

[East Overture](#)

1 ASCENDING OVERTURE TO THE 46TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2 From the Presbytery of the East

3 Subject: Request for a Position Paper and Permanent Committee on Digital Discipleship and Ethical Engagement in a
4 Technological Age

5 Whereas the Book of Government (19-4.C.2) provides for the action of a presbytery to overture the General Assembly on
6 those matters it believes vital or helpful to the whole Church, and

7 Whereas the Church of Jesus Christ is called to make disciples who are shaped by the Word of God¹, the Spirit of God²,
8 and the people of God³; and

9 Whereas the digital environment—including algorithmically curated media, persuasive technologies, and artificial
10 intelligence—now profoundly shapes how people think⁴, relate⁵, worship⁶, and understand truth⁷; and

11 Whereas artificial intelligence is rapidly advancing in ways that influence decision-making⁸, creativity⁹, relationships¹⁰, and
12 even spiritual practices¹¹, raising increasingly urgent questions about personhood¹², responsibility¹³, and faithful witness in
13 a technological age¹⁴; and

14 Whereas these technologies have a formative impact on moral imagination¹⁵, spiritual practices, social trust, and Christian
15 identity¹⁶, raising questions about truth, agency, justice, and sanctification¹⁷; and

16 Whereas pastors and elders across the EPC are seeking biblical and theological guidance for discipling congregations
17 shaped by these technologies and for making faithful decisions about their use in ministry; and

18 Whereas the EPC has not yet produced a pastoral or theological statement on digital ethics, algorithmic systems, or
19 technological discipleship; therefore

20 Be it resolved, that the 46th General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church authorize the formation of an ad
21 interim committee to draft a position paper on “Digital Discipleship and Ethical Engagement in a Technological Age,” and
22 explore the formation of a permanent committee that will offer ongoing guidance and recommendations on how the church
23 should engage in the use of, provide instruction about, and set ethical boundaries concerning the rapidly changing
24 technology sector and digital culture.

25 Submitted:

26 The Presbytery of the East of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church

¹ John 17:17, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12

² Acts 1:8, Romans 8:9-11

³ Hebrews 10:24-25, Proverbs 27:17, Acts 2:42-47

⁴ Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 10:5, Colossians 2:8

⁵ Ephesians 4:2-3, Colossians 3:12-14

⁶ Romans 1:25, Matthew 15:8-9

⁷ 1 John 4:1, 2 Timothy 4:3-4

⁸ James 1:5, Psalm 32:8

⁹ Exodus 31:3-5

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 12:25-26

¹¹ Romans 12:1-2, Ephesians 6:10-11

¹² Genesis 1:26-27, Psalm 139:13-14, Acts 17:28-29

¹³ Galatians 6:5, Romans 14:12, Luke 12:48

¹⁴ Matthew 5:16, 1 Peter 3:15-16

¹⁵ Philippians 4:8

¹⁶ Galatians 2:20, 1 Peter 2:9

¹⁷ Joshua 24:15, Deuteronomy 30:19, Micah 6:8, 1 Corinthians 1:30

Documentation for the Ascending Overture from POTE to the 46th General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church

Rationale: The Bible warns us over 20 times about false teachers—and today, many of the loudest voices shaping our people aren't pastors, but algorithms. These systems disciple us, liturgically, shaping what we love, fear, and believe—often more than the Word of God or the gathered body of Christ. We're losing formation to a disembodied, digital catechism. But God calls us to embodied community, shaped by Scripture and the Spirit.

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church has historically addressed, with clarity and compassion, the most pressing moral, cultural, and theological issues facing the Church. In our time, one of the most pervasive and yet under-addressed forces shaping Christians is the digital environment - particularly algorithmic systems, persuasive technologies, and artificial intelligence. These forces are not neutral tools; they shape desires, attention, beliefs, community, and even identity.

The Church now finds itself discipling people whose moral imaginations are increasingly formed by digital agents and ecosystems rather than the Word of God and healthy Christian community. Social media algorithms reward outrage and reduce truth to tribalism. Search engines personalize reality. Attention-based business models commodify our habits, thoughts, and relationships. Artificial intelligence now generates content, filters information, and mimics human agency, raising serious questions about human dignity, the image of God, and truth.

EPC pastors and elders are asking:

How do we form mature disciples in this environment?

How do we discern the difference between which emerging technologies are good and valuable and which are wrong and should be rejected?

What biblical principles should guide our ethical engagement with these systems?

Given the depth and complexity of the challenge, the Presbytery of the East will be bringing an ascending overture to the 2026 General Assembly proposing a two-phase approach:

Phase One: Position Paper: This paper would outline a Reformed theological and ethical response to digital and algorithmic culture, algorithmic systems, persuasive technologies, and artificial intelligence for the EPC's long-term guidance.

Phase Two: Permanent Committee Formation: Due to the rapidly evolving nature of technology, a position paper will not be sufficient. A permanent committee should be formed to review practices, including the church's use of technology, the privacy policies of our vendors, and the use of our personal and corporate data. This committee could also deploy best practices and practical support for churches to assess their data use and obligations, and to respond to

technology developments in real time. This committee might also oversee a subcommittee that publishes these best practices and works with other denominations and evangelical bodies to move the culture at large toward more biblically-formed technology ethics.

This two-phase approach allows the EPC to respond both promptly and thoughtfully, pastoring the flock now, while preparing a deeper foundation for the future.

46-32 *(to the Theology Standing Committee)*
Overture from the Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest

The **Pacific Northwest Presbytery** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to approve to re-affirm the position paper on Homosexuality and the Position Paper on the Sanctity of Marriage as the position of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and restore to the EPC website

[Pacific Northwest Overture](#)

EPC PRESBYTERY OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Proposed Overture to the 46th General Assembly

Whereas, homosexuality is sinful in both desire (Genesis 19:5-7; Jude 7) and behavior (Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:26-27)

Whereas, marriage between one man and one woman is blessed by God and the Lord Jesus calls us to hold such marriages in honor (Genesis 1:27-28, Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:5-6),

Whereas, the Position Paper on Homosexuality was approved by the **Sixth** General Assembly in **1986**,

Whereas, a revision of the Position Paper on Homosexuality was approved by the **Fourteenth** General Assembly in **1994**,

Whereas, the Position of Paper on the Sanctity of Marriage was approved by the **Twenty-fourth** General Assembly in **2004**,

Whereas, in **2010** the EPC notified the US Military Chief of Chaplains that the Position Paper on Homosexuality is the official position of the EPC,

Whereas, the **Thirty-fourth** General Assembly in **2014** approved revisions to the Position Paper on Homosexuality,

Whereas, the **Thirty-fifth** General Assembly in **2015** directed the Moderator to appoint a Special Committee to 1. Review the Position Paper on Homosexuality, 2. Review the Position Paper on the Sanctity of Marriage, 3. Draft an expansion of the Position Paper on the Sanctity of Marriage to include revisions of the Position Paper on Homosexuality, a section on biblical singleness and other appropriate topics, and 4. Report back in **2016** to the **Thirty-sixth** General Assembly,

Whereas, the **Thirty-sixth** General Assembly in **2016** approved removing the Position Papers on the Sanctity of Marriage and on Homosexuality from the EPC website, to be made available upon request,

Whereas, at no point did the General Assembly rescind or revoke the Position Paper on Homosexuality or the Position Paper on the Sanctity of Marriage, unlike when the Preliminary Position Paper on Capital Punishment was rescinded by the Fifteenth General Assembly in **1995**,

Therefore, in an effort to correct and clarify the misconception that the Position Paper on Homosexuality and the Position Paper on the Sanctity of Marriage had been “rescinded” or “superseded,” the Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest overtures the 46th General Assembly to 1) Re-affirm the Position Paper on Homosexuality and the Position Paper on the Sanctity of Marriage as the position of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church on these matters, and 2) Restore the Position Paper on Homosexuality and the Position Paper on the Sanctity of Marriage to the EPC website.

**Overture PASSED at 26th Stated Meeting on 5/8/26*

Stated Clerk: Edward Cummings clerk@epcpnw.org
Presbytery Assistant: Larena Mills larena@epcpnw.org

EPC PRESBYTERY OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST



12 May, 2026

Presbytery Office:
(509) 833-3882

4303 Maple Court,
Yakima, WA 98901

Dr. Edward Cummings,
Stated Clerk.
clerk@epcpnw.org

Mrs. Larena Mills,
Presbytery Assistant
larena@epcpnw.org

Dr. Dean Weaver
Office of the General Assembly
5850 T.G. Lee Blvd., Suite 510
Orlando, FL 32822

Dear Dean,

The Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest, at our 26th Stated Meeting on Friday, 8 May, passed the attached Ascending Overture from the Session of the Parkway Presbyterian Church, Tacoma, WA.

Thank you for your consideration of our Overture. We will be praying for you and the Assembly as the Mind of Christ is sought regarding the crucial issues that we face as a denomination.

Dr. Edward Cummings,
Stated Clerk,
Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest

46-33 *(to the Fraternal Relations Standing Committee)*
From the Fraternal Relations Committee

The Fraternal Relations Committee recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** entering into a Fraternal Relationship with Synod of the Nile.

Rationale:

Whereas the Evangelical Presbyterian Church is a global movement of Reformed, Evangelical, Presbyterian and Missional congregations, and whereas our mission is to Carry Out the Great Commission, the Permanent Committee on Fraternal Relations believes that a partnership with the Synod of the Nile (Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt) would serve to both continue to ground us in the Gospel-Centered movement of the global church and would also provide opportunities for strategic outreach into some of the most difficult to reach places of the Arab speaking world.

www.epconnect.org/2026report-fraternalrelations

46-34 *(to the floor)*
From Benefits Resources, Inc. Board of Directors

The Benefit Resources, Inc. Board of Directors recommends that the 46th 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.

Rationale:

Permits retired, ordained ministers to take advantage of this significant tax benefit in retirement, thereby making more of their retirement income available for living expenses. Adopting this recommendation on an annual basis provides retired ministers with a readily available reference if asked by tax authorities.

www.epconnect.org/2026report-bri

46-35 (to the Ministerial Vocation Standing Committee)

From the Ministerial Vocation Committee

Proposed Amendments to the *Endorsement Policy Acts of Assembly 20-10*

Current Language: <i>Acts of Assembly 20-10</i>	Proposed Language: <i>Acts of Assembly 20-10</i> <i>additions, in bold italics, deletions</i>
<p>Approved Agencies/Organizations: Assembly committees may recommend resource agencies/organizations for approval by the General Assembly. Such agencies/organizations shall meet the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An explicit statement of faith compatible with EPC confessional standards; 2. Exhibits both evangelical and reformed theology in doctrine and practice; 3. Ministry objectives compatible with the vision, purpose and goals of the recommending committee and the General Assembly; 4. Financial credibility as measured by the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability or by comparable standards. <p>Approved agencies/organizations may be listed in the EPC Directory and website. The Office of the General Assembly and Assembly committees may explore and implement areas of cooperative ministry with approved agencies/organizations, subject to the operational policies of the General Assembly.</p> <p>Committee Endorsed Resources: Assembly committees may endorse resources (e.g., print, audio/visual or curriculum.) An endorsed resource shall meet the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An explicit statement of faith compatible with EPC confessional standards and/or demonstrates both evangelical and reformed theology; 2. Compatible with the vision, purpose and goals of the endorsing committee and the General Assembly; <p>The committees may add annotations to their endorsements. Endorsed resources may be</p>	<p><i>The General Assembly and its permanent committees may deem it wise to recommend agencies and resources to its churches as valuable aids for their ministries. These recommended agencies and resources shall be evaluated on the following criteria:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>They assist EPC churches or leaders in pursuing our stated mission and vision.</i> • <i>They are consistent with our evangelical and Reformed beliefs.</i> <p><i>Recommended agencies may be included on the denominational website or in other communications.</i></p> <p><i>Permanent committees may add annotations to their recommendations, which will be included on the denominational website or in other communications.</i></p> <p><i>Permanent committees will establish biennial review procedures for agencies and resources they have recommended to ensure that they continue to meet the criteria above. In cases in which Assembly committees find that reviewed resources do not continue to meet the criteria, they shall report the removal of their recommendation, noting specific shortcomings.</i></p>

included, with their annotations, on the denominational web site or in other communications.

Committee Commended Resources: Assembly committees may commend resources (e.g., agencies, print, audio/visual, curriculum). Commended resources shall meet the following criteria:

1. A statement of faith consistent with the EPC *Essentials of Our Faith* and/or demonstrates biblical, orthodox theology consistent with the belief and practice of the EPC;
2. Not necessarily reformed in its theology;
3. Compatible with the mission, vision and goals of the recommending committee and the General Assembly;

Committees may add annotations to their commendations. Commended resources may be included, with their annotations, on the denominational website or in other communications. Prior to implementing cooperative ministries with commended agencies the committee shall secure the approval of the National Leadership Team.

Permanent committees will establish annual review procedures for agencies, organizations and/or resources they have approved, endorsed or commended to ensure that they continue to meet the criteria above.

In cases in which Assembly committees find that reviewed resources do not meet criteria for approval, endorsement or commendation, they shall report the removal of their recommendation. Specific shortcomings shall be noted in committee minutes.

Grounds: This updated Endorsement Policy will aid the Assembly as it seeks to accomplish its mission, vision and goals.

Rationale:

This recommendation eliminates specified categorization in the evaluation of Endorsed agencies, printed and electronic resources.

www.epconnect.org/2026-committee-report-mvc

46-36 *(to the Ministerial Vocation Standing Committee)*
Overture from the Presbytery of the Florida and the Caribbean

The **Florida and the Caribbean Presbytery** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to amend to the Book of Government 12-2.C.

[Florida and the Caribbean Overture](#)

Ascending Overture: That The Book of Government 12-2.C be amended.

Current Book of Government 12-2.C	Proposed amended Book of Government 12-2.C
The Candidate shall be examined in writing and orally in the following areas: Theology and Sacraments, English Bible, the Book of Order, the history of the Church and the Reformed tradition, and the nature of the office of Teaching Elder.	The Candidate shall be examined in writing and orally in the following areas: Theology and Sacraments, English Bible content , the Book of Order, the history of the Church and the Reformed tradition, and the nature of the office of Teaching Elder.

Rationale:

In keeping with the Revelation 7:9 emphasis of our denomination, and the growing number of Spanish speaking congregations, our Book of Order should not restrict examinations of the Bible only to the English language.

The Presbytery of Florida and the Caribbean has examined no less than 4 Spanish speaking TEs in the last 12 months. The Presbytery of Florida and the Caribbean seeks to overture the 46th General Assembly to amend our Book of Order to more accurately describe our ordination examinations. If we are going to be a global church, and one of our perceived goals is to better reach the Latin community or other communities where English may not be the primary language, our governing document should reflect that. We believe that the purpose of the “English Bible exam” is to test the candidate's knowledge of the Bible. We believe this objective would be best accomplished if the exam were to take place using the primary language of the person being examined. By deleting the word “English” and simply stating “Bible,” and adding the word “content” the purpose of the exam will be clear without disadvantaging someone due to their language of origin.

46-37 *(to the Ministerial Vocation Standing Committee)*
From the Permanent Judicial Commission

The **Permanent Judicial Commission** recommends that the 46th General Assembly answer the Florida and Caribbean 12-2 Overture with reference to the Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards, which among other things, has also proposed to amend Section **G. 12-2C**.

www.epconnect.org/2026report-pjc

[Report of the PJC regarding FCP 12-2 Overture](#)

[Florida and the Caribbean Overture](#)

REPORT OF THE PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION

The Florida and the Caribbean Presbytery overtured the 46th General Assembly to amend Section 12-2C of the *Book of Government* (the “***FCP 12-2 Overture***”). The Permanent Judicial Commission of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (the “***PJC***”) subsequently examined the proposed amendment for clarity and consistency of language and for compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, in each case as required by Section G.21-3D.2.a.

The PJC understands the categories “clarity,” “consistency,” and “compatibility” to have particular meanings. *Clarity* asks whether the language of the amendment is sufficiently precise that a reasonably informed reader of the Constitution could determine what the provision requires, permits, or forbids without reference to the debate that produced it. *Consistency* examines whether the amendment employs language in a manner consistent with the vocabulary, terminology, and logic used in the Constitution and within the amendment itself. *Compatibility* asks whether the amendment integrates coherently into the broader constitutional framework without creating conflict with other provisions or with the structure of the Constitution as a whole.

After due consideration,¹ the PJC determined as follows regarding the FCP 12-2 Overture:

Question Presented	PJC Determination
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of clarity of language?	Yes. Vote: 9-0.
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of consistency of language?	Yes. Vote: 9-0.
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of compatibility with other provisions of the EPC Constitution?	Yes. Vote: 9-0.

Accordingly, the PJC respectfully and prayerfully recommends that the General Assembly answer the FCP 12-2 Overture with reference to the Ad-Interim Committee on Ordination Standards, which, among other things, has also proposed to amend Section G.12-2C.

¹ The PJC’s task was limited. We did not determine the wisdom, necessity, or pastoral desirability of the FCP 12-2 Overture, but rather evaluated whether the proposed language is prepared for integration into the Constitution. Our evaluation of the “three-C” criteria helps the General Assembly determine whether an amendment is constitutionally serviceable in its present form, apart from the merits of the proposal itself.

46-38 *(to the Ministerial Vocation Standing Committee)*
Overture from the Presbytery of the Rivers and Lakes

The **Rivers and Lakes Presbytery** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to **APPROVE** the proposed amendments to the *Book of Government* 9-5.

[Rivers and Lakes Overture](#)

Overture #2

Original Text	Proposed Revisions
<p>G.9-5 The office of Teaching Elder</p> <p>D. Administrator A court of the Church or one of its agencies may call a Teaching Elder to serve in some administrative capacity. An organization deemed proper by the Presbytery may also issue a similar call. In such cases, it is always the responsibility of the Administrator to seek opportunity to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments.</p> <p>E. Chaplain A court of the Church, a hospital, the military, institutions, universities, or other appropriate fields of service may call a Teaching Elder as Chaplain if the Presbytery deems it appropriate. In such cases, the Chaplain shall always have as a primary responsibility the sharing of the Good News of God in Jesus Christ.</p>	<p>G.9-5 The office of Teaching Elder</p> <p>D. Administrator A court of the Church church or one of its agencies, or an organization deemed proper by the Presbytery may call a Teaching Elder to serve in some administrative capacity <i>provided that the nature of the work is appropriate to the gospel ministry and requiring ordination.</i> In such cases, it is always the responsibility of the Administrator to seek opportunity to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments.</p> <p>E. Chaplain A court of the Church church, a hospital, the military, institutions, universities, or other appropriate fields of service may call a Teaching Elder as Chaplain if the Presbytery deems it appropriate. In such cases, the Chaplain shall always have as a primary responsibility the sharing of the Good News of God in Jesus Christ.</p>

Rationale:

- From the “Notes For The 2024-2025 Edition” of the EPC Constitution: Volume One, “Church – when capitalized, refers to the universal church (defined in *Book of Government*, Chapter 1). The reference in G.9-5.D seems to be to the Universal Visible Church and should be ‘church’ rather than ‘Church.’ There may be additional instance of this terminological inconsistency (ex: G.9-5.E; G.9-6.A) that should be sought out.
- The proposed revision condenses the three spheres of Administrative work: EPC church courts and agencies, or an organization deemed proper by the Presbytery.
- The proposed addition mirrors the language of G.10-8.B.2.a – calls approved by the Presbytery from a church or agency outside the bounds of the Presbytery.



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Rivers & Lakes Presbytery hereby respectfully overtures the 46th General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church:

Whereas it belongs to synods and councils to make provision for the better administration of the government of the Visible Kingdom through the Order of the church (WCF 31.2); and

Whereas that earthly government must be maintained through diligence since it may err and need to be corrected or improved upon (WCF 31.3); and

Whereas *The Book of Government* grants the authority and responsibility of Presbyteries “to overture the General Assembly on those matters it believes vital or helpful to the whole Church,” (BOG 194.C.2);

Therefore, be it resolved that Rivers & Lakes Presbytery overtures the 46th General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church regarding three matters as enumerated below:

- Overture #1 - Proposed amendments to *The Book of Government* 5-10.
(Approved with a vote of 44 in favor, 0 opposed)
- Overture #2 - Proposed amendments to *The Book of Government* 9-5.
(Approved with a vote of 23 in favor, 14 opposed)
- Overture #3 - Proposed amendments to *The Book of Government* 19-3.
(Approved with a vote of 42 in favor, 0 opposed)

Approved by Rivers & Lakes Presbytery at its 46th Stated Meeting, January 23, 2026.


RE George Kalemkarian, Moderator


TE Annie Rose, Stated Clerk

46-39 *(to the Ministerial Vocation Standing Committee)*
From the Permanent Judicial Commission

The **Permanent Judicial Commission** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** Recommendation 46-38, River and Lakes Presbytery **G. 9-5** Overture.

www.epconnect.org/2026report-pjc

[Report of the PJC regarding RLP Overture G. 9-5](#)

[Rivers & Lakes Overture](#)

REPORT OF THE PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION

The Rivers and Lakes Presbytery overtured the 46th General Assembly to amend Sections 9-5D and 9-5E of the *Book of Government* (the “**PRL 9-5 Overture**”). The Permanent Judicial Commission of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (the “**PJC**”) subsequently examined the proposed amendment for clarity and consistency of language and for compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, in each case as required by Section G.21-3D.2.a.

The PJC understands the categories “clarity,” “consistency,” and “compatibility” to have particular meanings. *Clarity* asks whether the language of the amendment is sufficiently precise that a reasonably informed reader of the Constitution could determine what the provision requires, permits, or forbids without reference to the debate that produced it.¹ *Consistency* examines whether the amendment employs language in a manner consistent with the vocabulary, terminology, and logic used in the Constitution and within the amendment itself. *Compatibility* asks whether the amendment integrates coherently into the broader constitutional framework without creating conflict with other provisions or with the structure of the Constitution as a whole.

After due consideration, the PJC determined as follows regarding the PRL 9-5 Overture:

Question Presented	PJC Determination
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of clarity of language?	Yes. Vote: 8-0, with one abstention.
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of consistency of language?	Yes. Vote: 8-0, with one abstention.
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of compatibility with other provisions of the EPC Constitution?	Yes. Vote: 8-0, with one abstention.

The Permanent Judicial Commission respectfully and prayerfully reports these findings to the 46th General Assembly and recommends that it accept and adopt the PRL 9-5 Overture.²

¹ In many instances, constitutional language is designed to confer discretion on church courts. In such cases, a provision does not fail the clarity test merely because it allows a range of outcomes, since the granting of discretion is the very function the text is intended to serve. The clarity concern arises only where the language does not make clear, in the mind of a reasonably informed reader, the scope or object of that discretion.

² See G.21-3D.2.b.

46-40 *(to the Ministerial Vocation Standing Committee)*
From the Permanent Judicial Commission

The **Permanent Judicial Commission's** report and recommendation that the 46th General Assembly considers it in deciding whether to accept or decline Recommendation 46-41, Pacific Northwest Presbytery **G. 9-3A** Overture.

www.epconnect.org/2026report-pjc

[Report of the PJC regarding PNW Overture G.9-3A](#)

[Pacific Northwest Overture](#)



THE PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION
of
THE EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

PJC Report, Concurrences, and Minority Materials
Regarding the Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest G.9-3A Overture

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REPORT OF THE PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION

On January 30, 2026, the Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest overtured the 46th General Assembly to amend Section 9-3A of the *Book of Discipline* (the “***PNW 9-3A Overture***”). The Permanent Judicial Commission of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (the “***PJC***”) subsequently examined the proposed amendment for clarity and consistency of language and for compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, in each case as required by Section G.21-3D.2.a.

The PJC understands the categories “clarity,” “consistency,” and “compatibility” to have particular meanings. *Clarity* asks whether the language of the amendment is sufficiently precise that a reasonably informed reader of the Constitution could determine what the provision requires, permits, or forbids without reference to the debate that produced it.¹ *Consistency* examines whether the amendment employs language in a manner consistent with the vocabulary, terminology, and logic used in the Constitution and within the amendment itself. *Compatibility* asks whether the amendment integrates coherently into the broader constitutional framework without creating conflict with other provisions or with the structure of the Constitution as a whole.

After due consideration, the PJC determined as follows regarding the PNW 9-3A Overture:

Question Presented	PJC Determination
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of clarity of language?	Yes. Vote: 4-3, with one abstention.
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of consistency of language?	No. Vote: 5-3.
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of compatibility with other provisions of the EPC Constitution?	No. Vote: 5-3.

The PJC’s task was limited. We did not determine the wisdom, necessity, or pastoral desirability of the PNW 9-3A Overture, but rather evaluated whether the proposed language is prepared for integration into the Constitution. Our evaluation of the “three-C” criteria helps the General Assembly determine whether an amendment, such as the PNW 9-3A Overture, is constitutionally serviceable in its present form, apart from the merits of the proposal itself.

This constitutes our report and recommendation to the General Assembly.²

¹ In many instances, constitutional language is designed to confer discretion on church courts. In such cases, a provision does not fail the clarity test merely because it allows a range of outcomes, since the granting of discretion is the very function the text is intended to serve. The clarity concern arises only where the language does not make clear, in the mind of a reasonably informed reader, the scope or object of that discretion.

² See G.21-3D.2.b.

I. Clarity

The PJC first considered whether the language of the PNW 9-3A Overture is sufficiently precise that a reasonably informed reader of the Constitution could determine what the provision requires, permits, or forbids.

Some members of the PJC expressed concern that the language of the overture lacks sufficient precision, particularly in its introduction and treatment of categories of sinful desire and in the potential difficulty of consistent application in the examination of candidates for office. The concern was focused on a portion of the overture's operative language, which provides:

Those who profess, persist in, or identify with unnatural desires or affections... are disqualified from holding office in Christ's Church.

Questions were raised regarding the meaning and application of the phrases "profess," "persist in," and "identify with." These terms may be understood in different ways by presbyteries, sessions, and nominating committees, especially when applied to matters that are not always outwardly expressed (e.g., does "persist in" require intentional cultivation of inappropriate lust to be exclusionary or would an infrequent, unwanted, and intrusive thought characterizable as same-sex attraction also disqualify). Some PJC members concluded that the variability in the language rises to the level of a failure of clarity under the Constitution's standard.

Although the majority acknowledged these concerns, it determined that the clarity standard does not require exhaustive definition of every term, particularly given that examining candidates has always been an exercise in judgment. The language of the PNW 9-3A Overture, taken as a whole, conveys a sufficiently definite meaning in context to permit such examination by presbyteries and sessions. It directs attention to matters that may be explored through a candidate's words and reputation within the church's existing processes. Our church courts have a history of wisely applying constitutional text that admits of some variability, and there is every reason to continue to trust reasonably informed presbyters in faithfully doing so in the future.³

The PNW 9-3A Overture therefore satisfies the requirement of "clarity of language."

II. Consistency

Members of the Commission expressed differing views as to whether the overture's formulation employs language in a manner consistent with the vocabulary, terminology, and logic used in the Constitution and within the amendment itself.

In evaluating whether the proposed language was consistent with the Constitution, the PJC discussed the Westminster Standards extensively. The Standards are not advisory. Every Ruling and Teaching Elder receives and adopts them "as containing the system of doctrine taught in the

³ If a lower court errs by approving an inappropriate candidate for office, Chapter 14 of the *Book of Discipline* allows a concerned elder with standing the opportunity to file a complaint with a higher court and resolve the matter.

Holy Scriptures,”⁴ and they form the doctrinal framework within which all provisions of the Constitution must operate. The *Book of Government* states in Section 23-1B:

No changes may be made to the **Book of Order**, including any of its parts composed of the Book of Government, the Book of Discipline, and the Book of Worship, that would be contrary to the **Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms**.

(Bold in original.)

Although some PJC members concluded that the PNW 9-3A Overture appropriately reflects the Standards’ teaching regarding sinful desire and the call to holiness, the majority determined that, in the manner it defines and applies disqualification, the overture does not reflect the Standards’ treatment of indwelling sin and progressive sanctification.

The PJC was united in affirming that sexual desire outside of a faithful marriage between a man and a woman is sinful and that officers of the church must be persons of maturity, holiness, and self-control, consistent with the Standards. At the same time, the Standards recognize that even mature believers continue to experience the remnants of sin, including unwanted and intrusive thoughts or desires arising from remaining corruption, which are to be resisted, repented of, and put to death.

The majority concluded that the overture is not consistent with that structure. By attaching candidate disqualification directly to specified categories of desire, the overture treats those desires as operating outside the framework of progressive sanctification described in the Standards. In effect, its language isolates a category of internal experience and assigns it a different constitutional significance than the Standards themselves assign to the continuing presence of sin in the believer.

Under the Constitution, candidates are examined within a framework that assumes both the requirement of holiness⁵ and the persistence of indwelling sin.⁶ By contrast, the overture directs the Church to treat certain categories of desire as determinative in themselves, rather than as part of that broader framework of examination and pastoral judgment. The language of the overture is therefore inconsistent with the logic of the Standards.

In addition to requiring the foregoing evaluation regarding the overture’s consistency with the vocabulary, terminology, and logic used in the Constitution, the category of consistency requires the PJC to evaluate whether the language of the proposed amendment is *internally* consistent. The majority found that, if adopted as written, the overture would introduce certain deficiencies in this regard.

⁴ G.13-2A.3.

⁵ See *Westminster Larger Catechism* 138 & 139.

⁶ See *Westminster Confession of Faith* 6.5 & 13.1-2 and *Westminster Larger Catechism* 78 & 79.

In relevant part, G.9-3A currently provides:

A congregation preparing to elect persons to this holy office should carefully study appropriate passages of Scripture relating to the Ruling Elder and be very prayerful in selecting persons to this office.

It is clear from the text that this particular sentence directs congregations as the subject and speaks to the election of Ruling Elders as its objects. The text of the PNW 9-3A Overture, however, would modify the sentence so that it states as follows:

A **presbytery or** congregation preparing to elect persons to **these holy offices shall** carefully study appropriate passages of Scripture relating to the **Teaching Elder, Ruling Elder, and Deacon**, and be very prayerful in **electing** persons to these offices.

(Bold language reflects additions introduced by overture.) The modifications introduce a second subject (i.e., “a presbytery”) and expand the object to include Teaching Elders and Deacons. This creates tension within the existing structure of G.9-3A. Put simply, presbyteries do not “elect” Ruling Elders or Deacons; congregations do not “elect” Teaching Elders.⁷

For the reasons stated above, the PNW 9-3A Overture fails to satisfy the requirement of “consistency of language.”

III. Compatibility

In addition to raising consistency concerns, the PNW 9-3A Overture also raises fundamental questions regarding “compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church” (i.e., the Westminster Standards).

The Westminster Standards set forth a coherent doctrine of sin and sanctification that governs the Christian life and therefore the evaluation of those called to office. As reflected in Sections 6.5 and 13.1-3 of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, and in Questions 78 and 79 of the *Westminster Larger Catechism*, the Standards teach that corruption remains in the regenerate (i.e., the “born again”) and that sanctification in this life is imperfect. Believers continue to experience the remnants of sin, including sinful desires, even as they are renewed and engaged in an ongoing conflict against the flesh.

At the same time, the Standards are equally clear that such desires are sinful and must be resisted and put to death. *Westminster Larger Catechism* Questions 138 and 139 require chastity in body, mind, and affections and forbid all unclean thoughts and desires.

The Standards therefore hold together two propositions that must not be separated or read to be in conflict with one another. *First*, sinful desires are truly sinful and are to be put to death (i.e., are to be “mortified”). *Second*, the continued presence of such desires does not place the

⁷ It is possible that this internal inconsistency of language could be resolved by repositioning elements of the PNW 9-3A Overture in other appropriate sections of the *Book of Government*.

believer outside the state of grace but is part of the ongoing struggle described in the doctrine of progressive sanctification.

The PJC recognizes that the Standards also teach that some sins are more heinous than others.⁸ That principle, however, does not alter the structure of the doctrine described above. The distinction among sins speaks to their gravity and aggravations, not to whether the presence of a particular sin is treated as determinative of a believer's standing apart from the broader framework of repentance and sanctification. The Standards do not single out particular categories of indwelling sin and remove them from that framework.

Because the Standards are subscribed by every elder and form part of the Constitution's doctrinal framework, proposed amendments to the Constitution must preserve both truths.

The majority concluded that the overture does not do so. While the overture clearly intends to affirm biblical sexual ethics, the confessional standards acknowledge that believers continue to experience sinful desires. By attaching disqualification directly to specified categories of desire, the overture treats the presence of such desires as determinative of qualification for office. In doing so, it separates those desires from the broader framework of progressive sanctification and assigns them a different significance than the Standards themselves assign to the continuing presence of sin in the believer.

This is not merely a question of emphasis or application. It is a question of doctrinal coherence. The Standards do not isolate particular categories of indwelling sin (e.g., "same-sex attraction") and treat their presence as dispositive. *Westminster Confession of Faith* 13.2 teaches that the corruption of nature remains in every part of the believer in this life, even as it is progressively weakened and put to death. The *Westminster Larger Catechism* expresses the same teaching in similar terms. Question 77 explains that sanctification, though inseparably joined with justification, is not perfect in this life but grows toward perfection. Question 78 further teaches that believers "retain some remnants of sin throughout their whole being" and are "continually plagued with desires of their old sinful nature that are contrary to the spirit."

The issue, therefore, is not whether same-sex attraction is sinful. The Standards plainly teach that it is. The issue is whether the Constitution may treat the presence of such "unnatural" desires or affections, without regard to the believer's repentance and progress in holiness, as determinative of fitness for office. The majority concluded that it may not do so without departing from the system of doctrine set forth in the Standards.⁹

⁸ See *Westminster Larger Catechism* Questions 150-152.

⁹ It is clear to the PJC majority that any candidate for office who, for example, indulges in or acts upon lust (including by using pornography) has much growth in grace and perfection in holiness yet to achieve before he or she would be suitable for ordination. But an ordaining court *may* reach a different conclusion in the case of an otherwise qualified candidate who infrequently experiences an unwanted and intrusive thought that he or she recognizes as sinful, hates, repents of, and works to put to death. The presence of such a desire is always contrary to the spirit, but is not in every case, as a matter of constitutional law, determinative of fitness for office. As *Westminster Confession of Faith* 13.2 teaches, "a continual and irreconcilable war goes on in every believer," as "[t]he old nature tries to get its way in opposition to the Spirit, and the Spirit fights to assert its authority over the flesh." This is no less true for the ordained than it is for the non-ordained.

For these reasons, the majority concluded that the overture does not satisfy the requirement of “compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution.”

IV. Conclusion

The Permanent Judicial Commission has great respect for the concerns that gave rise to the PNW 9-3A Overture, which are rooted in a desire for biblical fidelity and holiness in Christ’s church. Nevertheless, for the reasons stated above, we conclude that, although the overture satisfies the requirement of clarity of language, it does not satisfy the requirements of consistency of language and compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution, including the Westminster Standards.

Certain aspects of the overture’s drafting could perhaps be addressed through amendment. However, the principal concerns identified by the Permanent Judicial Commission do not arise solely from matters of terminology or placement, but from the manner in which the overture defines and applies disqualification in relation to the doctrine of sin and sanctification reflected in the Westminster Standards. Those concerns are not resolved by modification of particular provisions, but go to the structure and operation of the proposal itself.

The Permanent Judicial Commission respectfully and prayerfully reports its findings to the 46th General Assembly and recommends that it consider them in deciding whether to accept or decline the PNW 9-3A Overture.

CONCURRING WITH THE REPORT OF THE PJC

I concur with the report of the majority of the Permanent Judicial Commission in its findings as to the PNW overture. We have come to the correct decision as to this particular overture.

However, I believe that we have not sufficiently guarded rights which are guaranteed to individual believers and the lower courts in our Book of Government, nor have we given weight to a provision in the Westminster Confession which helps us understand the proper interpretation of Scripture. Presbyterian government is not modeled after our civil government, which has become weighted in the Federal authority and little authority resides with the states. The application of the provisions in our EPC constitution would preserve authority in the presbyteries and appropriately limit the authority of the General Assembly. Specifically:

1. Liberty of Conscience/ Christian Freedom. Section 2-3 of the Book of Government states that the Scriptures are the ultimate rule of faith and practice, and that the Church may create no laws that will bind the conscience as to the interpretation of Scripture.

Sections 25-1 and 25-2 of the Book of Government together also guarantee in perpetuity that the Church may make no law to bind the conscience with respect to the interpretation of Scripture, and that no person may be rejected for ordination because of matters of conscience, except for stated reasons not at issue here.

Similarly, Section 20-2 of the Westminster Confession of Faith states “God alone is Lord of the conscience and has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any way contrary to his word in matters of faith or worship.”

In my view, the approval of the PNW overture would bind the consciences of presbyteries which disagree with the overture in violation of these guaranteed rights of liberty of conscience, and the EPC is obligated to guard against such infringements.

2. The Right of the Presbytery to Ordain to Office. Sections 19-4B (2) and (3) of the Book of Government acknowledge the right of the presbytery to examine, ordain and install candidates and pastors. Section 10-2 of the Book of Government states that the right of calling to office may never be taken away for non-Scriptural reasons. Does the PNW overture state a Scriptural reason to appropriately limit the presbytery’s right of ordination? We look next to the Westminster Confession to see what a Scriptural and non-Scriptural reason to limit ordination would be.

3. The Westminster Standard for the Interpretation of Scripture. Our understanding of the rights of liberty of conscience in interpretation of Scripture, also referred to as Christian freedom, and the right of calling by the presbytery is enhanced by Section 1-6 of the Westminster Confession of Faith, which provides that God’s purpose as to his glory, our salvation and our lives is “either explicitly stated in the Bible or may be deduced as inevitably and logically following from it. Nothing is at any time to be added to the Bible...”

As I understand WCF Section 1-6, the believer is bound to observe both (a) that which is explicitly stated in Scripture and (b) that which is not explicitly stated but is deduced inevitably and logically from that which is stated. Conversely, the believer is free to interpret Scripture according to his or her conscience when that standard is not met.

The question presented by the PNW overture is whether a person who experiences same-sex attraction but is chaste, does not affirm homosexuality as appropriate for Christians and otherwise mature in faith is disqualified to serve as an officer of the church. Whether the PNW proposal overture meets the Confession's standard for that which is Biblical and therefore can be required to be held in unity has not been addressed in sufficient depth.

These provisions of our Constitutional documents may not be easily harmonized. For the sake of our denomination going forward, and regardless of the adoption or non-adoption of the PNW overture, we need to give attention to the question of the priority of the liberties guaranteed by the EPC and proposed amendments to our constitutional documents.

We also should consider whether Section 1-6 of the Westminster Confession provides us with a working definition of what separates an "essential of the faith," as to which we should join in unity, as over against a non-essential as to which we have freedom.

I concur that the work of the PJC has produced the right result as to the PNW overture, but there are additional questions which deserve the attention of the Permanent Judicial Commission and the EPC at the appropriate time, which I believe to be as early as possible after we have a final determination on the PNW overture.

Soli Deo Gloria

Thomas C. Werner

38th Moderator of the EPC

MINORITY REPORT OF THE PJC

On the Constitutionality of the PNW Overture

The undersigned, a minority of the Permanent Judicial Commission, not agreeing with the majority, desire to express their views regarding the PJC's 3-C analysis of the PNW Overture. The minority hereby recommends amendment of the majority report to include the analysis stated below, with the amended recommendations that the General Assembly accept the PNW Overture as having satisfied the criteria of clarity and consistency of language, and compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

Report:

The PJC is charged with conducting an analysis of any proposed amendments to the EPC's constitution per B.O.G. 21-3(D)(2)(a):

“[T]he Permanent Judicial Commission [] shall examine the proposed amendment for clarity and consistency of language and for compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.”

The first question is therefore whether the language of the proposed amendment is clear and consistent. The second question is whether the proposed amendment is compatible with the other provisions of the constitution.

The PJC majority found that the language was sufficiently “clear” but fell short on the standards of “consistency” and “conformity.” This Minority Report is being offered because the PJC majority appears to have applied a stricter standard of analysis in reviewing the PNW Overture than it has in assessing other overtures, and because upon reasonable analysis the PNW overture is neither inconsistent with the Westminster Standards, nor is it incompatible with the current EPC Book of Government and should be submitted to the General Assembly for consideration as satisfying the 3-Cs of clarity and consistency of language, and conformity with the constitution.

The PJC separated “clarity and consistency of language” into two categories, and engaged in an extensive exegetical analysis of “consistency” beyond a review of whether the language is in fact internally consistent. We respectfully believe this analysis goes beyond the constitutional charge of B.O.G. 21-3(D)(2)(a). While the in-depth analysis reflected in the PJC Report was done in good faith with honest intent, we are concerned that this strayed too far into the merits of the debate on whether to adopt the PNW overture, as opposed to an analysis of language.

Four separate presbyteries have approved the exact same overture language, and a fifth presbytery has approved an overture similar in language and approach. This compels a degree of deference and respect, and in strongly suggests that five Presbyteries have found that the proposed standards pass constitutional muster.

To be certain, the PJC analysis on this overture was more detailed than any other 3-C analysis than any of our members have ever seen before. This was done in good faith, but, again, may have strayed too far into a debate on the merits of the overture.

A stricter standard of analysis was applied to the constitutional conformity element because the PNW overture was viewed as a disqualifying standard for ordination, rather than an affirmative guideline. However, in our view, nothing in the EPC Book of Government, Westminster Confession, or Scriptures compels such a difference in ordination standards. The majority's concerns over the PNW overture potentially infringing on the Westminster doctrine of progressive sanctification and indwelling sin pertain, in our opinion, to questions of salvation and not ordination.

The PNW overture satisfies the 3-C analysis. The language is clear and consistent, readily understandable by any reasonable measure of interpretation.

1. Clarity and Consistency of Language

Is the language of the PNW Overture for 9-3A clear and consistent?

The proposed amendment uses language throughout the three sentences of the proposal which are internally consistent. The majority takes issue not with this, but with the proposed use of three words in particular: “profess,” “persist” and “identify.” These are all words used in the everyday vocabulary of the reasonable Presbyterian.

a. The Simple Part:

There is no lack of clarity or consistency in changing “should” to “shall” in several instances in the overture. There is no lack of clarity or consistency in changing “this office” to “these offices.” There is no lack of clarity or consistency in adding “Presbytery” to the entity “preparing to elect persons to this office” or to naming the other two offices by name, those being “Teaching Elder” and “Deacon.” In fact, this makes 9-3 more consistent with the three “offices to the church” defined in 9-1. The current 9-3 cites to scriptural passages outlining the criteria for several levels of offices in the church, but the last sentence of the current 9-3 seems only to give guidance to congregations for Ruling Elders. However, the other sections of Chapter 9, and the title and citations of 9-3 suggest the criteria apply to all three offices to the church. By pluralizing and naming the three at the end, the PNW overture is actually clearer than the current version and is more consistent with the other provisions in chapter 9.

b. The Substantive Part:

The question is whether the two sentences in the middle of the overture, the “substantive part” are clear and consistent. While the provision must be read in the whole, for examination purposes it can be broken into two sentences. (We highlight the two sentences separately, but keep the clauses together).

i. The first sentence.

Therefore, persons eligible for church office shall conform in heart, mind, and conduct to God’s design for human sexuality, embracing with gratitude the calling of either chastity in singleness or fidelity within marriage between one man and one woman. Those who profess, persist in, or identify with unnatural desires or affections, contrary to God’s created order and condemned by Scripture as against nature, are disqualified from holding office in Christ’s Church.

The first sentence is language of guidance. This provision is intended to guide the ordaining body in the same manner as the current language does, requiring the ordaining body find the candidate to be “above reproach, sound in the faith, wise in the things of God, and discreet in all things.” Here, “*conforming in heart, mind, and conduct*” is no less clear than “*being above reproach, sound in faith, wise in the things of God, and discreet in all things.*” The overture here proposes that the constitution include additional clarity on what we expect of our ordained leaders with respect to human sexuality. This *adds* clarity.

As to the concern that this includes terms which are not defined in the constitution, none of the current terms are defined in the constitution. So it would be improper to burden this overture with a definitional standard not applicable to the current constitution.

There is an element of subjective interpretation in the current guiding language, and there is an element of subjective interpretation in the proposed language. The subjectivity does not render it unclear but rather gives additional language upon which to evaluate a candidate for ordination.

The term “heart, mind, and conduct” is not unclear. Conduct is crystal clear. Mind is crystal clear – it relates to the intellectual assent of the candidate to God’s order. “Heart” is equally clear, although tougher to measure from the outside. What is in our hearts is our inner emotional state. That’s simple and clear. Certainly, the ordaining body may never be certain what is *actually* in the candidate’s heart or mind, but we do presuppose a degree of integrity on the part of the candidate. But that uncertainty does not render this provision unclear.

ii. The Second Sentence

Therefore, persons eligible for church office shall conform in heart, mind, and conduct to God’s design for human sexuality, embracing with gratitude the calling of either chastity in singleness or fidelity within marriage between one man and one woman. Those who profess, persist in, or identify with unnatural desires or affections, contrary to God’s created order and condemned by Scripture as against nature, are disqualified from holding office in Christ’s Church.

To “profess” is perfectly clear. If a candidate advocates for homosexual lifestyles he is professing it. To “identify” is perfectly clear. Sexual identity is now part of the common

vernacular. It is used in everyday speech, on government forms, on job applications, and in medical journals. It refers to persons who find their self-conception defined by a particular characteristic (such as homosexuality, or same sex attraction), or imagined reality, such as identifying as a different gender than their biological gender. It is quite easy to find out if someone identifies as something other than what appears on the surface – just ask them. “How do you identify?” is a common question these days. Again, the candidate may not give full disclosure, but we should be able to presuppose integrity of candidates for ordination.

“Persist in” gets its own paragraph here because there has been much discussion about what persist means in this context. Here, in this context, persist clearly means “more than fleeting” and “continual and on-going despite resistance.” The dictionary definition includes “to remain unchanged” and “to go on resolutely or stubbornly in spite of opposition.” This is not unclear but differentiates between an occasional intrusive inappropriate sexual thought and one that is more continual.

The PJC did not find that the phrase “*unnatural desires or affections, contrary to God’s created order and condemned by Scripture as against nature*” is unclear, so it will not be addressed here, other than to say, if we do not understand this, then we cannot understand it in the context of conduct either.

c. The (mis-)Perceived Problem of Progressive Sanctification:

The PJC majority found that the PNW Overture was inconsistent with the concept of progressive sanctification. We respectfully disagree. The PNW Overture does not dispute the presence of the remnants of indwelling sin; it sets a threshold standard of maturity for the candidate to be qualified for ordination. The standard is not “100% free from temptations” but draws a line where the candidate professes, persists in, or identifies with the unnatural sexual desires or affections. If the candidate is still struggling with the sinful temptation, that is different from the scenario where the candidate feels he has overcome the temptation sufficiently to no longer identify with it, and no longer sees it as persistently plaguing his daily walk. A persistent temptation is different from an occasional intrusive thought. A fleeting or momentary thought is different from a persistent longing. The mature Christian who has experienced sufficient progressive sanctification is no longer plagued by persistent longings to sin. In this sense, the PNW Overture actually reinforces the concept of progressive sanctification and demands that the ordinand attain a certain degree of maturity before being qualified for office to be a leader within our church. Consequently, we do not believe the PNW Overture is inconsistent with the Westminster Standards.

2. Compatibility

Is this provision compatible with other portions of the constitution? By definition an amendment to the constitution *changes* the constitution, so in this context compatibility does not mean perfect conformity. It means “is it in harmony” or at least “is it not out of harmony” with the constitution.

Is the addition of a requirement for ordination candidates compatible with the current constitution? Yes. The current constitution does place minimum standards upon candidates both in Chapter 9 and elsewhere. The most prominent example is for Teaching Elders, where the EPC requires a certain level of education in 11-2G. (Arguably, all of Chapter 11 sets standards for ordination of Teaching Elder. B.O.G. 12-2 sets criteria that are not even found in scripture (e.g. competency in the original language of scripture). Therefore, the EPC's current constitution does set denomination-wide base-line standards. If the GA can set a base-line on education, it can set a baseline on issues relating to human sexuality.

Nothing in the PNW Overture disputes Westminster Confessional concepts of salvation, sanctification, or indwelling sin. It simply sets a threshold of maturity for the ordained leaders of the church with respect to sexual desires and behavior. If progressive sanctification means anything, it means that the Christian will progressively overcome sinful thoughts, desires, and actions. The PNW Overture recognizes this and is therefore not inconsistent or incompatible with the Westminster Confession of Faith or the EPC Book of Order.

Does the PNW Overture contradict the right of a presbytery to ordain? No. It sets criteria, as it does for other standards. The Presbytery is still responsible for examining and ensuring the individual meets the criteria. The PNW overture does no more violence to the concept of presbytery-led-ordination than the Ad Interim Committee's proposed changes to the constitution, which proposes an addition which asserts that "Officers must conform to the biblical requirement of chastity and sexual purity (see Westminster Larger Catechism Q & A 138-139; D. 1-10) in their descriptions of themselves, their convictions, character, and conduct." WLC 139 precludes "unnatural desires." Substantively, this is really no different than the PNW Overture.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, upon examination, we believe that the PNW Overture is clear, consistent, and compatible, and should pass the 3-C examination, and should be commended to the General Assembly for due consideration with the blessing of the PJC.

Submitted In Faith,

Forrest Norman, RE Presbytery of the Alleghenies
Gordon Miller, RE New River Presbytery
Don Flater, RE Rivers and Lakes Presbytery

CONCURRING WITH THE MINORITY REPORT

I respectfully join with my colleague(s) in the submission of a minority report. While I join in the Minority Report's findings that the PNW overture meets the 3 c requirements of B.O.G. 21-(D)(2)(a), I wish to address an important issue the current Permanent Judicial Commission and all future Commissions need to address.

When the Commission addresses a constitutional amendment for the purpose of doing a clarity, consistency, and compatibility test, the 3 c's, the Commission in many respects acts as a court of law. Constitutional amendments deserve a careful review. In this capacity, it acts somewhat like a Supreme Court. For the sake of this discussion, I'll refer to it as the Court Function.

Once this Court Function is completed, the B.O.G. gives the Commission options as to how to proceed. B.O.G. 21-(D)(2)(b). The Commission is required to report its findings along with its recommendations. It then "may include an amended version of any proposed constitutional changes as well as advice to accept or decline the proposals referred to the Commission." I'll refer to this as the Ministerial Function. Operating in the Ministerial Function, the Commission has the right to amend, to correct or "fix" an overture. (Note: The author recognizes the provision reads "may" and not "shall".)

Both functions should normally be in play when an overture is considered. For example, if it appears the 3 c test may fail, the PJC has the right to take steps to correct the part(s) that may have failed. Simple issues may involve rather minor corrections that could quickly be addressed. Others may be more complicated requiring communication with the Presbytery offering the overture. Nothing in our Constitution prevents this. It is my position that the Ministerial Function should always be considered unless a very clear constitutional violation would be allowed by doing so. This is in keeping with the ethos of the E.P.C.

If only the Legal Function is considered, the danger exists that the Commission may review overtures as if a cross-examination is being conducted, or drafting skills are being tested. A Ministerial Function would ask if an overture works or can be made to work. The Ministerial Function is clearly contemplated by our B.O.G. Proponents of overtures are our brothers and sisters in Christ. I believe it to be in the best interest of our beloved EPC for all Permanent Judicial Commissions to consider both functions so that overtures can be heard by the entire General Assembly. The Permanent Judicial Commission should not be the place where overtures go to die.

Nothing in my opinion is meant to suggest or imply that the Commission did not consider both functions.

Respectfully submitted,

Gordon A. Miller

34th Moderator of the EPC

Ruling Elder

46-41 *(to the Ministerial Vocation Standing Committee)*
Overture from the Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest

The **Pacific Northwest Presbytery** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to amend the *Book of Government* 9-3A.

[Pacific Northwest Overture](#)

EPC PRESBYTERY OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Overture from the Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest to the 46th General Assembly:

Whereas, God created Adam and Eve and ordained the first marriage and family consisting of one man and one woman in sexual union, establishing the context for the biblical sexual ethic (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:24; 4:1); and

Whereas, God has established the one flesh union between a husband and wife, as a great mystery in reference to Christ and His Church (Ephesians 5:25; 31-32); and

Whereas, the Holy Scriptures declare that the sexual union and desire between one man and one woman, in the covenant of marriage, is righteous and holy, and all other sexual activity is unrighteous and sinful, including homosexuality, which the Holy Scriptures describe as “degrading passions” (Romans 5:18-19; Romans 1:26-27; I Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; *Westminster Confession of Faith* 24:1; *Westminster Larger Catechism* 138, 139); and

Whereas, the application of the Seventh Commandment forbids the sins of homosexuality, unnatural lusts, and unclean affections, affirming that homosexual acts and the desires to commit those acts are both sinful (Matthew 5:27-28; *Westminster Larger Catechism* 139); and

Whereas, the Christian’s identity is rooted in Christ so that he is a “new creation” in Him, his identity cannot be defined by sexual and any other experiences, desires or lifestyles that are contrary to the Holy Scriptures; for the Christian there is a clear distinction between self-conception (“this is who I am”) and their remaining indwelling sin (“this is what I must daily mortify”) (Romans 6:1-14; I Corinthians 6:9-11; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 3:1-5); and

Whereas, identification or ongoing experience as “Same Sex Attracted” or any other identification or ongoing experience contrary to the biblical sexual ethic is sinful, is against nature itself, is something God detests, and is not fitting for an officer of the Church of Christ (Leviticus 18:22; I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:5-6); and

Whereas, the biblical qualifications for a church officer require him (or her) to be “above reproach,” officers and candidates for office must conform their lives to biblical sexual ethics, which include denying and mortifying all sexual passions and desires toward anyone to whom they are not married (I Timothy 3:2); and

Whereas, for two thousand years the Church of Jesus Christ has at no time doctrinally allowed for the ordination of those engaged in homosexual activity or experiencing homosexual desire and thus has been faithful to the Holy Scriptures teaching on human sexuality, sanctification and the offices of the church, and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church has faithfully followed that teaching since its inception; and

Whereas, the *Position Paper on Homosexuality*, adopted by the 16th General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in 1996, affirms, “The witness of God’s Word in both the Old and New Testaments is clear, declaring that the practice of homosexuality, including lust, is a grievous sin, and that any who continue to engage in such activity face the consequences of God’s condemning judgment. However, God’s grace offers love, forgiveness, hope and a new life. The necessary response to this offer is true repentance, including turning from homosexual behavior, and commitment to a faithful obedience to the Lord according to His Word;” and

Whereas, the *Position Paper on Human Sexuality*, adopted by the 37th General Assembly in 2017, declares, “As repentant and forgiven sinners, we in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church resolve to teach the biblical truths of godly sexuality to our members and to all who will listen, with compassion and with courage, regardless of the cost to ourselves;” and

Whereas, the LGBTQ+ movement has infiltrated many quarters of the church, resulting in widespread confusion and controversy and has disrupted the peace and unity of the church; and

Whereas, the question of ordination of those who, on an ongoing basis experience homosexual desire, is sufficiently grave so that should any court in the EPC ordain someone who acknowledges ongoing homosexual desire, there is likely to be widespread rejection of the validity of that person’s ordination resulting in significant disruption of the peace and unity of the church; and

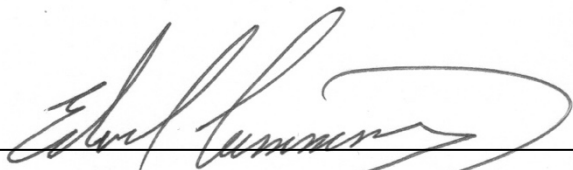
Whereas, promoting the peace and unity of the church is a vow all church officers of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church make (*Book of Government* 13-2A.9); and

Whereas, in response to the consideration of ordained church office for those currently experiencing Same Sex Attraction, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church must take a definitive, constitutional position on this matter;

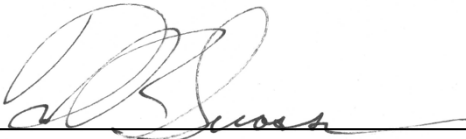
Therefore, be it resolved that the Jacksonville Presbyterian Church, Jacksonville, OR, overtures the 25th Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of the Pacific NW to amend the Book of Government 9-3A. as follows:

Current Book of Government 9-3A.	Proposed Book of Government 9-3A.
According to Scripture, those who bear office in the Church should exhibit certain characteristics of life. This includes being above reproach, sound in the faith, wise in the things of God, and discreet in all things. Persons who fill this office should exhibit a lifestyle that is an example to all, both in and outside the Church. A congregation preparing to elect persons to this holy office should carefully study appropriate passages of Scripture relating to the Ruling Elder and be very prayerful in selecting persons to this office.	“According to Scripture, those who bear office in the church shall exhibit certain characteristics of life. This includes being above reproach, sound in the faith, wise in the things of God, and discreet in all things. Persons who fill these offices shall exhibit a lifestyle that is an example to all, both in and outside the Church. Therefore, persons eligible for church office shall conform in heart, mind, and conduct to God’s design for human sexuality, embracing with gratitude the calling of either chastity in singleness or fidelity within marriage between one man and one woman. Those who profess, persist in, or identify with unnatural desires or affections, contrary to God’s created order and condemned by Scripture as against nature, are disqualified from holding office in Christ’s Church.ⁱ A

	<p>presbytery or congregation preparing to elect persons to these holy offices shall carefully study appropriate passages of Scripture relating to the Teaching Elder, Ruling Elder, and Deacon, and be very prayerful in electing persons to these offices.</p> <p><i>¹ See Romans 1:26–27 on desires contrary to God’s created order; Genesis 1–2 on the creation of male and female; Westminster Larger Catechism Q.139 on the moral duties of Christians and the proper ordering of affections.</i></p>
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Clerk of the Presbytery
Rev. Dr. Edward M. Cummings



Moderator of Presbytery
Mr. Don Swanson

46-42 *(to the Ministerial Vocation Standing Committee)*
From the Permanent Judicial Commission

The **Permanent Judicial Commission's** report and recommendation that the 46th General Assembly considers it in deciding whether to accept or decline Recommendation 46-43, Central Carolinas Presbytery **G. 9-3A** Overture.

www.epconnect.org/2026report-pjc

[Report of the PJC regarding CCP Overture **G. 9-3A**](#)

[Central Carolinas Overture](#)

REPORT OF THE PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION

On January 31, 2026, the Central Carolinas Presbytery overtured the 46th General Assembly to amend Section 9-3A of the *Book of Government* (the “**PCC 9-3A Overture**”). The Permanent Judicial Commission of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (the “**PJC**”) examined the proposed amendment for clarity and consistency of language, and for compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, in each case as required by Section G.21-3D.2.a.¹

The PCC 9-3A Overture is identical to an overture from the Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest (the “**PNW 9-3A Overture**”), which the PJC previously reviewed. Accordingly, after due consideration, the PJC determined that its conclusions regarding the PNW 9-3A Overture apply to, and therefore answer, the PCC 9-3A Overture with respect to the required “three-C” analysis. The PCC 9-3A Overture satisfies the requirement of clarity of language, but fails to satisfy the requirements of consistency of language and compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution.²

For the reasons stated in our prior analysis of the PNW 9-3A Overture, the Permanent Judicial Commission respectfully and prayerfully recommends that the General Assembly consider these conclusions in determining whether to accept or decline the PCC 9-3A Overture.

¹ The PJC’s task was limited. We did not determine the wisdom, necessity, or pastoral desirability of the PCC 9-3A Overture, but rather evaluated whether the proposed language is prepared for integration into the Constitution. Our evaluation of the “three-C” criteria helps the General Assembly determine whether an amendment is constitutionally serviceable in its present form, apart from the merits of the proposal itself.

² The PJC minority herein adopts and incorporates by reference the alternative analysis offered in the Minority Report for the PNW 9-3A Overture.

46-43 *(to the Ministerial Vocation Standing Committee)*
Overture from the Presbytery of the Central Carolinas

The **Central Carolinas Presbytery** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to amend the *Book of Government* 9-3A.

[Central Carolinas Overture](#)

Presbytery of Central Carolinas
Ascending Overture
To the 46th General Assembly of the EPC
February 21, 2026

Whereas, God created Adam and Eve and ordained the first marriage and family consisting of one man and one woman in sexual union, establishing the context for the biblical sexual ethic (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:24; 4:1), and

Whereas, God has established the one flesh union between a husband and wife, as a great mystery in reference to Christ and His Church (Ephesians 5:25; 31-32), and

Whereas, the Holy Scriptures declare that the sexual union and desire between one man and one woman, in the covenant of marriage, is righteous and holy, and all other sexual activity is condemned by the seventh commandment as unrighteous and sinful including homosexuality (Exodus 20:14; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11,18; Exodus 22:16; Hebrews 13:4, Ephesians 5:3-5; *Westminster Confession of Faith 24:1*; *Westminster Larger Catechism Q138-139*), and

Whereas, the Holy Scriptures teach that not all sins are equally heinous, but some carry much greater consequence than others (John 19:11, Ezekiel 8:6, 1 John 5:16, *Westminster Larger Catechism Q150-151*), and

Whereas, homosexuality is among those sinful sexual activities uniquely defined as “unnatural”, violating not only the moral law of God but the mandates and fabric of Creation itself (Genesis 1:27-28; Romans 1:26-27) and therefore, as with other unnatural sins such as bestiality (Leviticus 20:15-16) and incest (Leviticus 18:6-20), is of greater heinousness and therefore that which God detests (*Westminster Confession 24:4*, *Westminster Larger Catechism Q139*, *Q150*, *Q151*), and

Whereas the prohibitions against sinful sexuality include not only deeds but also thoughts and desires (Matthew 5:27-28; 15:19-21; Isaiah 55:7), therefore homosexual desire (now often labeled as “same sex attraction”), is inherently both fully sinful and wholly unnatural, and

Whereas, the Christian’s identity is rooted in Christ so that he or she is a “new creation” in Him, his or her identity cannot be defined by sexual and any other experiences, desires or lifestyles that are contrary to the Holy Scriptures; for the Christian there is a clear distinction between self-conception (“this is who I am”) and their remaining indwelling sin (“this is what I must daily mortify”) (Romans 6:1-14; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 3:1-5); and

Whereas, while the Church is to welcome all who desire repentance and relief from their sins, including those whose sins include homosexuality or other unnatural lusts or acts, and offer all new life in Christ with a mind and heart disposed towards sinners and their constant need for grace (1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 John 1:8-9), the biblical qualifications for a church officer are much more demanding, requiring elders and

deacons to be “above reproach” (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; James 3:1; 1 Timothy 5:20), and

Whereas officers and candidates for office must therefore conform their lives to biblical sexual ethics, which include denying and mortifying all sexual passions and desires toward anyone to whom they are not married (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:5-6), and

Whereas the Westminster Confession 13.3 teaches: “*Although the old nature temporarily wins battles in this warfare, the continual strengthening of the sanctifying Spirit of Christ enables the regenerate nature in each believer to overcome. And so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God,*” indicating that persistent homosexual desire or “same-sex sexual attraction” is inconsistent with a Reformed understanding of the Holy Spirit’s sanctifying work in regeneration and perfecting holiness in a Christian’s life, and

Whereas, for two thousand years, the historic orthodox Christian churches have been faithful to Biblical teaching which condemns same-sex sexual desire and practice, and never knowingly allowed for the ordination of homosexual persons to church office¹, and

Whereas, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church has faithfully followed the Bible’s teaching on human sexuality, stating in its’ 1996 *Position Paper on Homosexuality*, “The witness of God’s Word in both the Old and New Testaments is clear, declaring that the practice of homosexuality, including lust, is a grievous sin, and that any who continue to engage in such activity face the consequences of God’s condemning judgment. However, God’s grace offers love, forgiveness, hope and a new life. The necessary response to this offer is true repentance, including turning from homosexual behavior, and commitment to a faithful obedience to the Lord according to His Word”, and

Whereas the *Position Paper on Human Sexuality*, adopted by the 37th General Assembly in 2017, declares, “As repentant and forgiven sinners, we in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church resolve to teach the biblical truths of godly sexuality to our members and to all who will listen, with compassion and with courage, regardless of the cost to ourselves”, and

Whereas all officers take a vow to “promote the peace, purity, and unity of the church” (*Book of Government* 13-2A.9) and, yet the LGBTQ+ movement has regrettably influenced many quarters of the church, resulting in widespread confusion and controversy, disrupting the peace and unity of the church, and

Whereas, in response to the consideration of ordained church office for those experiencing ongoing homosexual desire or “same sex attraction”, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church must take a definitive, constitutional position on this matter.

Therefore, be it resolved that Central Carolinas Presbytery overture the 46th General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church to amend the Book of Government 9-3A. as follows:

¹ Unchanging Witness, Dr. Donald S. Fortson and Dr. Rollin Grams; B&H Publishing, 2016.

Current Book of Government 9-3A.

According to Scripture, those who bear office in the Church should exhibit certain characteristics of life. This includes being above reproach, sound in the faith, wise in the things of God, and discreet in all things. Persons who fill this office should exhibit a lifestyle that is an example to all, both in and outside the Church. A congregation preparing to elect persons to this holy office should carefully study appropriate passages of Scripture relating to the Ruling Elder and be very prayerful in selecting persons to this office.

Proposed Book of Government 9-3A.

“According to Scripture, those who bear office in the church **shall** exhibit certain characteristics of life. This includes being above reproach, sound in the faith, wise in the things of God, and discreet in all things. Persons who fill **these offices shall** exhibit a lifestyle that is an example to all, both in and outside the Church. **Therefore, persons eligible for church office shall conform in heart, mind, and conduct to God’s design for human sexuality, embracing with gratitude the calling of either chastity in singleness or fidelity within marriage between one man and one woman. Those who profess, persist in, or identify with unnatural desires or affections, contrary to God’s created order and condemned by Scripture as against nature, are disqualified from holding office in Christ’s Church.**² A presbytery or congregation preparing to elect persons to **these holy offices shall** carefully study appropriate passages of Scripture relating to the **Teaching Elder, Ruling Elder, and Deacon**, and be very prayerful in **electing** persons to these offices.



Eric Batel (Mar 3 2026 20:46 15 EST)

TE Eric Batel, Moderator



TE Robert M. Howard, Stated Clerk

² See Romans 1:26–27 on desires contrary to God’s created order; Genesis 1–2 on the creation of male and female; Westminster Larger Catechism Q.139 on

the moral duties of Christians and the proper ordering of affections.

46-44 *(to the Ministerial Vocation Standing Committee)*
From the Permanent Judicial Commission

The **Permanent Judicial Commission's** report and recommendation that the 46th General Assembly considers it in deciding whether to accept or decline Recommendation 46-45, Florida and the Caribbean Presbytery **G. 9-3A Overture**.

www.epconnect.org/2026report-pjc

[Report of the PJC regarding FCP G. 9-3A Overture](#)

[Florida and the Caribbean Overture](#)

REPORT OF THE PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION

On February 21, 2026, the Florida and the Caribbean Presbytery overtured the 46th General Assembly to amend Section 9-3A of the *Book of Government* (the “**FCP 9-3A Overture**”). The Permanent Judicial Commission of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (the “**PJC**”) examined the proposed amendment for clarity and consistency of language, and for compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, in each case as required by Section G.21-3D.2.a.¹

The FCP 9-3A Overture is identical to an overture from the Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest (the “**PNW 9-3A Overture**”), which the PJC previously reviewed. Accordingly, after due consideration, the PJC determined that its conclusions regarding the PNW 9-3A Overture apply to, and therefore answer, the FCP 9-3A Overture with respect to the required “three-C” analysis. The FCP 9-3A Overture satisfies the requirement of clarity of language, but fails to satisfy the requirements of consistency of language and compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution.²

For the reasons stated in our prior analysis of the PNW 9-3A Overture, the Permanent Judicial Commission respectfully and prayerfully recommends that the General Assembly consider these conclusions in determining whether to accept or decline the FCP 9-3A Overture.

¹ The PJC’s task was limited. We did not determine the wisdom, necessity, or pastoral desirability of the FCP 9-3A Overture, but rather evaluated whether the proposed language is prepared for integration into the Constitution. Our evaluation of the “three-C” criteria helps the General Assembly determine whether an amendment is constitutionally serviceable in its present form, apart from the merits of the proposal itself.

² The PJC minority herein adopts and incorporates by reference the alternative analysis offered in the Minority Report for the PNW 9-3A Overture.

46-45 *(to the Ministerial Vocation Standing Committee)*
Overture from the Presbytery of Florida and the Caribbean

The **Florida and the Caribbean Presbytery** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to amend the *Book of Government* 9-3A.

[Florida and the Caribbean Overture](#)

Overture to the 46th General Assembly

Whereas, God created Adam and Eve and ordained the first marriage and family consisting of one man and one woman in sexual union, establishing the context for the biblical sexual ethic (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:24; 4:1); and

Whereas, God has established the one flesh union between a husband and wife, as a great mystery in reference to Christ and His Church (Ephesians 5:25; 31-32); and

Whereas, the Holy Scriptures declare that the sexual union and desire between one man and one woman, in the covenant of marriage, is righteous and holy, and all other sexual activity is unrighteous and sinful, including homosexuality, which the Holy Scriptures describe as “degrading passions” (Romans 5:18-19; Romans 1:26-27; I Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; *Westminster Confession of Faith* 24:1; *Westminster Larger Catechism* 138, 139); and

Whereas, the application of the Seventh Commandment forbids the sins of homosexuality, unnatural lusts, and unclean affections, affirming that homosexual acts and the desires to commit those acts are both sinful (Matthew 5:27-28; *Westminster Larger Catechism* 139); and

Whereas, the Christian’s identity is rooted in Christ so that he is a “new creation” in Him, his identity cannot be defined by sexual and any other experiences, desires or lifestyles that are contrary to the Holy Scriptures; for the Christian there is a clear distinction between self-conception (“this is who I am”) and their remaining indwelling sin (“this is what I must daily mortify”) (Romans 6:1-14; I Corinthians 6:9-11; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 3:1-5); and

Whereas, identification or ongoing experience as “Same Sex Attracted” or any other identification or ongoing experience contrary to the biblical sexual ethic is sinful, is against nature itself, is something God detests, and is not fitting for an officer of the Church of Christ (Leviticus 18:22; I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:5-6); and

Whereas, the biblical qualifications for a church officer require him (or her) to be “above reproach,” officers and candidates for office must conform their lives to biblical sexual ethics, which include denying and mortifying all sexual passions and desires toward anyone to whom they are not married (I Timothy 3:2); and

Whereas, for two thousand years the Church of Jesus Christ has at no time doctrinally allowed for the ordination of those engaged in homosexual activity or experiencing homosexual desire and thus has been faithful to the Holy Scriptures teaching on human sexuality, sanctification and the offices of the church, and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church has faithfully followed that teaching since its inception; and

Whereas, the *Position Paper on Homosexuality*, adopted by the 16th General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in 1996, affirms, “The witness of God’s Word in both the Old and New Testaments is clear, declaring that the practice of homosexuality, including lust, is a grievous sin, and that any who continue to engage in such activity face the consequences of God’s condemning judgment. However, God’s grace offers love, forgiveness, hope and a new life. The necessary response to this offer is true repentance, including turning from homosexual behavior, and commitment to a faithful obedience to the Lord according to His Word;” and

Whereas, the *Position Paper on Human Sexuality*, adopted by the 37th General Assembly in 2017, declares, “As repentant and forgiven sinners, we in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church resolve to teach the biblical truths of godly sexuality to our members and to all who will listen, with compassion and with courage, regardless of the cost to ourselves;” and

Whereas, the LGBTQ+ movement has infiltrated many quarters of the church, resulting in widespread confusion and controversy and has disrupted the peace and unity of the church; and

Whereas, the question of ordination of those who, on an ongoing basis experience homosexual desire, is sufficiently grave so that should any court in the EPC ordain someone who acknowledges ongoing homosexual desire, there is likely to be widespread rejection of the validity of that person’s ordination resulting in significant disruption of the peace and unity of the church; and

Whereas, promoting the peace and unity of the church is a vow all church officers of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church make (*Book of Government* 13-2A.9); and

Whereas, in response to the consideration of ordained church office for those currently experiencing Same Sex Attraction, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church must take a definitive, constitutional position on this matter;

Therefore, be it resolved that Florida and Caribbean Presbytery overtures the 46th General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church to amend the Book of Government 9-3A. as follows:

Current Book of Government 9-3A.	Proposed Book of Government 9-3A.
According to Scripture, those who bear office in the Church should exhibit certain characteristics of life. This includes being above reproach, sound in the faith, wise in the things of God, and discreet in all things.	“According to Scripture, those who bear office in the church shall exhibit certain characteristics of life. This includes being above reproach, sound in the faith, wise in the things of God, and discreet in all

Persons who fill this office should exhibit a lifestyle that is an example to all, both in and outside the Church. A congregation preparing to elect persons to this holy office should carefully study appropriate passages of Scripture relating to the Ruling Elder and be very prayerful in selecting persons to this office.

things. Persons who fill **these offices shall** exhibit a lifestyle that is an example to all, both in and outside the Church. **Therefore, persons eligible for church office shall conform in heart, mind, and conduct to God’s design for human sexuality, embracing with gratitude the calling of either chastity in singleness or fidelity within marriage between one man and one woman. Those who profess, persist in, or identify with unnatural desires or affections, contrary to God’s created order and condemned by Scripture as against nature, are disqualified from holding office in Christ’s Church.**¹ A **presbytery or** congregation preparing to elect persons to **these holy offices shall** carefully study appropriate passages of Scripture relating to the **Teaching Elder, Ruling Elder, and Deacon**, and be very prayerful in **electing** persons to these offices.

² *See Romans 1:26–27 on desires contrary to God’s created order; Genesis 1–2 on the creation of male and female; Westminster Larger Catechism Q.139 on the moral duties of Christians and the proper ordering of affections.*

46-46 *(to the Ministerial Vocation Standing Committee)*
From the Permanent Judicial Commission

The **Permanent Judicial Commission's** report and recommendation that the 46th General Assembly considers it in deciding whether to accept or decline Recommendation 46-47, New River Presbytery **G. 9-3A Overture**.

www.epconnect.org/2026report-pjc

[Report of the PJC regarding NRP G. 9-3A Overture](#)

[New River Overture](#)

REPORT OF THE PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION

On February 6, 2026, the New River Presbytery overtured the 46th General Assembly to amend Section 9-3A of the *Book of Government* (the “**NRP 9-3A Overture**”). The Permanent Judicial Commission of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (the “**PJC**”) examined the proposed amendment for clarity and consistency of language, and for compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, in each case as required by Section G.21-3D.2.a.¹

The NRP 9-3A Overture is identical to an overture from the Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest (the “**PNW 9-3A Overture**”), which the PJC previously reviewed. Accordingly, after due consideration, the PJC determined that its conclusions regarding the PNW 9-3A Overture apply to, and therefore answer, the NRP 9-3A Overture with respect to the required “three-C” analysis. The NRP 9-3A Overture satisfies the requirement of clarity of language, but fails to satisfy the requirements of consistency of language and compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution.²

For the reasons stated in our prior analysis of the PNW 9-3A Overture, the Permanent Judicial Commission respectfully and prayerfully recommends that the General Assembly consider these conclusions in determining whether to accept or decline the NRP 9-3A Overture.

¹ The PJC’s task was limited. We did not determine the wisdom, necessity, or pastoral desirability of the NRP 9-3A Overture, but rather evaluated whether the proposed language is prepared for integration into the Constitution. Our evaluation of the “three-C” criteria helps the General Assembly determine whether an amendment is constitutionally serviceable in its present form, apart from the merits of the proposal itself.

² The PJC minority herein adopts and incorporates by reference the alternative analysis offered in the Minority Report for the PNW 9-3A Overture.

46-47 *(to the Ministerial Vocation Standing Committee)*
Overture from the Presbytery of the New River

The **New River Presbytery** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to amend the *Book of Government* 9-3A.

[New River Overture](#)

Overture to the 46th General Assembly

Whereas, God created Adam and Eve and ordained the first marriage and family consisting of one man and one woman in sexual union, establishing the context for the biblical sexual ethic (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:24; 4:1); and

Whereas, God has established the one flesh union between a husband and wife, as a great mystery in reference to Christ and His Church (Ephesians 5:25; 31-32); and

Whereas, the Holy Scriptures declare that the sexual union and desire between one man and one woman, in the covenant of marriage, is righteous and holy, and all other sexual activity is unrighteous and sinful, including homosexuality, which the Holy Scriptures describe as “degrading passions” (Romans 5:18-19; Romans 1:26-27; I Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; *Westminster Confession of Faith* 24:1; *Westminster Larger Catechism* 138, 139); and

Whereas, the application of the Seventh Commandment forbids the sins of homosexuality, unnatural lusts, and unclean affections, affirming that homosexual acts and the desires to commit those acts are both sinful (Matthew 5:27-28; *Westminster Larger Catechism* 139); and

Whereas, the Christian’s identity is rooted in Christ so that he is a “new creation” in Him, his identity cannot be defined by sexual and any other experiences, desires or lifestyles that are contrary to the Holy Scriptures; for the Christian there is a clear distinction between self-conception (“this is who I am”) and their remaining indwelling sin (“this is what I must daily mortify”) (Romans 6:1-14; I Corinthians 6:9-11; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 3:1-5); and

Whereas, identification or ongoing experience as “Same Sex Attracted” or any other identification or ongoing experience contrary to the biblical sexual ethic is sinful, is against nature itself, is something God detests, and is not fitting for an officer of the Church of Christ (Leviticus 18:22; I Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:5-6); and

Whereas, the biblical qualifications for a church officer require him (or her) to be “above reproach,” officers and candidates for office must conform their lives to biblical sexual ethics, which include denying and mortifying all sexual passions and desires toward anyone to whom they are not married (I Timothy 3:2); and

Whereas, for two thousand years the Church of Jesus Christ has at no time doctrinally allowed for the ordination of those engaged in homosexual activity or experiencing homosexual desire and thus has been faithful to the Holy Scriptures teaching on human sexuality, sanctification and the offices of the church, and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church has faithfully followed that teaching since its inception; and

Whereas, the *Position Paper on Homosexuality*, adopted by the 16th General Assembly of the

Evangelical Presbyterian Church in 1996, affirms, “The witness of God’s Word in both the Old and New Testaments is clear, declaring that the practice of homosexuality, including lust, is a grievous sin, and that any who continue to engage in such activity face the consequences of God’s condemning judgment. However, God’s grace offers love, forgiveness, hope and a new life. The necessary response to this offer is true repentance, including turning from homosexual behavior, and commitment to a faithful obedience to the Lord according to His Word;” and

Whereas, the *Position Paper on Human Sexuality*, adopted by the 37th General Assembly in 2017, declares, “As repentant and forgiven sinners, we in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church resolve to teach the biblical truths of godly sexuality to our members and to all who will listen, with compassion and with courage, regardless of the cost to ourselves;” and

Whereas, the LGBTQ+ movement has infiltrated many quarters of the church, resulting in widespread confusion and controversy and has disrupted the peace and unity of the church; and

Whereas, the question of ordination of those who, on an ongoing basis experience homosexual desire, is sufficiently grave so that should any court in the EPC ordain someone who acknowledges ongoing homosexual desire, there is likely to be widespread rejection of the validity of that person’s ordination resulting in significant disruption of the peace and unity of the church; and

Whereas, promoting the peace and unity of the church is a vow all church officers of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church make (*Book of Government* 13-2A.9); and

Whereas, in response to the consideration of ordained church office for those currently experiencing Same Sex Attraction, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church must take a definitive, constitutional position on this matter;

Therefore, be it resolved that The New River Presbytery overtures the 46th General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church to amend the Book of Government 9-3A. as follows:

Current Book of Government 9-3A.

According to Scripture, those who bear office in the Church should exhibit certain characteristics of life. This includes being above reproach, sound in the faith, wise in the things of God, and discreet in all things. Persons who fill this office should exhibit a lifestyle that is an example to all, both in and outside the Church. A congregation preparing to elect persons to this holy office should carefully study appropriate passages of Scripture relating to the Ruling Elder and be very prayerful in selecting persons to this office.

Proposed Book of Government 9-3A.

“According to Scripture, those who bear office in the church **shall** exhibit certain characteristics of life. This includes being above reproach, sound in the faith, wise in the things of God, and discreet in all things. Persons who fill **these offices shall** exhibit a lifestyle that is an example to all, both in and outside the Church. **Therefore, persons eligible for church office shall conform in heart, mind, and conduct to God’s design for human sexuality, embracing with gratitude the calling of either chastity in singleness or fidelity within marriage between one man and one woman. Those who profess, persist in, or identify with unnatural desires or affections, contrary to God’s created order and condemned by Scripture as against nature, are disqualified from holding office in Christ’s Church.**¹ A presbytery or congregation preparing to elect persons to **these holy offices shall** carefully study appropriate passages of Scripture relating to the **Teaching Elder, Ruling Elder, and Deacon**, and be very prayerful in **electing** persons to these offices.

1. See Romans 1:26–27 on desires contrary to God’s created order; Genesis 1–2 on the creation of male and female; Westminster Larger Catechism Q.139 on the moral duties of Christians and the proper ordering of affections.

On 6 February 2026, the Elders of the New River Presbytery, meeting at River Oaks Community Church approved this Overture to be sent to the 46th General Assembly.

/S/ Rufus T Burton
Rufus T Burton, Clerk

46-48 *(to the Ministerial Vocation Standing Committee)*
From the Permanent Judicial Commission

The **Permanent Judicial Commission's** report and recommendation that the 46th General Assembly considers it in deciding whether to accept or decline Recommendation 46-49, West Presbytery **G. 9-3A** Overture.

www.epconnect.org/2026report-pjc

[Report of the PJC regarding POW G. 9-3A Overture](#)

[West Overture](#)

REPORT OF THE PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION

On April 15, 2026, the Presbytery of the West overtured the 46th General Assembly to amend Section 9-3A of the *Book of Government* (the “**POW 9-3A Overture**”). The Permanent Judicial Commission of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (the “**PJC**”) examined the proposed amendment pursuant to Section G.21-3D.2.a.

The POW 9-3A Overture is substantially similar to the PNW 9-3A Overture, which the PJC previously reviewed. The PNW 9-3A Overture, which has become commonly known as the “redline” overture, and the instant POW 9-3A Overture differ in that the POW 9-3A eliminates the word “unnatural” as a modifier to “desires or affections,” adds certain references to an explanatory footnote, and adds a second explanatory footnote acknowledging the possibility of a believer’s success in putting to death same-sex attraction in this life.

The question presented is whether those revisions are sufficient to alter the conclusions we reached with respect to the PNW 9-3A Overture’s clarity, consistency, and compatibility. They are not. Concerning the “three-Cs,” the POW 9-3A Overture has the same strengths and deficiencies as the PNW 9-3A Overture.

Accordingly, after due consideration, the PJC determined as follows regarding the POW 9-3A Overture:

Question Presented	PJC Determination
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of clarity of language?	Yes. Vote: 8-1.
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of consistency of language?	No. Vote: 5-4.
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of compatibility with other provisions of the EPC Constitution?	No. Vote: 5-4.

The PJC’s task was limited. We did not determine the wisdom, necessity, or pastoral desirability of the POW 9-3A Overture, but rather evaluated whether the proposed language is prepared for integration into the Constitution. Our evaluation of the “three-C” criteria helps the General Assembly determine whether an amendment, such as the POW 9-3A Overture, is constitutionally serviceable in its present form, apart from the merits of the proposal itself.

This constitutes our report and recommendation to the General Assembly.¹

¹ See G.21-3D.2.b.

I. Relationship to Prior Analysis

The POW 9-3A Overture adopts an operative structure nearly identical to the PNW 9-3A Overture. It states:

Those who profess, persist in, or identify with desires or affections ... are disqualified from holding office in Christ's Church.

The only change to the operative provision is the removal of the adjective "unnatural," which appears after the word "with" and before the word "desires" in the PNW 9-3A Overture.

The other revisions offered by the Presbytery of the West are primarily explanatory in nature. In particular, the overture adds a footnote stating that:

[R]epentant believers experiencing such desires are true believers and included in Christ's church. Likewise, by the redemption of Jesus Christ, such desires and the resulting disqualification may be removed in this life.

The PJC recognizes this addition as an effort to acknowledge the reality of progressive sanctification in the desires and affections of believers. The possibility of victory in Christ over a particular sin on this side of glory is not to be denied.

II. Clarity

The POW revisions do not materially alter the clarity analysis we undertook with the PNW 9-3A Overture, however. The operative terms of the provision remain materially unchanged, and the same considerations regarding the interpretation of "profess," "persist," and "identify" apply. Although these terms admit of some variability in interpretation, the PJC majority does not view this as fatal.

The language of the POW 9-3A Overture, taken as a whole, conveys a sufficiently definite meaning in context to permit examination of candidates by presbyteries and sessions. It directs attention to matters that may be explored through a candidate's words and reputation within the church's existing processes. Our church courts have a history of wisely applying constitutional text that admits of some variability, and there is every reason to continue to trust reasonably informed presbyters in faithfully doing so in the future.²

The POW 9-3A Overture therefore satisfies the requirement of "clarity of language."

III. Consistency

The PJC previously concluded that the PNW 9-3A Overture is inconsistent with the logic of the Westminster Standards, particularly in its treatment of indwelling sin and progressive sanctification.

² If a lower court errs by approving an inappropriate candidate for office, Chapter 14 of the *Book of Discipline* allows a concerned elder with standing the opportunity to file a complaint with a higher court and resolve the matter.

The Presbytery of the West revisions implicitly acknowledge those doctrines but do not integrate them into the operation of the proposed rule. The disqualification attaches to the mere presence of a category of desires (i.e., same-sex attraction), rather than to the candidate's response to sinful impulses in repentance and life.

In addition to being inconsistent with the logic of the Standards, the POW 9-3A Overture, like the PNW 9-3A Overture, introduces internally inconsistent terminology in its last sentence. If adopted by the General Assembly, G.9-3A would contain language erroneously suggesting that presbyteries "elect" Teaching Elders, Ruling Elders, and Deacons, and that congregations "elect" Teaching Elders.

For these reasons, the POW 9-3A Overture fails to satisfy the requirement of "consistency of language."

IV. Compatibility

Our prior analysis of the PNW 9-3A Overture's compatibility with the Constitution, including the Westminster Standards, applies to the POW 9-3A Overture, as well. In short, the Westminster Standards teach *both* that sinful desires must be put to death³ *and* that the remnants of sin remain in every believer.⁴ The Standards do not single out particular categories of indwelling sin and remove them from that framework. Because the Standards are subscribed by every elder and form part of the Constitution's doctrinal framework, proposed amendments to the Constitution must preserve both truths.⁵

The issue is whether the Constitution may treat the presence of certain desires or affections, without regard to the believer's repentance and progress in holiness, as *per se* determinative of fitness for office. The majority concluded that it may not do so without departing from the system of doctrine set forth in the Standards. The Presbytery of the West revisions acknowledge these principles but do not reconcile them within the operative structure of the provision. The overture continues to treat the presence of a condition as determinative of qualification for office, without incorporating the broader framework of sanctification described in the Standards.

For these reasons, the majority concluded that the overture does not satisfy the requirement of "compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution."

V. Conclusion

The PJC recognizes and appreciates the effort of the Presbytery of the West to uphold the biblical sexual ethic and maintain the purity of Christ's church. The revisions made to the original redline overture reflect a desire to affirm both the seriousness of sin and the reality of progressive

³ See Westminster Larger Catechism 138 & 139.

⁴ See Westminster Confession of Faith 6.5 & 13.1-3; Westminster Larger Catechism 78 & 79.

⁵ See G.23-1B [stating that "[n]o changes may be made to the Book of Order, including any of its parts composed of the Book of Government, the Book of Discipline, and the Book of Worship, that would be contrary to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms" (emphasis in original removed)].

sanctification. Nevertheless, because those revisions do not alter the operative structure of the text, the conclusions previously reached by the PJC remain applicable.

The POW 9-3A Overture satisfies the requirement of clarity of language, but fails to satisfy the requirements of consistency of language and compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution.⁶

Accordingly, for the reasons stated above and in our prior analysis of the PNW 9-3A Overture, the Permanent Judicial Commission respectfully and prayerfully recommends that the General Assembly consider these conclusions in determining whether to accept or decline the POW 9-3A Overture.

⁶ The PJC minority herein adopts and incorporates by reference the alternative analysis offered in the Minority Report for the PNW 9-3A Overture.

46-49 *(to the Ministerial Vocation Standing Committee)*
Overture from the Presbytery of the West

The **West Presbytery** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to amend the *Book of Government* 9-3A.

[West Overture](#)

**Christ Covenant EPC & Grace Lakin EPC
Overture to the 46th General Assembly**

The Presbytery of the West overtures the 46th General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church to amend the Book of Government 9- 3A. as follows:

<p style="text-align: center;">Current Book of Government 9-3A.</p> <p>According to Scripture, those who bear office in the Church should exhibit certain characteristics of life. This includes being above reproach, sound in the faith, wise in the things of God, and discreet in all things. Persons who fill this office should exhibit a lifestyle that is an example to all, both in and</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Proposed Book of Government 9-3A.</p> <p>“According to Scripture, those who bear office in the church shall exhibit certain characteristics of life. This includes being above reproach, sound in the faith, wise in the things of God, and discreet in all things. Persons who fill these offices shall exhibit a lifestyle that is an example to all, both in and</p>
<p>outside the Church. A congregation preparing to elect persons to this holy office should carefully study appropriate passages of Scripture relating to the Ruling Elder and be very prayerful in selecting persons to this office.</p>	<p>outside the Church. Therefore, persons eligible for church office shall conform in heart, mind, and conduct to God’s design for human sexuality, embracing with gratitude the calling of either chastity in singleness or fidelity within marriage between one man and one woman.¹ Those who profess, persist in, or identify with desires or affections contrary to God’s created order and condemned by Scripture as against nature, are disqualified² from holding office in Christ’s Church.³ A presbytery or congregation preparing to elect persons to these holy offices shall carefully study appropriate passages of Scripture relating to the Teaching Elder, Ruling Elder, and Deacon, and be very prayerful in electing persons to these offices.</p> <p>¹ See Westminster Confession of Faith 24:1</p> <p>² While these individuals are disqualified from ordination, repentant believers with such ongoing yet not embraced unnatural desires are true believers and included in Christ’s church. Likewise, by the redemption of Jesus Christ, such desires and the resulting disqualification may be removed in this life.</p> <p>³ See Romans 1:26–27 on desires contrary to God’s created order; Genesis 1–2 on the creation of male and female; Westminster Larger Catechism Q. 138-139 and 150-151 on the moral duties of Christians and the proper ordering of affections, especially for those in church leadership.</p>

46-50 *(to the Overtures and Resolutions Standing Committee)*
Overture from the Presbytery of Florida and the Caribbean

The **Florida and the Caribbean Presbytery** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to adjust the presbytery boundaries to include Spain.

[Florida and the Caribbean Overture](#)

Overture on Presbytery Boundaries

From: Presbytery of Florida & the Caribbean

The Presbytery of Florida & the Caribbean overtures the 46th General Assembly to adjust the presbytery boundaries to include Spain.

- Rationale:
1. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church is a Global Movement that reaches beyond the boundaries of the United States.
 2. The establishment of an EPC presence often begins with the reception of a single church from which other congregations or church plants originate. (Ex: our churches in The Bahamas and Puerto Rico)
 3. There is currently no Reformed body in Spain that is similar in nature to the EPC.
 4. The Presbytery of Florida & the Caribbean is the first fully bilingual presbytery which utilizes both electronic participation and live translation technology to accommodate members from different language groups.
 5. The Presbytery has approved the reception of Iglesia Lapresbi in Málaga Spain as the initial EPC presence in Spain which promises to be the first of many congregations in that nation.

46-51 *(to the Overtures and Resolutions Standing Committee)*
From the Permanent Judicial Commission

The **Permanent Judicial Commission** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** recommendation 46-50 to adjust the Florida and the Caribbean Presbytery boundaries to include Spain.

www.epconnect.org/2026report-pjc

[Florida and the Caribbean Overture](#)

46-52 *(to the Overtures and Resolutions Standing Committee)*
Overture from the Presbytery of the Rivers and Lakes

The **Rivers and Lakes Presbytery** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to approve the proposed amendments to the *Book of Government* 5-10.

[Rivers and Lakes Overture](#)

Original Text	Proposed Revisions <i>bold italicized</i>
<p>G.5-10 The dismissal of a local church to another body or to independence</p> <p>A. The Church Session shall notify the Presbytery of its desire to be dismissed. Once a Church Session has notified the Presbytery of its desire under this section, the Presbytery shall take no action to dismiss, dissolve, or divide the local church and its elders until all proceedings under this section 5-10 are fully completed. This provision shall not be construed to prohibit the Presbytery from reasonable means of access to the Session or church members in order to present its position. Nor shall this provision be construed to prohibit the presbytery from taking action under the <i>Book of Discipline</i> on matters unrelated to the request for dismissal.</p> <p>B. At a duly called meeting of the congregation, with representatives from the Presbytery present and having the privilege of the floor, the motion to request dismissal shall be put and discussed. The meeting shall recess for no less than three months and no more than six months, to a date determined at the meeting.</p> <p>C. At the time set, the congregation shall reconvene, with representatives from the Presbytery present and having the privilege of the floor, and the request to dismiss shall again be put to the congregation and the floor opened for discussion. The congregation shall then</p>	<p>G.5-10 The dismissal of a local church to another body or to independence</p> <p>A. <i>No congregation shall be dismissed to another body or to independence except by the procedures set forth in this section G.5-10.</i></p> <p>B. The Church Session shall notify the Presbytery of its desire to be dismissed; <i>this notice shall include the Active Roll of the congregation as an attachment.</i> Once a Church Session has notified the Presbytery of its desire under this section, the Presbytery shall take no action to dismiss, dissolve, or divide the local church and its elders until all proceedings under this section 5-10 are fully completed. This provision shall not be construed to prohibit the Presbytery from reasonable means of access to the Session or church members in order to present its position. Nor shall this provision be construed to prohibit the presbytery from taking action under the <i>Book of Discipline</i> on matters unrelated to the request for dismissal.</p> <p>C. At a duly called meeting of the congregation, with representatives from the Presbytery present and having the privilege of the floor, the motion to request dismissal shall be put and discussed. The meeting shall recess for <i>adjourn until</i> no less than three months and no more than six months, to a date determined at the meeting.</p> <p>D. At the time set, the congregation shall reconvene, with representatives from the Presbytery present and having the privilege of the floor, and the request to dismiss shall again be put to the congregation and the floor opened for discussion. The congregation shall</p>

Overture #1

<p>vote on the motion by written ballot. If it passes by a two-thirds majority, the Presbytery shall dismiss the congregation as requested with all of its property and assets. Those not desiring to participate in the dismissal shall notify the Presbytery, which will assign them to other congregations of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.</p> <p>D. D. If a request for dismissal fails to achieve the required two-thirds majority,⁴¹ the process of dismissal (G.5-10) may not be repeated until at least 12 months have elapsed following the vote.</p>	<p>then vote on the motion by written ballot, <i>provided that only those listed on the Active Roll attached to the notice given in G.5-10.B may vote.</i> If it passes by a two-thirds majority, the Presbytery shall dismiss the congregation as requested with all of its property and assets. Those not desiring to participate in the dismissal shall notify the Presbytery, which will assign them to other congregations of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.</p> <p>E. If a request for dismissal fails to achieve the required two-thirds majority, the process of dismissal (G.5-10) may not be repeated until at least 12 months have elapsed following the vote.</p>
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Rationale:

- Proposed addition section “A” clarifies that under no circumstances may a congregation renounce jurisdiction since that is inconceivable in a presbyterian form of government; it must follow the procedures established in G.5-10.
- The addition of the Active Roll (G.8-3.B) has the mutual benefit of encouraging the Session to ensure the rolls of the congregation are in order prior to the request for dismissal, as is their responsibility (G.8-1, 3; 18-3), and allowing the Presbytery knowledge of who has standing to vote in the congregational meeting, and who may need to be assigned to other congregations of the church in application of current provision §C and proposed provision §D.
- The G.5-10 process is an initial congregational meeting, followed by a time period of 3-6 months, concluding with a meeting in continuation of the initial meeting. In the updated 12th Edition of Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR) this is considered an “Adjourned Meeting” (RONR 9:17-19). The present parliamentary verbiage of “recess” is in conflict for procedures for adjourned meetings. The proposed language would bring our procedures into conformity with parliamentary procedure.



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Rivers & Lakes Presbytery hereby respectfully overtures the 46th General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church:

Whereas it belongs to synods and councils to make provision for the better administration of the government of the Visible Kingdom through the Order of the church (WCF 31.2); and

Whereas that earthly government must be maintained through diligence since it may err and need to be corrected or improved upon (WCF 31.3); and


Whereas *The Book of Government* grants the authority and responsibility of Presbyteries “to overture the General Assembly on those matters it believes vital or helpful to the whole Church,” (BOG 194.C.2);

Therefore, be it resolved that Rivers & Lakes Presbytery overtures the 46th General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church regarding three matters as enumerated below:

- Overture #1 - Proposed amendments to *The Book of Government* 5-10.
(Approved with a vote of 44 in favor, 0 opposed)
- Overture #2 - Proposed amendments to *The Book of Government* 9-5.
(Approved with a vote of 23 in favor, 14 opposed)
- Overture #3 - Proposed amendments to *The Book of Government* 19-3.
(Approved with a vote of 42 in favor, 0 opposed)

Approved by Rivers & Lakes Presbytery at its 46th Stated Meeting, January 23, 2026.


RE George Kalemkarian, Moderator


TE Annie Rose, Stated Clerk

46-53 *(to the Overtures and Resolutions Standing Committee)*
From the Permanent Judicial Commission

The **Permanent Judicial Commission** recommends that the 46th General Assembly
APPROVE Recommendation 46-52 Rivers and Lakes Presbytery **G. 5-10**.

www.epconnect.org/2026report-pjc

[Report of the PJC regarding RLP G. 5-10 Overture](#)

[Rivers and Lakes Overture](#)

REPORT OF THE PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION

The Rivers and Lakes Presbytery overtured the 46th General Assembly to amend Section 5-10A of the *Book of Government* (the “**PRL 5-10A Overture**”). The Permanent Judicial Commission of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (the “**PJC**”) subsequently examined the proposed amendment for clarity and consistency of language and for compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, in each case as required by Section G.21-3D.2.a.

The PJC understands the categories “clarity,” “consistency,” and “compatibility” to have particular meanings. *Clarity* asks whether the language of the amendment is sufficiently precise that a reasonably informed reader of the Constitution could determine what the provision requires, permits, or forbids without reference to the debate that produced it.¹ *Consistency* examines whether the amendment employs language in a manner consistent with the vocabulary, terminology, and logic used in the Constitution and within the amendment itself. *Compatibility* asks whether the amendment integrates coherently into the broader constitutional framework without creating conflict with other provisions or with the structure of the Constitution as a whole.

After due consideration, the PJC determined as follows regarding the PRL 5-10A Overture:

Question Presented	PJC Determination
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of clarity of language?	Yes. Vote: 8-0, with one abstention.
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of consistency of language?	Yes. Vote: 8-0, with one abstention.
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of compatibility with other provisions of the EPC Constitution?	Yes. Vote: 8-0, with one abstention.

The Permanent Judicial Commission respectfully and prayerfully reports these findings to the 46th General Assembly and recommends that it accept and adopt the PRL 5-10A Overture.²

¹ In many instances, constitutional language is designed to confer discretion on church courts. In such cases, a provision does not fail the clarity test merely because it allows a range of outcomes, since the granting of discretion is the very function the text is intended to serve. The clarity concern arises only where the language does not make clear, in the mind of a reasonably informed reader, the scope or object of that discretion.

² See G.21-3D.2.b.

46-54 *(to the Overtures and Resolutions Standing Committee)*
Overture from the Presbytery of the Rivers and Lakes

The **Rivers and Lakes Presbytery** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to approve the proposed amendments to the *Book of Government* 19-3.

[Rivers and Lakes Overture](#)

Overture #3

Original Text	Proposed Revisions <i>bold italicized</i>
<p>G.19-3 Officers of the Presbytery</p> <p>A. Moderator The Moderator of the Presbytery shall be elected by that court. The person elected must be a Ruling or Teaching Elder. A Ruling Elder, once elected, shall be a member of the court for the length of term to which elected.</p> <p>1. Length of Term Election may be for that stated meeting of the court or, at the discretion of the Presbytery, for one year. A Ruling Elder, once elected as Moderator, shall be a member of the court for the length of term to which elected.</p>	<p>G.19-3 Officers of the Presbytery</p> <p>A. Moderator The Moderator of the Presbytery shall be elected by that court. The person elected must be a Ruling or Teaching Elder. A Ruling Elder, once elected <i>as Moderator</i>, shall be a member of the court for the length of term to which elected.</p> <p>1. Length of Term Election may be for that stated meeting of the court or, at the discretion of the Presbytery, for one year. A Ruling Elder, once elected as Moderator, shall be a member of the court for the length of term to which elected.</p>

Rationale:

- This eliminates and clarifies a present redundancy.



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Rivers & Lakes Presbytery hereby respectfully overtures the 46th General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church:

Whereas it belongs to synods and councils to make provision for the better administration of the government of the Visible Kingdom through the Order of the church (WCF 31.2); and

Whereas that earthly government must be maintained through diligence since it may err and need to be corrected or improved upon (WCF 31.3); and

Whereas *The Book of Government* grants the authority and responsibility of Presbyteries “to overture the General Assembly on those matters it believes vital or helpful to the whole Church,” (BOG 194.C.2);

Therefore, be it resolved that Rivers & Lakes Presbytery overtures the 46th General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church regarding three matters as enumerated below:

Overture #1 - Proposed amendments to *The Book of Government* 5-10.

(Approved with a vote of 44 in favor, 0 opposed)

Overture #2 - Proposed amendments to *The Book of Government* 9-5.

(Approved with a vote of 23 in favor, 14 opposed)

Overture #3 - Proposed amendments to *The Book of Government* 19-3.

(Approved with a vote of 42 in favor, 0 opposed)

Approved by Rivers & Lakes Presbytery at its 46th Stated Meeting, January 23, 2026.

Handwritten signature of George Kalemkarian in black ink.

RE George Kalemkarian, Moderator

Handwritten signature of Annie Rose in black ink.

TE Annie Rose, Stated Clerk

46-55 *(to the Overtures and Resolutions Standing Committee)*
From the Permanent Judicial Commission

The **Permanent Judicial Commission** recommends that the 46th General Assembly
APPROVE Recommendation 46-54 River and Lakes Presbytery **G. 19-3**.

www.epconnect.org/2026report-pjc

[Report of the PJC regarding RLP G. 19-3 Overture](#)

[Rivers and Lakes Overture](#)

REPORT OF THE PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION

The Rivers and Lakes Presbytery overtured the 46th General Assembly to amend Section 19-3 of the *Book of Government* (the “***PRL 19-3 Overture***”). The Permanent Judicial Commission of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (the “***PJC***”) subsequently examined the proposed amendment for clarity and consistency of language and for compatibility with other provisions of the Constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, in each case as required by Section G.21-3D.2.a.

The PJC understands the categories “clarity,” “consistency,” and “compatibility” to have particular meanings. *Clarity* asks whether the language of the amendment is sufficiently precise that a reasonably informed reader of the Constitution could determine what the provision requires, permits, or forbids without reference to the debate that produced it.¹ *Consistency* examines whether the amendment employs language in a manner consistent with the vocabulary, terminology, and logic used in the Constitution and within the amendment itself. *Compatibility* asks whether the amendment integrates coherently into the broader constitutional framework without creating conflict with other provisions or with the structure of the Constitution as a whole.

After due consideration, the PJC determined as follows regarding the PRL 19-3 Overture:

Question Presented	PJC Determination
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of clarity of language?	Yes. Vote: 8-0, with one abstention.
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of consistency of language?	Yes. Vote: 8-0, with one abstention.
Does the amendment satisfy the requirement of compatibility with other provisions of the EPC Constitution?	Yes. Vote: 8-0, with one abstention.

The Permanent Judicial Commission respectfully and prayerfully reports these findings to the 46th General Assembly and recommends that it accept and adopt the PRL 19-3 Overture.²

¹ In many instances, constitutional language is designed to confer discretion on church courts. In such cases, a provision does not fail the clarity test merely because it allows a range of outcomes, since the granting of discretion is the very function the text is intended to serve. The clarity concern arises only where the language does not make clear, in the mind of a reasonably informed reader, the scope or object of that discretion.

² See G.21-3D.2.b.



A global movement of
evangelistic presbyterians

46-56 (to the World Outreach Standing Committee)

From the World Outreach Committee

Proposed Amendments to the *Rules for Assembly X 10-1.B*

Current Language: RfA 10-1.B	Proposed Language: RfA 10-1.B <i>additions, in bold italics, deletions</i>
<p>Committee on World Outreach</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee on World Outreach shall be comprised of nine members on a three-year, three-class system, with the Moderator and Stated Clerk serving as ex-officio members with voice and vote. A quorum of the committee shall be five, excluding ex-officio members. The Committee's membership shall include three Teaching Elders and at least four Ruling Elders. The two remaining positions may be filled by non-ordained, active members of EPC churches with particular expertise or experience in world missions. Committee members may serve all or part of two consecutive terms and then may not be reelected for at least one year. The Committee on World Outreach shall meet at least twice a year, including the week of the General Assembly. The Committee on World Outreach, in consultation with the Ministerial Vocation Committee, shall be responsible for providing a course of instruction for those global workers to be commissioned by the General Assembly with authority to administer sacraments on the mission field (W.3-1, G.20-4A.5). All such workers shall sustain a written examination developed by the Ministerial Vocation Committee, be recommended to the General Assembly by the World Outreach Committee and sustain an oral examination by the World Outreach Committee. 	<p>Committee on World Outreach</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee on World Outreach shall be comprised of nine <i>twelve</i> members on a three-year, three-class system, with the Moderator and Stated Clerk serving as ex-officio members with voice and vote. A quorum of the committee shall be five <i>seven</i>, excluding ex-officio members. The Committee's membership shall include three <i>four</i> Teaching Elders and at least four <i>five</i> Ruling Elders. The two <i>three</i> remaining positions may be filled by non-ordained, active members of EPC churches with particular expertise or experience in world missions. Committee members may serve all or part of two consecutive terms and then may not be reelected for at least one year. The Committee on World Outreach shall meet at least twice a year, including the week of the General Assembly. The Committee on World Outreach, in consultation with the Ministerial Vocation Committee, shall be responsible for providing a course of instruction for those global workers to be commissioned by the General Assembly with authority to administer sacraments on the mission field (W.3-1, G.20-4A.5). All such workers shall sustain a written examination developed by the Ministerial Vocation Committee, be recommended to the General Assembly by the World Outreach Committee and sustain an oral examination by the World Outreach Committee.

Rationale: This amendment is to increase the number of WOC members from 9 to 12. The purpose is to gain better representation across the 16 presbyteries and increase capacity for working sub-committees as World Outreach has grown by over 40% in the last 5 years.

46-57 *(to the Administration Standing Committee)*
From the National Leadership Team

The NLT recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** the [FY27 Administrative Budget.](#)

<http://www.epconnect.org/2026report-nlt>

[FY27 Budget Request Narrative](#)

[Description of Accounts](#)

*Additional budget information can be located on our GA documents page under [Other Documents.](#)

**FY27 Budget Request**

See attached budget narrative for descriptions.

	FY26 Actual through April	Annualized/ Projected FY26 Actual	FY26 Budget	FY27 Request
Revenue				
POI	2,292,473	2,716,932	2,724,567	2,798,440
Service Provider Income	474,578	569,494	561,262	673,232
Pledge	40,000	40,000	40,000	0
Interest and Dividends	70,457	84,548	105,653	83,723
Total Revenue	2,877,508	3,410,974	3,431,482	3,555,395
Expenses				
Administration				
Staff Costs	1,799,977	2,111,972	2,034,098	2,113,743
Staff Travel	5,208	6,250	0	3,600
Executive Travel	32,594	39,113	30,000	30,000
Executive Travel - ASC	31,362	37,634	30,000	35,000
Professional Expense Allowance	2,812	3,374	4,000	4,000
Commercial Insurance	54,439	66,296	67,882	69,611
Tech Services	157,757	189,308	154,685	163,726
General Office	272,159	326,591	373,383	340,084
Professional Services	50,932	50,932	50,700	53,235
Total Administration	2,407,240	2,831,470	2,744,748	2,812,999
Church Planting				
Leadership Team Meetings	782	782	0	0
Leadership Expenses	38,255	46,924	50,000	50,000
Assessment	2,294	2,294	0	0
Total Church Planting	41,331	50,000	50,000	50,000
Church Health				
Mtgs./Training/Misc.	2,029	2,029	0	0
Travel	7,971	7,971	10,000	10,000
Total Church Health	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000

Effective Biblical Leadership				
EBL - General	8,744	8,744	9,180	8,000
Chaplain Endorser Travel	8,942	8,942	10,000	10,000
Chaplains Work & Care	6,775	6,775	10,200	7,000
Disaster Relief	3,425	3,425	8,000	5,000
Ministerial Vocation Committee	14,968	14,968	18,720	23,400
Next Gen Committee	7,291	7,291	7,830	7,830
Presbytery Moderators	12,615	12,615	14,390	29,580
XP/Admin Peer Network	6,667	8,000	8,000	8,000
7:9 Commission	14,553	14,553	15,000	26,250
National Leadership Team	27,312	27,312	25,000	37,500
Presbytery Min. Chairs	6,058	6,058	16,320	16,320
Presbytery Stated Clerks	15,144	15,144	15,000	23,400
Theology	3,975	3,975	6,120	6,120
Book of Discipline Taskforce			0	6,000
Digital Discipleship Committee			0	6,000
AIC - Digital Discipleship Pos. Paper			0	6,000
AIC - SSA	6,442	6,442	12,000	0
AIC - Ordination	9,534	9,534	12,000	0
AIC - Disabilities and Sacraments	0	0	9,180	8,000
Total Effective Biblical Leadership	152,445	153,778	196,940	234,400
Global Movement				
World Outreach	343,871	407,540	408,685	419,766
Fraternal Relations Expenses	8,778	10,534	21,110	28,230
Total Global Movement	352,649	418,073	429,795	447,996
Total Operating Expenses	2,963,665	3,463,322	3,431,483	3,555,395
Net Cash Flow from Operating Activities	(86,157)	(52,348)	0	0

FY27 Budget Request Narrative

REVENUE

POI (Percentage of Income) is projected to come within .3% of the FY26 budget. FY27 POI is based on 3% growth over the projected FY26 POI.

Service Provider Income is projected to exceed the budget by 1.5%. The FY27 increase is primarily due to changes in EPC OGA staff allocations. Other costs such as office space rent and commercial insurance are included in this number.

A pledge was made and fulfilled in FY26. No pledges were made for FY27.

Interest and Dividends on an annualized basis for FY26 are expected to be over \$21,000 lower than the budgeted amount for the period. The primary reason for the shortfall was a deteriorating interest rate environment and equity market returns impacted by the level of economic uncertainty during the period. The FY27 budget reflects a more stabilized environment, albeit at the lower levels present at the end of FY26.

EXPENSES

Administration

Staff costs actual expenses are projected to exceed budget by 3.8%. This is due to additional staffing needs as well as some overtime costs. This included additional staffing needed for the increase in number of GA committees as well as new responsibilities in serving WO. The FY27 budget does not include a cost-of-living increase and is projected to be virtually the same as FY26 actual.

Limited staff travel was necessary in FY26. A relatively small amount for FY27 should suffice.

The Executive Travel lines exceeded budget due to unanticipated travel needs. It is expected that travel will be more normal in FY27.

Professional Expense Allowance is under budget for FY26. It is anticipated that the same budget should suffice for FY27.

Commercial insurance costs are slightly below budget for FY26. A 5% increase is projected for FY27.

Tech Services will finish over budget by approximately \$35,000. This was primarily due to some equipment needs that were unforeseen. This included unexpected equipment replacement premature obsolescence and equipment for new hires. The FY27 budget request is an accurate estimate of planned software and equipment costs.

General Office will finish below budget for FY26. This was accomplished through efforts to find savings by going paperless as much as possible, for example. A 5% increase is anticipated to cover inflation.

Professional Services will finish virtually on budget. A small increase is anticipated for FY27.

Church Planting will finish on budget for FY26. The same amount is allocated for FY27.

Church Health will finish on budget for FY26. The same amount is allocated for FY27.

Effective Biblical Leadership will finish virtually on budget for FY26. Increases are expected due to an increase in the number of committees meeting in FY27 plus inflation in travel costs.

Global Movement

The EPC's fixed percentage contribution to World Outreach based on POI.

Fraternal Relations will finish FY26 relatively close to budget. The FY27 budget increase is due to the Fraternal Relations Committee planning a meeting for FY27.

Description of Accounts

POI	Percentage of income – The amount contributed by EPC churches to support the work of the EPC, including expenses associated with the Office of the General Assembly and the Gospel Priorities.
Service Provider Income	Costs incurred by the EPC OGA to support both BRI and WO are reimbursed. These costs include rent along with shared personnel costs such as Finance, HR, and IT. These costs are borne by the EPC and shared with BRI and WO through the Service Provider Agreement.
Pledge	Pledge made by church to support OGA salaries.
Interest and Dividends	Interest and dividends are earned both on investments and through interest-bearing bank accounts.
Staff costs	This includes payroll and benefits for OGA staff and leadership.
Staff Travel	Travel expenses for office staff that aren't budgeted in other specific areas.
Executive Travel	Travel expenses for the Stated Clerk and Moderators.
Executive Travel – ASC	Travel expenses for the Assistant Stated Clerk.
Professional Expense Allowance	Expenses necessary for the Stated Clerk to perform his duties such as office supplies.
Commercial Insurance	Insurance policies covering the EPC and its subsidiaries.
Tech Services	Hardware and software costs for OGA staff and systems.
General Office	Office expenses including the office space lease, office supplies, printing, and bank fees.
Professional Services	This is primarily for CPA and legal fees.
Church Planting	Primarily travel-related expenses for the Church Planting Director.
Church Health	Primarily travel-related expenses for the Church Health Director.
Effective Biblical Leadership	These line items represent the travel and meeting expenses of the committees and ministries of the EPC.
Global Movement	This covers the contribution to WO as well as fraternal relations expenses.
Cash, Cash Equivalents, & Investments	This includes cash in the bank as well as investments.
Notes Receivables	The EPC has a loan fund for member churches. This is the current balance.
Other Current Assets	Inventory and accounts receivable.
Fixed Assets	Fixed assets less accumulated depreciation.
Other Assets	Westminster Confession Intangible Asset right to use.

Current Liabilities	Accounts payable
Long-term Liabilities	Copier lease
Net Assets With Restrictions	Cash held in restricted funds.
Net Assets Without Restrictions	Designated covers cash that has been designated by the NLT for specific purposes. Undesignated is the sum of unrestricted cash, notes receivable, other current assets, and other assets, less current and long-term liabilities. Fixed Assets are net of accumulated depreciation.

46-58 *(to the Administration Standing Committee)*
From the National Leadership Team

The NLT recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** the [FY27 Special Projects](#).

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FY27 Special Projects

Account	FY26 Request	Contributions as of April 2026	April 2026 Balance	FY27 Request
Ministerial Vocation				
Care of Pastors and Spouses	\$5,000	\$9,889	\$63,112	\$20,000
Care of Chaplains	\$10,000	\$13,816	\$28,947	\$10,000
Small Church Network	\$5,000	\$469	\$16,879	\$10,000
7:9 Team	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$25,000
	\$45,000	\$24,174	\$108,938	\$65,000
Student and College Ministries				
Next Gen Ministry	\$4,000	\$500	\$10,011	\$4,000
	\$4,000	\$500	\$10,011	\$4,000
National Outreach				
Church Planting Initiatives	\$250,000	\$126,454	\$178,248	\$250,000
Church Planting Bridge Fund	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$150,000
Latino Church Planting	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$50,000
	\$250,000	\$126,454	\$178,248	\$450,000



Account	FY26 Request	Contributions as of April 2026	April 2026 Balance	FY27 Request
World Outreach				
Bangladeshi Project	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$50,000
Family Gathering	\$0	\$55,850	\$0	\$100,000
Food Vouchers for Syrian Refugees	\$20,000	\$141	\$1,473	\$20,000
Indonesia Sea Cucumber Project	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$100,000
Lebanon Philemon Preschool Project	\$280,000	\$213,290	\$264,049	\$280,000
Project Sunshine	\$10,000	\$375	\$1,375	\$20,000
WO Regional Coordinator Mtgs and Training	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$100,000
The Crochet Project	\$20,000	\$6,124	\$4,275	\$20,000
	\$480,000	\$275,780	\$271,172	\$690,000

46-59 *(to the Administration Standing Committee)*
From the National Leadership Team

The National Leadership Team recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** that the purchase of a new Data Management System “Site Stacker” for the General Assembly be made available to all the courts of the church (at no additional charge), which expresses the unity and relatedness of all its parts as described in EPC. **G. 20-1.**

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46-60 (to the Administration Standing Committee)
From the National Leadership Team

The National Leadership Team recommends that the 46th General Assembly

- A:** **WAIVE** the requirements for the report to be read in its entirety (*Rules for Assembly 14-2*)
- B:** **SUSPEND** *Rules for Assembly 14-3* so that the report may be adopted as a whole.
- C:** **APPROVE** the revised [*Book of Discipline*](#) and send it to the Presbyteries as a descending overture.

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*The Book of Discipline is a 103-page document and is available online by clicking the link above. If you would prefer a printed copy, please see Zenaida Bermudez in the business office.

46-61 *(to the Administration Standing Committee)*
From the Permanent Judicial Commission

The **Permanent Judicial Commission** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** the recommendations of the Book of Discipline Task Force to amend the [*Book of Discipline*](#).

www.epconnect.org/2026report-pjc

*The Book of Discipline is a 103-page document and is available online by clicking the link above. If you would prefer a printed copy, please see Zenaida Bermudez in the business office.

46-62 *(to the Administration Standing Committee)*
From the National Leadership Team

The National Leadership Team recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** all ecclesiastical judicial procedures in process on the date the revised *Book of Discipline* is ratified continue to be processed under the provisions of the current [\(2026\) Book of Discipline](#).

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46-63 *(to the Administration Standing Committee)*
Overture from the Presbytery of the Midwest

The **Midwest Presbytery** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to instruct the Office of the General Assembly to not charge an admission fee to future General Assembly meetings, with the exception of meals and childcare, for non-voting spouses and dependents of voting presbyters, and that the Office of the General Assembly to publish a complete overview of the cost of each future General Assembly meeting.

[Midwest Overture](#)



Presbytery of the Midwest

Whereas, the Book of Government describes the EPC as a connectional church, stating of Ruling Elders serving in broader courts that they participate there “recognizing that the Evangelical Presbyterian Church is a connectional church” (BG 9-8);

Whereas, the EPC Book of Government teaches that “The General Assembly, composed of all the courts and local churches of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, expresses the unity and relatedness of all the parts. It has the responsibility of overseeing the total work of the Church” (BG 20-1);

Whereas, the EPC’s General Assembly serves not only as a governing body but also as a time of encouragement, connection, and renewal for pastors and leaders across the denomination; and

Whereas, Scripture recognizes and honors the role of the family in ministry (e.g., 1 Timothy 3:4–5), acknowledging that a pastor’s household is integrally connected to their calling; and

Whereas, pastors’ spouses and families often share materially and spiritually in the burdens, sacrifices, and demands of pastoral ministry, and their encouragement and strengthening contribute to the health of pastoral households, congregations, and the broader Church; and

Whereas, the cost of their attendance at General Assembly may unnecessarily hinder spouses and immediate family members from participating in the fellowship and encouragement that General Assembly can provide;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Presbytery of the Midwest overtures the 46th General Assembly to instruct the Office of the General Assembly to not charge an admission fee to future General Assembly meetings, with the exception of meals and childcare, for non-voting spouses and dependents of voting presbyters.

Be it further resolved that the 46th General Assembly direct the Office of the General Assembly to publish a complete overview of the cost of each future General Assembly meeting.

Rationale

- This overture arises from a pastoral concern for the holistic well-being of EPC clergy and their families. Pastors do not serve alone; their spouses and families often share in the sacrifices, stresses, and joys of ministry. Creating space for their participation in General Assembly – particularly by removing financial obstacles – signals that the EPC values not only its pastors but also those who support them most closely.

Such a step would foster deeper connection, encouragement, and unity across the denomination, strengthening both pastoral longevity and congregational health.



To TE Dean Weaver, Stated Clerk:

Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The included overture to the 46th General Assembly was adopted by the session of Warsaw EPC (Warsaw, Indiana) on April 13, 2026, and subsequently adopted by the Presbytery of the Midwest at its 188th Stated Meeting, held May 8-9, 2026.

We request that the General Assembly prayerfully consider the adoption of the resolutions contained in this overture. Through this consideration, may Christ, our Lord, continue to provide for the better government and continuing improvement of his church.

In Christ, and on behalf of the Presbytery of the Midwest,

TE Pete Scribner
Stated Clerk

TE Andrew Winter
Assistant Stated Clerk

46-64 *(to the Administration Standing Committee)*
Overture from the Presbytery of the Rivers and Lakes

The **Rivers and Lakes Presbytery** respectfully **OVERTURES** the 46th General Assembly to direct the National Leadership Team (NLT) to study the current state of the preservation, cataloging, and accessibility of the historical records of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

[Rivers and Lakes Overture](#)



1
2 Rivers & Lakes Presbytery hereby respectfully overtures the 46th General Assembly of the Evangelical
3 Presbyterian Church with consideration of the preservation and stewardship of the historical record of the
4 Evangelical Presbyterian Church:

5
6 **Whereas**, it belongs to synods and councils to make provision for the better administration of the government
7 of the Visible Kingdom through the Order of the church (WCF 31.2), and that earthly government must
8 be maintained through diligence since it may err and need to be corrected or improved upon (WCF 31.3);
9 and

10
11 **Whereas**, *The Book of Government* grants the authority and responsibility of Presbyteries “to overture
12 the General Assembly on those matters it believes vital or helpful to the whole Church,” (BOG 19-
13 4.C.2);

14
15 **Whereas**, this church has from its genesis prioritized the decent and orderly handling of ecclesiastical
16 matters, since, at the inaugural gathering of the First General Assembly of the Evangelical
17 Presbyterian Church, on the first session on Tuesday afternoon September 22, 1981, the sixth
18 action was to adopt the *Rules for Assembly*; and

19
20 **Whereas**, at the Fifth General Assembly in 1985, The Committee on Administration reported
21 concurrence with the Stated Clerk [L. Edward Davis] that, “serious work should begin on
22 establishing denominational archives to house our history. George Scotchmer has been asked to
23 act as Historian, and with the Clerk, will begin to gather and sort historical data unique to EPC
24 history. For the present, denomination archive will be stored in the Office of the General
25 Assembly” (Minutes 5 – Journal Part II Appendix C “Report of General Assembly Administration
26 Committee, p. 61); and

27
28 **Whereas**, at the same Fifth General Assembly, The Committee on Administration presented
29 recommendation 21, which proposed amending § IV The Stated Clerk of the *Rules for Assembly*
30 by adding, “The Stated Clerk shall have surveillance over denomination archives and historical
31 documents on behalf of the General Assembly, and shall be responsible for the right of access to
32 such documents” (Minutes 5 – 12, p. 18), which was subsequently recommended by the

1 Standing Committee on Administration, adopted by the floor (Minutes 5 – 43, p.47), and
2 immediately recorded in the *Rules for Assembly* as 4-7¹; and
3

4 **Whereas**, in 1986, the Sixth General Assembly adopted Acts of Assembly 86-15, originally rising as
5 Overture 86-B from the Presbytery of the Central South, and commended by the Standing
6 Committee on Administration, “To establish [a] historical foundation, appoint a committee to
7 oversee its development, and instruct that committee to prepare a history of the origins of the
8 Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The Committee for the Historical Foundation shall be
9 responsible for collecting, cataloging, and preserving historical documents, artifacts, and other
10 items of historical significance in the origins and ongoing life of the Evangelical Presbyterian
11 Church” (Minutes 6 – 75, p.58); and
12

13 **Whereas**, in 1987, the 7th General Assembly received a report from a body identified as the “Historical
14 Commission,”² (Minutes 7 – Part II “Historical Commission Report,” p. 114) though the Assembly
15 had authorized a committee to oversee a foundation rather than the establishment of a
16 commission. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the “Historical Commission” was comprised of TE
17 Kent Bull, RE Homer Graham, and TE George Scotchmer; and
18

19 **Whereas**, following this initial activity, since 1987 there is no record of sustained implementation,
20 development, or continuation of the Historical Foundation as envisioned by the General
21 Assembly, nor of an ongoing denominational strategy for the preservation and accessibility of
22 historical materials; and
23

24 **Whereas**, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, though relatively young, has a meaningful and instructive
25 history in its founding, theological commitments, ecclesiastical development, and ministry, which
26 bears significance for future generations of the Church; and
27

28 **Whereas**, the Holy Scriptures commend to the people of God the faithful remembrance and recording of
29 His mighty acts in history, that His deeds might be proclaimed among His people and not
30 forgotten, but declared to future generations “that we may not hide them from their children,
31 but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and His might, and the
32 wonders that He has done” (Psalm 78:4–7); and
33

34 **Whereas**, the people of God are called to publish abroad His saving works and to make known His
35 providential care, saying, “I will recount the steadfast love of the LORD, the praises of the LORD,
36 according to all that the LORD has granted us” (Isaiah 63:7; cf. Psalm 9:11; Psalm 105:1–2); and
37

¹ The section heading of “The Stated Clerk” changes from IV to V, the current section of the *Rules of Assembly*, in 2005 when Overture 04-C was ratified by the 25th General Assembly (Minutes 25 – 9, p. 13-15) to appoint the role of Moderator-Elect, which is the present § IV The Stated Clerk of the *Rules for Assembly*.

² The report is received from “The Historical Commission” (Minutes 7 – Part II “Historical Commission Report,” p. 114) even though the Assembly had authorized a committee to oversee the Historical Foundation rather than a commission (Minutes 6 – 75, p. 58).

1 **Whereas**, it is fitting that even in our own small portion of Christ’s Church - this blessed corner of Zion
2 entrusted to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church - we should remember with gratitude the Lord’s
3 faithfulness in our origins, preservation, and growth, and commit these things to record for the
4 instruction and encouragement of the generations to come (cf. Psalm 102:18; Joel 1:3); and
5

6 **Whereas**, the faithful preservation of ecclesiastical history serves the Church’s witness by bearing
7 testimony to the Lord’s work in her midst (cf. Psalm 78:4–7), and assists future leaders in
8 understanding both the principles and practices that have shaped the denomination;
9

10 **Therefore, be it resolved:** That the 46th General Assembly direct the National Leadership Team (NLT) to
11 study the current state of the preservation, cataloging, and accessibility of the historical records
12 of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.
13

14 That this study include:

- 15 1. A review of Acts of Assembly 86-15 and its original intent regarding the Historical
16 Foundation.
- 17 2. An evaluation of the present responsibilities of the Stated Clerk under the *Rules for*
18 *Assembly* (particularly § 5–7) concerning archival oversight.
- 19 3. An assessment of existing denominational records, archives, and historical materials,
20 including their condition, organization, and accessibility.
- 21 4. Consideration of whether the original vision of an Historical Foundation remains
22 advisable, feasible, and beneficial.
23

24 That the NLT bring recommendations to the 47th General Assembly, including:

- 25 1. Whether to implement, reconstitute, or formally conclude the Historical Foundation
26 envisioned in 1986.
- 27 2. Whether the current assignment of archival responsibility to the Stated Clerk is
28 sufficient, or should be expanded, clarified, or reassigned.
- 29 3. Proposed structures, policies, or partnerships (if any) for the long-term preservation and
30 accessibility of denominational history.
- 31 4. Any recommended amendments to the *Rules for Assembly* or other governing
32 documents necessary to support these conclusions.
33

34
35 That, in its report, the NLT give consideration not only to administrative efficiency, but also to the
36 theological and pastoral value of preserving the history of this our beloved portion of ancestral
37 Zion, the EPC, as a testimony to the faithfulness of God across generations.
38

39 Approved by Rivers & Lakes Presbytery at its 47th Stated Meeting, April 25, 2026, by a vote of 31-0.
40

41 
42 _____
43 RE George Kalemkarian, Moderator

41 
42 _____
43 TE Annie Rose, Stated Clerk

46-65 *(to the Administration Standing Committee)*
From the National Leadership Team

The National Leadership Team recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** the [45th General Assembly Minutes](#).

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46-66 (to the floor)

From the Presbytery Review Committee

The Presbytery Review Committee recommends that the 46th General Assembly **APPROVE** the ***Exceptions*** requiring responses and found in the 2025 minutes of 14 of our 16 Presbyteries.

Alleghenies

The Committee recommends that the Minutes of the Presbytery of the Alleghenies be approved with the following ***exceptions***.

- a. Period of time for term of service not specified-TE Andy Moore, Assistant Pastor, Bellefield EPC. Mtg. 54, pg. 1308-1309, 11C, G. 10.6.A; Acts of Assembly 02-04.4

Central Carolinas

The Committee recommends that the Minutes of the Presbytery of the Central Carolinas be approved with the following ***exceptions***.

- a. No Disparity Correction action taken. Mtgs. 8/9/10, B 19-2A.4b, Acts of Assembly -05-08
- b. No area of responsibility specified for TE Tim Carey. Mtg. 8, pg. 17, 30-31, G. 10-5, Acts of Assembly 02-04
- c. Membership of the Presbytery's Ministerial Committee not reported. G. 21-2

Central South

The Committee recommends that the minutes of the Presbytery of the Central South be approved with the following ***exceptions***.

- a. No definite term of Service listed for Commissioned Pastor Kirk. Mtg. 124, pg. 1158, 124.09 5. G. 9-11A
- b. No primary areas of responsibilities listed for TE Franklin as Associate Pastor. Mtg. Called, pg. 1183, 5. G. 10-5

Coastal Mid-Atlantic

The Committee recommends that the minutes of the Presbytery of the Coastal Mid-Atlantic be approved with the following ***exceptions***.

- a. No review of Session records reported. Mtgs, 8,9,10. G. 19-4A7. Acts of Assembly 07-08
- b. TE King's position on Westminster not recorded. Mtg. 10, pg. 4-5, 1.16. G. 12-4
- c. Dates of installation and installation commissions for TEs Schmemmerhorn and Brooks not in minutes. Mtg. 8, pg. 5-6, 1.15.01-7. G. 13-1A. G. 21-1C.2.b
- d. It was unclear whether TEs Schmemmerhorn and Brooks both declared exceptions to Westminster, or if only one did. Mtg. 8, pg. 5, 1.14.04. G. 12-4

East

The Committee recommends that the Minutes of the Presbytery of the East be approved with the following ***exceptions***.

- a. No definite period of time for a term of service for Assistant Pastor Kim. Mtg. 133, pg. 1584, 133-13E. G. 10-6

- b. The period of service many Out of Bound TEs are expired. They need to be renewed if they are still serving. Mtg. 133, pg. 1587, 133-13J, Mtg. 134, pg. 1634, 134-26H, Mtg. 135, pg. 1662, 135-22F. G. 10-8 B.2a.
- c. Ministerial committee TE to RE members ratio must be within 1 of each other. It has 5 TE and 3 RE. Mtg. 135, pg. 1654, 135-14. G. 21-2 A

Florida and the Caribbean

The Committee recommends that the Minutes of the Presbytery of Florida and the Caribbean be approved with the following *exceptions*.

- a. No mention that TE Charlie Halleran was dismissed at a Congregational Meeting. Same for TE Bryn MacPhail. Mtg. 104, pg. 11, 104.12.5, Mtg. 106, pg. 8, 106.09. G. 14-1 B
- b. A definite period of time for a term of service for Commissioned Pastors not listed for Leonilda Ruiz Perez. Mtg. 104, pg. 12-13, 104.12. G. 9.11 A
- c. No definite period of time for a term of service for Stated Supply Pastor TE Paul Pepin. Mtg. 104, pg. 17, 104.19 3. G. 10-7 A.2.a
- d. No definite period of time for a term of service for TE Dr. Gregory Perry serving out of Bounds. Mtg. 105, pg. 7-10, 105.9. G. 10-8 B.2.a
- e. There is no record in the Minutes listing the members of the Ministerial Committee. Mtgs. 103, 104, 105, 106. G. 21-2 A
- f. There is no record of responses to the PRC for Exceptions to the 2024 Minutes. Mtg. 106, pg. 7, 106.06, letter from GA

Great Plains

The Committee recommends that the Minutes of the Presbytery of the Great Plains be approved with the following *exceptions*.

- a. No record of examination of TE Matthew Jaderston and TE Jeff Sparks; positions not specified for TEs Spencer and Jaderston. Mtg. 34, pg. 679-680, 34.05.F, 34.07.I,J. G. 12-2 through 5, G. 13- 1 through 7, G. 19-4B1-7, G. 21-1A.2 and G. 21-1C.2.b.
- b. Candidate Julien de Leiris: period of time for a term of service not specified. Mtg. 34, pg. 680, 34.07. G. 10-5, 10-6, Acts of Assembly 02-04
- c. Candidate Cody Pritchett's pastor is advisor. Candidate Timothy Roberts' pastor is advisor. Mtg. 34, pg. 678-679, 34.05.C, 34.05.D. G. 11-2E, Acts of Assembly 06-08
- d. Candidate Collin Grant's pastor is his advisor. Mtg. 36, pg. 12, 36-14.E. G. 11-2E, Acts of Assembly 06-08

Gulf South

The Committee recommends that the Minutes of the Presbytery of the Gulf South be approved with the following *exceptions*.

- a. No indication that Candidate Mook was examined by the Presbytery. Mtg. 32, pg. 233-234, 32.13. G. 11-2 C
- b. No particular area of responsibility listed for Assistant Pastors: TE Fike, TE Ramer, TE Hutson. Mtg. 33, pg. 254, 33.19 2)g), i), Mtg. 34, pg. 279, 34.21 2. G. 10-6, Acts of Assembly 02-04

- c. No particular area of responsibility listed for Associate Pastor Walker. Mtg. 34, pg. 279, 34.21 3. G. 10-5, Acts of Assembly 02-04

Mid-America

The Committee recommends that the Minutes of the Midwest Presbytery be approved with the following *exceptions*.

- a. Stated Meeting Ending in “blessing” not prayer. Mtg. 101, pg. 1583, 100.16, Mtg. 102, pg. 1583, 102.16 G. 16-1A

Midwest

The Committee recommends that the Minutes of the Presbytery of the Midwest be approved with the following *exceptions*.

- a. Exam of a TE from another denomination does not list educational credentials or experience and spiritual growth. Mtg. 184, pg. 649, 184-06, 184-06, Mtg. 186, pg. 758, 186-08, G. 12.3B.1&2
- b. Exam of a TE from another denomination does not list educational credentials or experience and spiritual growth. Mtg. 184, pg. 653, 184-12, G. 12.3B.1
- c. Executive Sessions. Mtgs. 184, 185, 186, pg. 658-659, pg. 692, pg. 757-758, 184-24, 185-20, 186-07-08. Executive Sessions may be used for sensitive discussions but any motions resulting from such discussions must be done in open session so that they can be recorded in the Minutes of the meeting.

Pacific Southwest

The Committee recommends that the Minutes of the Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest be approved with the following *exceptions*.

- a. The minutes did not report the names of all members of the ministerial committee at this meeting nor at the meeting in 2024. Mtg. 22, pg. 347, 22-10. G. 21-2

Rivers and Lakes

The Committee recommends that the Minutes of the Rivers and Lakes Presbytery be approved with the following *exceptions*.

- a. Page 701 missing. Mtg. 43, pg. 701, missing sections 43.11- 43.18

Southeast

The Committee recommends that the Minutes of the Presbytery of the Southeast be approved with the following *exceptions*.

- a. There is no provision in the EPC Constitution for maintaining a second (secret?) set of minutes for any of its courts since all minutes must be reviewed by the next higher court. Mtg. 124, pg. 394, 124-22, Mtg. 125, pg. 415, 124-24. G.2-4A, Rules for Assembly 9-12B
- b. Report not opened with prayer. Mtg. 124, pg. 394, 124-20

West

The Committee recommends that the Minutes of the Presbytery of the West be approved with the following *exceptions*.

- a. No review of Session minutes. Mtgs, 134, 135, 135. G. 19-4A7, Acts of Assembly

07-08, Rules for Assembly 9-12.G.9

- b.** Actual count of votes on Descending Overture 44-A not recorded. Mtg. 134, pg. 4, 134.5. G. 19-4C2
- c.** Roster of the Ministerial Committee not reported in 1st meeting nor at the last meeting of the previous year. Mtg. 134. G. 12-2
- d.** Ten days notice not documented for called meeting. Mtg. Called 1-2-25, pg. 1, 1-2-25.2. G. 19-5[VMB
- e.** Complete list of attendees not included. Mtg. Called 1-2-25, pg. 1, 1-2-25.2. Acts of Assembly 03-04.4, G. 19-5B
- f.** An agenda was adopted, but purpose of called meeting not clearly stated. Mtg. Called 1-2-25, pg. 1, 1-2-25.2. G. 7-10, G. 19-5B

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46-67 *(to the floor)*
From the Presbytery Review Committee

The Presbytery Review Committee recommends that the 46th General Assembly **RECOGNIZE** the approval of the responses from the Presbyteries to those exceptions sent to them by the 45th General Assembly.

Rationale:

Those responses were received in a timely fashion from all of those Presbyteries cited at the 45th General Assembly and reviewed by members of the Committee. The presbyteries reviewed include Alleghenies, Central Carolinas, Central South, Coastal Mid Atlantic, East, Florida and the Caribbean, Great Plains, Gulf South, Mid-America, Midwest, Pacific Northwest, Southeast, and the West.

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46-68 *(to the floor)*
From the Permanent Judicial Commission

The **Permanent Judicial Commission** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **SUSTAIN** the findings of the Permanent Judicial Commission in the matter of New Albany vs. the Presbytery of the Alleghenies.

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[PJC's Order Dated January 15, 2026](#)



THE PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION
of
THE EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

THE SESSION OF NEW ALBANY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH *v.*
PRESBYTERY OF THE ALLEGHENIES

ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

January 15, 2026

This matter comes before the Permanent Judicial Commission on the Complaint of the Session of New Albany Presbyterian Church (“Complainant”) against the Presbytery of the Alleghenies (“Respondent”).

This Complaint was timely filed on November 25, 2025.

The Commission conducted its D.14-8 analysis on December 9, 2025, found that the Complaint stated grounds upon which relief could be granted, and directed Respondent to answer and produce the Record by January 8, 2026. Respondent timely filed its Answer and produced the Record.

The Complaint alleges irregularities by Respondent in handling an overture submitted by Complainant for consideration at Respondent’s November 15, 2025 meeting. The essence of the Complaint is that the overture was deemed in order in advance by the EPC’s Chief Parliamentarian, whom Respondent’s Leadership Team (“LT”) consulted on this matter, yet Respondent used procedural steps to keep the overture from receiving a first reading on the docket. Rather than placing the overture on the docket for a first reading, Respondent scheduled a vote on whether to include the overture on the docket, citing General Assembly Resolution 44-43 (“GA 44-43”), which expresses an “opinion and wish” that presbyteries refrain from taking action on certain matters pending the work of the Ad Interim Committee on Same Sex Attraction and Ordination. Respondent’s meeting packet included a letter from GA Moderator David Strunk to the EPC family, placed immediately before the Complainant’s overture, which letter references the GA 44-43 opinion and wish.

In seeking the opinion of the Chief Parliamentarian, Respondent’s LT was advised that the overture was technically in order but not in accord with the wishes of GA 44-43. At that meeting, the Stated Clerk “spoke to the overture being in order but not in accord with the

wishes of the GA 44-43.” (Provisional Minutes of the 56th Stated Meeting of Respondent, held on November 15, 2025). The question was posed: “Shall the overture be included in the docket as a first reading?” Following discussion, Respondent voted to keep the overture from receiving a first reading at the November meeting of Respondent.¹

Specifically, the Complaint raises five counts, which are summarized here²:

(1) The Stated Clerk wrongly and improperly relied upon an excerpt from a letter from GA Moderator Strunk and National Leadership Team (“NLT”) Chair Jones regarding the “opinion and wish” of the 44th GA concerning Resolution 44-43. The letter was included in the packet and placed before the overture, thus prejudicing the subsequent limited discussion and resulting in a vote not to place the overture on the docket.

(2) The Stated Clerk stated to the Presbytery that a number of Respondent’s members had voted in favor of GA 44-43. Complainant asserts that Respondent’s actions in deferring to GA 44-43 are in conflict with G.18-3N regarding a Session’s responsibility to overture its Presbytery on matters it believes vital or helpful to the whole Church.

(3) Complainant challenges Respondent’s practice of first and second readings as restrictive of the ability of a local church Session to move a proposed constitutional amendment through its Presbytery and have it filed with the General Assembly’s Stated Clerk in a timely manner.

(4) Respondent’s actions to procedurally exclude the overture from consideration were taken after being advised by the EPC’s Chief Parliamentarian that the overture was in order. Once Respondent was advised the overture was in order, it should have been placed on the docket.

(5) The “Gentlemen’s Agreement” reflected in GA 44-43 has no binding effect and is unconstitutional. No General Assembly can bind future General Assemblies, nor can it restrict a Presbytery or local church in a manner which is contrary to the Constitution.

Respondent provided a thorough Answer to the Complaint.

¹ Respondent utilizes a practice of first and second readings of overtures. The first reading is simply a presentation of the overture in writing, without discussion or debate. The second reading occurs at the next meeting of the Presbytery, where discussion on the merits is held. The Respondent’s practice is that the overture is not read aloud at the first meeting, but is included in the packet for reference.

² D.14-3B requires that a complaint set forth with particularity all facts and reasons why the action or decision is being challenged. This often results in lengthy pleadings so as not to waive potential grounds. For readability, the Complaint is not restated in full here, but has been considered in its entirety and is summarized below.

Statement of Facts

On October 1, 2025, Complainant informed Respondent that the Session was considering bringing an overture to the Presbytery in November for discussion at the February meeting. This timing reflects an understanding that Respondent has had a practice of presenting overtures for first and second readings since 2022. The first and second readings practice is not in Respondent's bylaws, and it has never been adopted in a formal vote. It has, however, become a regular practice of Respondent.

On November 6, 2025, Complainant submitted an overture approved by its Session to Respondent's LT for inclusion on the November docket. Complainant requested that the overture be included in the packet and presented for a first reading without comment from Respondent's LT, and that it be given to the Presbytery for prayerful consideration in preparation for the second reading at the February 2026 meeting, at which time the merits would be discussed. The significance of the timing is that Respondent's February meeting is the last meeting of the Presbytery before the 60-day window for overtures to be submitted to the General Assembly. Therefore, if a first reading was to be held at the February meeting, there would not be sufficient time for the Presbytery to consider the matter at a second reading, presumably at the next meeting of the Presbytery.

The overture addresses issues concerning ordination standards and same sex attraction. Respondent's LT raised concerns as to whether this would be contrary to the 44th General Assembly's action set forth in GA 44-43, the so-called "Gentlemen's Agreement," or recommendation, which states in the final paragraph: "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 [of the Ad Interim Committee on Same Sex Attraction and Ordination] is received and acted upon by the 46th General Assembly." The parties are in agreement that the "opinion and wish" language of GA 44-43 is not binding upon Presbyteries or future General Assemblies.

Respondent's LT consulted with the EPC's Chief Parliamentarian, who advised that the overture was in order, but out of accord with the resolution of GA 44-43.

The record shows that after being advised that the overture was in order, Respondent's LT decided to include the overture in the packet but to have the Presbytery vote as to whether to receive it for a first reading. If accepted, no discussion on the merits would take place. If rejected, the matter would not receive consideration on the merits at the February meeting in time for transmission to the General Assembly if passed, but would be tabled in some manner until after the Ad Interim Committee on Same Sex Attraction and Ordination completed its work. Included in the packet immediately in front of Complainant's overture was the letter from the Moderator of the 45th GA, David Strunk, and Victor Jones, Chair of the NLT and Moderator of the 44th GA, reiterating the "opinion and wish" language from GA 44-43.

Opinion and Order

The Complaint sets forth five particular counts, each of which contains subparts and arguments. Pursuant to D.14-9A, this Commission is to vote “either to sustain, to sustain in part, or not to sustain” the complaint. This Commission is entitled to interpret pleadings, counts, and specific items set forth in the complaint in order to give effect to the intent of the constitution of the EPC, and is not bound to a rigid wooden reading of the counts as set forth in the pleadings. This is not a test on drafting pleadings, but in doing justice under the EPC constitution. Therefore, the voting on specifications may not line up perfectly with the pleadings, but may be set forth in order to give proper constitutional effect to the matter. Where there is an irregularity, the goal is to afford a remedy.

Some discussion is in order.

First, this Commission does not decide, and expresses no opinion regarding, the general propriety, constitutionality, or advisability of any presbytery practice concerning first and second readings or other docketing practices. The relief granted herein is limited to the specific irregularity shown in this record.

Second, this Commission has been advised that all parties are in agreement that the so-called “Gentlemen’s Agreement” and “opinion and wish” section of GA 44-43 are not binding upon future General Assemblies, and do not restrict a Session or Presbytery from considering a matter where appropriate. It is not a constitutional basis for exclusion of an otherwise valid overture.

Here, on the particular facts of this record, the overture was acknowledged to be in order, yet it was not taken up for consideration at the November 15, 2025 meeting based on reliance on GA 44-43. On these specific facts, this Commission concludes that the overture should have been taken up for consideration by Respondent as a court, and that reliance on GA 44-43 as the basis for not taking it up for consideration was improper.

Consequently, this Commission sustains in part the Complaint of New Albany Presbyterian Church, essentially as to Count 4, but with some overlapping areas in other counts. This Commission grants relief requested in Request for Relief No. 2 and directs Respondent to place the overture on the agenda for consideration, including opportunity for debate and vote, at Respondent’s February 14, 2026 meeting. Nothing in this Order compels adoption of the overture or any particular substantive outcome.

The relief granted is based solely on the particular facts of this record, namely, that the overture was acknowledged to be in order, yet was not taken up for consideration at that meeting based on reliance on GA 44-43. Although this Commission must correct this error in view of a Session’s right under G.18-3N, this Order is not intended to establish a general constitutional rule requiring presbyteries to docket or consider every overture submitted by a Session.

This Commission voted to sustain the Complaint in part and to grant the relief set forth above. Any separate concurring opinions, if submitted, are appended.

CONCURRING OPINION

*THE SESSION OF NEW ALBANY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (Complainant) v.
THE PRESBYTERY OF THE ALLEGHENIES (Respondent)*

January 15, 2026

I join the judgment of this Commission. I write separately because the complaint, sustained in part, presented additional constitutional matters that were properly before us and, in my view, warrant further constitutional consideration.

Scope

This decision, and my concurrence, do not address the theological substance of the Complainant's overture, the work of the Ad-Interim Committee on Same-Sex Attraction, or the wisdom of advancing constitutional amendments during the pendency of Ad-Interim Committees of the General Assembly. It addresses only the limits of presbyterial authority under the Constitution.

Concurrence: *The Rights of Sessions*

The Constitution expressly grants to Sessions the right to overture Presbytery on matters they believe vital or helpful to the whole Church (G.18-3.N). That grant is not qualified by the preferences of higher courts, forthcoming recommendations of denominational committees, or any anticipated reaction from commissioners.

The Respondent repeatedly asserts that the Complainant's overture was "not out of order, but out of accord with the EPC." The Constitution, however, recognizes no such category. "Accord" is neither a parliamentary ruling nor a constitutional standard. It has no defined content, no assigned authority, and no limiting principle. At most, it expresses a judgment of prudence. It does not express a rule of law. The Respondent's argument, therefore, is not that the overture was unlawful, but that it was inadvisable. For this reason, the Commission is correct to conclude that "the overture should have been taken up" and subsequently order its consideration.

It is not disputed that the overture was in order. By refusing to receive it, the Respondent nonetheless imposed the very consequence that follows from a ruling of "out of order," while disclaiming the constitutional grounds required to make such a ruling. The effect was to deny the Complainant the exercise of an explicit constitutional right on a basis the Constitution does not recognize.

A Presbytery's procedural authority over its own docket does not grant discretion to suspend, delay, or nullify the rights of the lower court. A Presbytery may debate an overture, amend, or decline to approve it on the merits. It may not deny a Session access to constitutional process by refusing to receive or consider an overture that is otherwise in order on grounds not found in the Constitution. A right that can be withheld for reasons of "accord" is not a right, but a permission.

For that reason, I agree with the Commission that the Presbytery's action, taken on the basis that the overture was "out of accord" with the wishes of a prior General Assembly, exceeded its constitutional authority, however well-intended. The Respondent's actions rest on accord, not authority, and in our polity, accord without authority is no authority at all.

First Urge for Broader Resolution: *First and Second Reading Practices*

The disposition of this case did not require the Commission to decide whether the practice of first and second readings for presbytery overtures is itself constitutionally permissible. The matter proposed by the Complainant did not erroneously fail because of that practice, but because the Presbytery declined to docket it at all.

The Complainant nevertheless questioned the constitutional status of such practices, and the Respondent relied upon them in its defense. Because the issue implicates the relationship between express constitutional rights and non-mandated procedural customs, and because such arguments are likely to recur, it deserves additional consideration.

The question presented is not whether a presbytery may adopt orderly procedures for the consideration of overtures. It may. The question is whether such procedures, when not mandated by the Constitution or bylaws, may be given priority over an express constitutional right.

A distinction must be maintained between expressed provisions and procedural custom. Expressed provisions are those powers and rights affirmatively granted by the *Book of Order*. They define what must be honored and what may not be withheld. Procedural custom, by contrast, consists of wise/"best" practices, non-mandatory procedures, parliamentary conveniences, and local habits developed over time. Such practices may promote order and efficiency, but they possess no independent legal force unless the Constitution or bylaws explicitly confer it.

The principle that demands emphasis is this: procedures exist to serve expressed rights; they do not exist to defeat them. By illustration, a presbytery may adopt a practice requiring ascending overtures to be submitted in a certain manner or by a certain advance date. That procedure channels the exercise of a session's right. But if the presbytery were to refuse to receive any overture submitted by a session merely on the ground that it prefers to avoid controversial subjects for a season, that would no longer serve the right, it would nullify it. The former regulates method; the latter extinguishes substance.

The Respondent contends that first and second readings are a longstanding and accepted practice; that the Constitution does not prohibit them; and that they may therefore govern how overtures are handled. The premise is accurate. The conclusion is not.

The failure lies in treating silence as authorization. The Constitution's silence concerning first and second readings does not elevate practice to constitutional status; it preserves the rights that are expressly granted. To reason otherwise would be to suggest that whatever the Constitution does not forbid, a court may impose. That is not how a polity governed by a written Constitution works. The absence of a prohibition does not create authority.

The Book of Government 18-3.N grants Sessions the right to overture Presbytery. The Constitution contains no requirement of multiple readings as a condition of receipt. From this it follows that a practice not found in the Constitution may regulate the manner in which a right is exercised, but it may not determine whether the right is exercised at all.

When a non-mandated practice is employed to delay, deny, or condition the receipt of an overture, it ceases to be merely procedural and becomes substantive. At that point it operates, not as a channel of constitutional process, but as a barrier to it.

Stated concisely: the Constitution grants Sessions the right to overture Presbytery. The practice of first and second readings, while not prohibited, is not itself a provision of the Constitution or of the Respondent's bylaws. Such a practice may regulate the manner of consideration, but it may not be employed to suspend, condition, nullify, or delay the consideration of a constitutional right. Where a conflict arises, express provisions control over procedural custom. Procedural practices may channel the exercise of rights; they may not condition their existence.

Second Urge for Broader Resolution: *The "Gentleman's Agreement"*¹

The Complainant asked this Commission to determine whether the concluding stipulation reflected in Assembly Item 44-43, now recorded as *Act of Assembly 24-05* (§Office of the Minister, p. 216, 2025-2026), is unconstitutional. The Commission has declined to rule on that question. I respectfully believe this case presented an appropriate occasion to consider its constitutional effect.

The controlling issue is not the wisdom of restraint, the desirability of unity, or the prudence of awaiting the report of a denominational study committee. The sole question is one of authority.

This case presented an appropriate opportunity to clarify a matter of enduring constitutional importance: whether one General Assembly may, by expression of "opinion and wish," effectively bind future Assemblies or subordinate courts in the exercise of rights granted by the Constitution. That question transcends the present controversy in our beloved corner of Zion, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The subject matter will change. The constitutional principle will not.

The General Assembly's desire to provide an Ad-Interim Committee a season of unpressured deliberation is understandable and commendable. Nothing here questions that impulse. The issue is not whether the Assembly may encourage restraint, but whether it may enforce restraint by suspending the constitutional rights of Sessions and Presbyteries to overture.

The Constitution grants lower courts the right to overture the next higher court, in regular gradation (G.1-11; 3-1; 18-3.N). No provision authorizes the Assembly to place those rights in abeyance, even temporarily, by resolution. Assembly Item 44-43 (*AoA 24-05*) did not amend the Constitution and did not claim to. It expressed a sentiment which, fairly interpreted, acknowledged those constitutional limits.² Encouragement and authority are not the same. Opinions and wishes do not carry the authority of order.

¹ I use the phrase "Gentleman's Agreement" only because it appears in the record. The label is colloquial, imprecise, and confers no judicial weight. Whatever its name, the issue before the Court is the constitutional effect, if any, of the understanding described.

² The text of *Acts of Assembly 24-05* excludes the stipulation of this so-called "Gentleman's Agreement," perhaps by acknowledgement, that even among statutory provisions of the constitution, it possesses no binding authority.

If an Assembly's "opinion and wish" may operate to suspend enumerated rights, then those rights exist only at the pleasure of a majority. That is not polity conducted according to a written constitution. Rights secured by text may be altered only by amendment, not by expectation.

For that reason, I believe the Commission should have found that Assembly Item 44-43 (AoA 24-05), properly understood, could not bind Sessions or Presbyteries in the exercise of their rights to overture the higher court.

Conclusion

These additional matters, in which the Commission has exercised restraint in declining to address, were properly before us, and I would have welcomed their resolution. While appreciating the impulse toward restraint, in this instance clarity on such matters is a better servant of the peace of the Church.

Taken together, these issues reveal a single constitutional principle: in our polity, authority flows from text, not from tradition, preference, or prudence. Expressed provisions govern. Practices serve rights; they do not defeat them. Advisory guidance may exhort; it may not command. Jurisdiction is to be exercised within, and not beyond, the limits of constitutional authority.

For these reasons, I respectfully concur in the judgment and write separately to express why the additional grounds for relief, in my view, should have been addressed.

TE Zachary Hopkins

This concurring opinion is joined by

RE Gordon Miller
RE Donald Flater

46-69 *(to the floor)*
From the Permanent Judicial Commission

The **Permanent Judicial Commission** recommends that the 46th General Assembly **SUSTAIN** the findings of the Permanent Judicial Commission in the matter of TE McClelland vs. the Presbytery of Central Carolinas.

www.epconnect.org/2026report-pjc

[PJC's Order Dated December 30, 2025](#)



THE PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION
of
THE EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ROBERT MCCLELLAND, TEACHING ELDER, *v.*
PRESBYTERY OF THE CENTRAL CAROLINAS

ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

[December 30, 2025]

This commission has received and reviewed the complaint filed by Teaching Elder Robert McClelland (the “Complainant”) against the Presbytery of the Central Carolinas (the “Respondent”).

Our first duty is to determine under *Book of Discipline* section D.14-8A whether the complaint states grounds on which relief may be granted. We conclude that it does, subject to the provisions of this order.¹

I. Alleged Procedural History²

On April 10, 2025, several elders from the Complainant’s congregation filed a Form 1 Charge against him, alleging violations of the *Book of Discipline* and certifying compliance with the preliminary requirements of Matthew 18:15-16 and Galatians 6:1.

A judicial investigative committee of the Respondent reported to the presbytery on September 27, 2025, recommending a charge of immorality and a charge of contempt. Based on that report, the Respondent’s stated clerk signed a Form 4 Indictment on October 9, 2025.

The Complainant retained defense counsel on October 27, 2025, and objections to the indictment were filed the same day. An amended indictment, specifying certain additional charges, was issued on October 31, 2025. The Complainant filed a motion to dismiss.

¹ Because we are addressing a threshold matter, nothing in this order confirms the guilt or innocence of the Complainant concerning the charges against him.

² This procedural history is drawn from the allegations stated in the complaint, which, solely for purposes of this order, we have assumed are true. We have not, however, made any findings as to the complaint’s factual accuracy.

Acting through its judicial commission, the Respondent authorized mediation as an alternative to proceeding to trial.³ Mediation thereafter occurred, and the Complainant and the Respondent's prosecutor reached an agreement intended to resolve the matter.

That mediated settlement agreement was presented to the Presbytery's judicial commission on December 5, 2025. The judicial commission declined to give effect to the settlement, determining it to be "null and void ab initio" pursuant to section D.3-2C.3.⁴ The judicial commission also partially denied Complainant's motion to dismiss.

In response, the Complainant and the Respondent's prosecutor submitted a modified settlement agreement. The judicial commission's moderator informed counsel for the Complainant and the Respondent's prosecutor that the commission intended to proceed to trial and would not consider the modified settlement.

The Complainant then timely filed the instant complaint, alleging, among other things, that the Respondent erred by failing to consider the modified settlement and by partially denying the motion to dismiss. He asks us to enter appropriate relief, including "a stay of all sanctions currently being imposed until this case is finally decided."

On December 17, 2025, this commission prospectively stayed "all further judicial action against the Complainant by the Respondent in this matter, including, without limitation, proceeding to trial."

No trial has occurred. No final disposition of the charges has been entered. During the pendency of these and the below proceedings, however, the Complainant has been restricted from the pulpit and from other pastoral functions.⁵

II. Standing

We find that the Complainant has standing to bring this complaint. The Complainant is a Teaching Elder subject to the Respondent's judicial authority, is the defendant in the disciplinary proceedings below, and alleges present aggrievement arising from the Respondent's actions in those proceedings.

III. Scope of Review

At this stage, our review is limited to determining whether the complaint plausibly alleges constitutional error by the Respondent for which we could grant relief.⁶ In conducting this review, we do not defer to a lower court's characterization of its own actions as constitutionally required.

³ It is not clear whether "the written consent of all necessary individuals as determined by the court or commission referring the matter for mediation" was secured as required in section D.3-2A. There is also no indication whether the parties agreed to be bound as specified in section D.3-2C. However, the judicial commission's moderator twice cited D.3-2C as the basis for rejecting the mediated agreement. We assume for the purposes of this order, therefore, that the mediation was conducted as required in section D.3-2.

⁴ D.3-2C.3 states in relevant part, "[N]o settlement can be entered into which conflicts shall conflict with any provision of the Constitution of the EPC. Any such settlement will be considered null and void ab initio (from the beginning)."

⁵ D.7-7.

⁶ D.14-8A.

IV. Findings

Assuming the facts pled to be true, we find that the complaint states grounds on which relief may be granted within the meaning of *Book of Discipline* section D.14-8A.

The complaint alleges that the Respondent authorized mediation pursuant to the *Book of Discipline* and that the parties reached a mediated settlement agreement disposing of the pending charges. The complaint further alleges that the Respondent, acting through its judicial commission, declined to give effect to that settlement for reasons other than constitutional noncompliance.

In addition, the complaint alleges that the Respondent declined to review a modified settlement agreement entered in response to identified concerns and instead indicated its intent to proceed toward trial.

These allegations raise constitutional and procedural questions. Was the Respondent justified in rejecting the mediated settlement agreement? Was the Respondent justified in failing to consider or to give effect to the modified settlement agreement? Resolving these questions does not require a trial, as it does not concern adjudication of guilt or innocence, but rather an evaluation of the constitutional authority exercised by the Respondent.⁷

V. Orders

Pursuant to *Book of Discipline* section 14-8B, we order as follows:

1. The Respondent shall appoint one or more representatives to defend the complaint.
2. The Respondent shall file an answer no later than Thursday, January 29, 2026. The answer shall respond to each allegation in the complaint and shall set forth with specificity all defenses on which the Respondent relies.
3. The Respondent shall provide the full record as required by section D.14-8C.⁸
4. All further judicial action against the Complainant by the Respondent in this matter, including, without limitation, proceeding to trial, shall continue to be stayed pending further order of this commission.

We expressly reserve authority to extend, lift, or modify the stay of proceedings below, as well as the current suspension of the Complainant's pastoral responsibilities. We also reserve authority to issue such further orders and relief as may be required or advisable under the *Book of Discipline*.⁹

So ORDERED.

⁷ If we ultimately hold that the mediated settlement was binding and constitutionally valid, we will necessarily determine the scope of the relief to be granted. Such relief could include, without limitation, dismissal of the charges resolved by the settlement.

⁸ The record in this matter dates from at least April 10, 2025, when charges were originally brought, and shall include, without limitation, any written agreement by parties to be bound by mediation and to comply with the requirements of D.3-2.

⁹ The parties are encouraged to dispute with one another in a manner that maintains the honor of our Lord. See D.14-12.

46-70 *(to the floor)*
Possible Omnibus Motion

Business items coming from the Standing Committees that are of a routine nature, such as Committee Minutes, are often put into an Omnibus Consent Motion. This single Motion is then brought to the floor of the Assembly for a vote.

The following Committees and Teams have no recommendations:

Chaplain Work and Care Committee
www.epconnect.org/2026report-cwcc

Church Health Leadership Team
www.epconnect.org/2026report-churchhealth

Church Planting Leadership Team
www.epconnect.org/2026report-churchplanting

Disaster Relief Committee
www.epconnect.org/2026report-drc

Effective Biblical Leadership Team
www.epconnect.org/2026report-eb1

Next Generation Ministries Council
www.epconnect.org/2026report-nextgen

Revelation 7:9 Team
www.epconnect.org/2026report-revelation79

Theology Committee
www.epconnect.org/2026report-theology