

# The Clerk's Report

2022 Spring Meeting — Lafayette, IN  
March 3-5, 2022

Dear Fathers & Brethren,

This past year has proved to be my busiest as clerk, since taking over the reigns from Mr. Morton in 2016. Nevertheless, I am especially grateful for the collaborative efforts of several men, including Dale Koons (Retiring Asst. Clerk), Nathan Eshelman (Asst. Clerk *pro tem*), Frank Smith (GLG/AIC Mod.), Adam Niess (C&CC Ch.), and Richard Blankenship (AIC Clerk, *G.O.A.T.*<sup>1</sup>). Since last spring, I have performed the following tasks as clerk.

- Sent official correspondence in response to various communications as directed by the presbytery.
- Sent membership transfer letter(s) in cooperation with the Shepherding Comte and the Ad Interim Commission.
- Forwarded intra-church correspondences from the Clerk of Synod (and others) to the GLG delegates email list.
- Disseminated formal communications from various sources to the GLG delegates email list.
- Recorded, distributed, and submitted all presbytery minutes in accordance with the law and order of the church.
- Cooperated with assistant clerk to formulate attendance rolls and submit annual presbytery report to synod.
- Completed and submitted annual RPCNA statistical questionnaire to our home office in Pittsburgh.
- Worked with various other presbyters (including those mentioned above) to help coordinate all GLGP meetings.
- Cooperated with the AIC in formulating a plan to facilitate the ongoing work of internet maintenance.
- Prepared all meeting agendas, submitted clerical reports with recommendations, disseminated reminders and documents via email, fielded procedural questions from various sources (delegates, committees, individual members), assisted delegates in obtaining information posted on our website (e.g. dates, documents, contact info, etc.), received and implemented feedback regarding password-protection issues, cooperated with attorneys to provide them with pertinent contact information for various delegates, forwarded “Delegates List” email change requests to Keith Evans for processing, sought and received clarification from the Synod Judicial Committee on a variety of questions, and worked with members of the AIC to respond appropriately to the Indianapolis Star.

## EXISTING COMMUNICATIONS

We have four existing communications from 2021 which are still in the process of being addressed by the court.

1. **21-5**: Letter from Jordan Kessler (RPCL) expressing concern over our handling of the IRPC judicial case.<sup>2</sup>
2. **21-10**: Clerical communication relaying synod decisions regarding the LeFebvre and IRPC complaints, etc.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I am not exaggerating. If it were possible to appoint an AIC clerk *in perpetuity*, Mr. Blankenship would receive my vote.

<sup>2</sup> Previous Motion Adopted (11/5/21): “That presbytery defer any consideration of GLG 21-5 (Jo. Kessler) until synod’s judicial commission has finished its work.”

<sup>3</sup> Previous Motion Adopted (11/5/21): “That presbytery refer GLG 21-10 (Synod Decisions) to BUSCOM, to be appointed, to report back at this meeting with its recommendation(s) regarding an appropriate corporate response, if any, to the judicial decisions of synod. Additional Minutes (11/6/21): “Mr. Dage introduced Item #2, Recommendation 1, concerning GLG 21-10, a clerical communication relaying the recent decisions of synod regarding the LeFebvre and IRPC complaints. It was moved and seconded to lay this recommendation on the table to entertain the following substitute motion: ‘Upon reflection of Synod’s sustaining the Anderson complaint, the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery confesses that the suspending of judicial process for Dr. Lefebvre and granting Dr. Lefebvre’s credentials to himself was unwise, unconstitutional, and unbiblical.’ The motion to lay on the table was discussed, after which it was moved and seconded ‘That this matter be referred to the upcoming spring meeting of presbytery.’ The referral motion was discussed and adopted, after which it was moved, seconded, and adopted ‘That the moderator appoint a three-man committee to consider the matter of Synod’s sustaining the Anderson complaint (Comm. 20-05), and to bring a report to the Spring 2022 meeting of the presbytery.’” [Comte: Tom Reid, James Odom, Jake Schwartz]

3. **21-11**: Letter from Enas/Swan (CCRP) requesting a committee to investigate concerns and provide counsel.<sup>4</sup>
4. **21-15**: Pre-Litigation Letter Copied to the Presbytery.<sup>5</sup>

### **NEW COMMUNICATIONS**

In addition, we have several new communications to address at this meeting.<sup>6</sup>

1. **22-1**: Paper from A. Kuehner, endorsed by Southfield session, proposing minor revisions to RPCNA queries.
2. **22-2**: Paper from A. Kuehner proposing comte to explore solutions to geographical/logistical challenges.
3. **22-3**: Paper from A. Kuehner outlining proposed advice for presbytery's nominating committee.
4. **22-4A**: Petition from five communicant members of FRPC-GR requesting a visitation committee.<sup>7</sup>
5. **22-4B**: Comments from FRPC-GR Session relative to its forwarding of GLG 22-4A without endorsement.
6. **22-4C**: TBA — *Pre-notification received; awaiting transmission from local session.*
7. **22-5**: Petition from FRPC-D Session requesting transfer to the Presbytery of the Alleghenies (RPCNA).
8. **22-6**: Petition from Atlanta TGB requesting a comte to explore subdividing the GLGP into regional commissions.
9. **22-7**: Petition from the CCRP Session requesting authorization for interim pastoral care.
10. **22-8**: Petition from Marion session requesting assistance with a challenging discipline case.<sup>8</sup>
11. **22-9**: Petition from J. Faris (endorsed by 2RP Session) proposing presbytery realignment.
12. **22-10**: 2RP Session's response to the CCRP Reconciliation Comte Report.

### **INTERCESSORY PRAYER**

In the proposed agenda for this meeting, you will notice that each business session includes fifteen minutes of corporate intercessory prayer for three or four designated churches or committees. In order to give our prayer leaders ample time to study the corresponding congregational report in advance, I have listed each proposed prayer assignment in parenthesis. **Please look over the agenda to see if you've been pre-appointed for this important task!** (Even if these assignments are approved with the agenda, they may be swapped with someone else or amended by the moderator.) As in the past, when our prayer time immediately precedes the end of a business session, the final prayer leader will conclude his prayer by recessing the court in the name and by the authority of Zion's only Head and King.

<sup>4</sup> Previous Motion Adopted (11/5/21): "That presbytery refer GLG 21-11 (Enas/Swan) to BUSCOM, to be appointed, to report back with its recommendation(s) at this meeting." Additional Minutes (11/6/21): "Mr. Dage introduced BUSCOM's two recommendations for Item 4, concerning GLG 21-11, a petition from CCRP members, Nathan Enas and Kevin Swan, requesting a committee to investigate concerns and provide counsel. Recommendation 1 ("That Communication 21-15 be received.") was withdrawn, being already implied by presbytery's referral of this communication to BUSCOM. Recommendation 2 ("That the moderator appoint a three-person committee to hear from the authors of the GLG 21-11 and the session to pursue reconciliation, and report back to the Spring meeting.") was introduced, after which it was moved, seconded, debated, and adopted to grant Nathan Enas and Kevin Swan ten minutes to address the court. Mr. Enas addressed the court for five minutes, after which Recommendation 2 was discussed and adopted without vocal dissent." [Comte: Craig Scott, David Kley, Drew Poplin]

<sup>5</sup> Previous Minutes (11/6/21): "Mr. Dage introduced BUSCOM's two recommendations for Item 3, concerning GLG 21-15, a letter copied to the presbytery. Recommendation 1 ("That Communication 21-15 be received.") was discussed and adopted. Recommendation 2 ("That the moderator appoint a presbyter to contact Jim McFarland by Tuesday, 11/9/21 to coordinate retention of legal counsel.") was discussed, after which it was moved, seconded and adopted to refer the matter to the AIC. In response to a question from the assistant clerk pro tem, the moderator clarified that GLG 21-15 has become part of the public record, albeit password-protected on the internet. It was moved and seconded by the clerk that presbytery instruct the clerk to password-protect all online versions of GLG 21-15, and refer all requests for the written copy to the AIC. This motion was discussed and adopted." AIC Minutes (11/6/21): "Upon request of the moderator, AIC advises that Andrew Falk (Christ Church, RPC) be appointed to communicate with Mr. Jim McFarland in regard to communication 21-15." AIC Minutes (11/9/21): "It was moved, seconded, and approved to authorize Andrew Falk (Ruling Elder – Christ Church RPC) to retain legal counsel on behalf of the Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery regarding Communication GLG 21-15 and all related matters with an initial budget of \$5,000. Approval of additional funds for the engagement may be approved by unanimous vote of the AIC. Such vote may be taken and approved via email."

<sup>6</sup> The deadline for papers will be Friday 3/5 after the mid-morning break, regardless of whether or not it is announced on the floor.

<sup>7</sup> AIC Minutes (2/3/22): "It was moved, seconded, and approved regarding Communications 22-4A and 22-4B to appoint an Inquiry Committee consisting of Philip McCollum and Richard Blankenship to inquire further into the concerns reported to the AIC by three families and the Session of First RPC of Grand Rapids. The Inquiry Committee is to report their findings and any recommendations to the Presbytery at the Presbytery meeting scheduled for March 3, 2022."

<sup>8</sup> AIC Minutes (2/17/22): "The request and recommendations received from the Marion RPC Session for help in handling a discipline case in their congregation were moved, seconded, and approved, those being specifically (i) appointing Shawn Anderson (Sycamore RPC—Kokomo) and Bob McKissick (Sycamore RPC—Kokomo) as provisional elders to handle the oversight and discipline of Christian Camery and (ii) appointing Shawn Anderson as moderator pro-tem over the case involving Christian Camery. A copy of the request from the Marion RPC Session is attached to and made a part of these minutes."

**BUSCOM**

As a general rule, in order to facilitate greater efficiency of deliberation, I am recommending that all *petitionary* communications be referred to the moderator-appointed *Business Committee of the Day* (BUSCOM) to report back with recommendations at various designated time slots later in the meeting. Such a vetting mechanism enables three competent men, acting on the court's behalf, to (1) examine each referral carefully in light of our constitution, (2) solicit valuable clarification from the author and/or involved parties, (3) inform the court of its findings, and (4) present a recommended course of action which the court may then discuss. By doing all of this in *advance* of any substantive floor discussion, we are helping to ensure that we have all the information we need to maintain an efficient and constructive deliberation process.

**JUDCOM**

At the moment, none of our incoming communications warrant referral to a moderator-appointed *Judicial Committee of the Day* (JUDCOM). However, if an item of *judicially-oriented business* (JOB) were to arrive on our doorstep, how would we handle it? On the one hand, presbytery could refer the JOB to JUDCOM. On the other hand, it could authorize BUSCOM to handle *all* types of business (judicial *and* non-judicial), thereby precluding the need for a separate JUDCOM. Generally speaking, if there are *multiple* JOBs, it might make more sense to appoint a separate JUDCOM, so as not to overload BUSCOM. However, if the JOB is singular in nature, perhaps BUSCOM would be the better option. In either case, if the presbytery does see fit to appoint a separate JUDCOM, this committee would need to share the time slots currently assigned to BUSCOM in the proposed agenda.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That presbytery appoint James Odom and Jason O'Neill as parliamentarians for this meeting, with Steve Rhoda and Phil Pockras serving as alternates.
2. That presbytery instruct the nominating committee to determine the congregations to be visited this year.
3. That presbytery instruct the moderator to make the following appointments:
 

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|---|---------------------------------------|
| A. Session/TGB Min. Book Reviewers (2/Bk)       | D. Finance Committee (3)              |
| B. Business Comte OTD [BUSCOM] (3) <sup>9</sup> | E. Resolution of Thanks Committee (2) |
| C. Nominating Committee (3)                     | F. Time and Place Committee (2)       |
4. That presbytery adopt it as a standing policy that the deadline for papers at a spring meeting occurs immediately following the mid-morning break on the second day (usually a Friday) regardless of whether or not a "last call for papers" has been made by the clerk or moderator.
5. That presbytery refer GLG 22-1 and 22-3 to the business committee (of the day) [BUSCOM] to report back with recommendations later in the meeting.
6. That presbytery refer GLG 22-2, 22-5<sup>10</sup>, 22-6, and 22-9 to a five-man realignment committee (of the day) [REALCOM] consisting of the authors of these four communications (James Faris<sup>Ch</sup>, Adam Kuehner, Kent Butterfield, and a member of the Atlanta TGB appointed by the moderator), along with an additional delegate appointed by the moderator, to discuss all four communications and report back later at this meeting with relevant recommendations.<sup>11</sup>
7. That presbytery refer GLG 22-4C to the Grand Rapids Inquiry Committee, to report back with any recommendations during its scheduled time slot at this meeting.
8. That presbytery take up GLG 22-7 in connection with the CCRP congregational report.
9. That presbytery take up GLG 22-9 in connection with the CCRP Reconciliation Comte report.

<sup>9</sup> If there are judicial matters to refer, the court can decide to turn BUSCOM into a judicial committee or simply form a separate judicial committee.

<sup>10</sup> The FRPCD Session is requesting that their petition be taken up by the court no later than Friday.

<sup>11</sup> The rationale here is very simple: We will save precious time by giving the respective authors an opportunity to present a unified proposal to discuss, rather than spinning our wheels discussing all four communications separately. If for some reason, the committee cannot come to agreement, the individual communications and their respective recommendations may still come before the court for consideration.

10. That presbytery receive all written congregational reports *without* hearing oral reports<sup>12</sup> — with the exception of Belle Center, Christ Church, Grand Rapids, Immanuel, and Marion<sup>13</sup> each of which shall report orally — and refer the provisional elder recommendations from Elkhart and Westminster to the nominating committee.
11. That presbytery approve the following committee reports and commission minutes as submitted<sup>14</sup>, without hearing oral reports:
  - A. Inter-Church Liaison Report
  - B. Visitation Reports (Second RP, Sparta)
  - C. Youth Ministries Comte of Synod Report
  - D. Covfamikoi Report
  - E. Geneva College Board of Corp.'s Report
  - F. Military Chaplaincy Report (R. Fearing)
12. That presbytery grant all RPCNA elders present, including all non-certified delegates from this presbytery, the privilege of the floor during the remainder of this meeting.<sup>15</sup>
13. That presbytery excuse BUSCOM to begin its work.
14. That presbytery receive the clerk's report.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Adam Kuehner, Clerk

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<sup>12</sup> Note: This recommendation simply enables the court to *receive* the reports without hearing them orally. It is *not* an absolute prohibition that would hinder the court from adopting a later motion to hear any (or all) of these oral reports, should the current slate of business be completed more efficiently than expected, leaving a sizable surplus of time. Moreover, this recommendation would not prevent the court from hearing oral congregational reports at a future meeting, e.g. our June meeting(s) at Synod or a possible special meeting in the fall. This same principle applies to #7.

<sup>13</sup> It should be evident that these four congregations are enjoying special priority here due to recent developments. If there are other congregations you would like to hear from orally during this meeting, feel free to make a motion to that effect and we can try to fit them in.

<sup>14</sup> Similar to #6 above, this motion is designed to facilitate "line item" amendments in case the court prefers to hear an oral report from any of these committees, or if the court desires to add other reports to this recommendation.

<sup>15</sup> Note: Recommendation #4 does not grant *voting* privileges to GLG elders lacking written session certification.