

The Provisional Session of Marion RP Church Report
GLG Spring Presbytery
March 2-4, 2023

February 16, 2023

Dear Fathers and Brothers,

On February 17, 2022, the AIC took the following action,

“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.”

As a provisional session, we met formally three times.

- February 25, 2022: To hear from Christian Camery regarding the events surrounding his arrest.
- March 1, 2022: To censure Christian Camery and explain this censure and the steps of repentance and restoration.
- February 16, 2023: To finalize our work and approve our Minutes.

Our minutes reflect the details of Mr. Camery’s progress in his repentance and our handing his pastoral care over to the standing session with Pastor Aaron Murray working directly with Christian. Though they are attached for your perusal as acts of the Marion Provisional Session, we believe they remain on the record of the Marion RPC’s session minutes.

Recommendation:

1. *That Shawn Anderson and Bob McKissick be dismissed as provisional elders of the Marion session in the case involving Mr. Christian Camery.*

In service to Christ and His Church,

-Shawn Anderson, Jason Camery, Greg Fisher, and Bob McKissick

Attached: (1) Minutes of 2022.02.25; (2) 2022.03.01; (3) 2023.02.16; (4) Letter of Censure to Christian Camery; (5) Letter to the Congregation Concerning Christian Camery’s Censure.

**Marion Reformed Presbyterian Church
Marion Provisional Session Meeting
1100 W. Jeffras Ave., Marion, IN
February 25, 2022**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Shawn Anderson (Moderator pro-tem), Jason Camery, Greg Fisher (Clerk pro-tem), and Bob McKissick. Christian Camery was also present.

CONSTITUTION OF THE COURT

Jason led a time of devotions from Proverbs 14:22-27. After a time of prayer lead by Greg Fisher, the court was constituted in prayer at 7:10 pm.

SHEPHERDING THE FLOCK

Christian Camery was invited to come and explain what happened and why he was arrested by the Marion Police Department.

Shawn Anderson opened up this discussion asking Christian Camery to tell us what happened on the morning of February 12, 2022.

Christian Camery answered various questions from the session and gave answers. Christian admitted/confessed to a variety of sins in his interview.


Christian Camery was dismissed with prayer so that the session could consider all that was revealed to them.

Motion was made to have Shawn Anderson draft a letter explaining the provisional session's recommendation that Christian Camery's membership be suspended, and guiding Mr. Camery in what repentance looks like as he is restored to Christ and His Church. It was seconded and passed unanimously.

Next meeting with Christian Camery is scheduled for March 1, 2022

ADJOURNMENT

Motion carried to adjourn. Greg Fisher prayed and adjourned the court in prayer at 8:30 pm.



Moderator of Session (Pro-Tem)

Clerk of Session (Pro-Tem)

**Marion Reformed Presbyterian Church
Marion Provisional Session Meeting
1100 W. Jeffras Ave., Marion, IN
March 1, 2022**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jason Camery and Greg Fisher (Clerk pro-tem) were present. Shawn Anderson (Moderator pro-tem) and Bob McKissick joined via Zoom call. Christian Camery was also present.

CONSTITUTION OF THE COURT

The court was constituted in prayer at 8:03 pm.

SHEPHERDING THE FLOCK

Christian Camery was presented with a draft letter of his suspension (attached). After discussion, Christian said that he understood everything in the letter. He explained that he is seeking the Lord's forgiveness and grace to repent. We also discussed our understanding that Christian did receive head trauma which contributed to his erratic behavior. At the same time, he was urged to consider the culpability highlighted in the provisional session's letter.

The provisional session also communicated what would be shared in a letter to the congregation. Christian understood the content and why it would be sent to the Church.

Bob led in prayer for Christian, who was then dismissed from the meeting.

DISCIPLINE

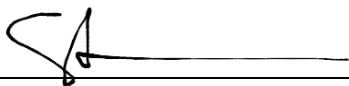
Motion sustained to suspend Christian Camery from the privileges of church membership for violating the sixth commandment. The following statement was made in the name of the Lord.

Whereas Christian Camery has been found guilty of violating the sixth commandment in being publicly drunk, and in placing lives in immediate danger with the careless use of a firearm, and in causing the magistrate to arrest him to protect the public, this court, on March 1, 2022, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ sadly and solemnly suspends Christian from the privileges of church membership, including participation in the sacraments, until he has given satisfactory evidence of true repentance, and have been restored to good standing by this court.

Greg Fisher led in prayer for Christian's repentance and restoration in this discipline.

ADJOURNMENT

The provisional session adjourned in prayer at 8:47 pm.



Moderator of Session (Pro-Tem)

Clerk of Session (Pro-Tem)

March 1, 2022

**1315 N. Beckford Place, Apt. 1
Marion, IN 46952**

Dear Christian,

The session met with you on February 24, 2022, to consider your recent behavior and explanation of the events of February 12, 2022, in much prayer to our Triune God for grace, wisdom, and love. We have reflected on the following:

- As you admitted, it was wrong to go to Jaybo's bar. While at the bar, you became publicly drunk, harming your Christian witness (Psalm 1:1; Prov. 4:14-15).¹
- While at the bar, your carousing led people to believe that you intended to seduce a woman with whom you were talking, harming your Christian witness (Rom. 13:13-14).²
- After being attacked, you left the bar in anger and drove to your house while drunk, putting others in harm's way (James 1:20-21).³
- In a rage, you brought two guns back to the bar—either intending to intimidate or harm your attacker, shot your way in—putting those inside in harm's way, pointed a loaded firearm at multiple people—placing them in fear of their life, demanded information about your attacker—intimidating them, and all the while intoxicated—compounding the gravity of an already dangerous situation (Ex. 20:13; Numb. 35:16-18).⁴
- This brought police into a hazardous circumstance wherein their lives were believed to be threatened by your actions.
- As this story is being covered by the local media, it has brought suspicion and criticism to the congregation with which you are associated, giving opportunity for the unbeliever to blaspheme the name of Christ (2Sam. 12:14; Neh. 5:9).⁵

¹ Psalm 1:1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! Proverbs 4:14 Do not enter the path of the wicked and do not proceed in the way of evil men. 15 Avoid it, do not pass by it; Turn away from it and pass on.

² Romans 13:13 Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

³ James 1:20 for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. 21 Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

⁴ Exodus 20:13 You shall not murder.

Numbers 35:16 'But if he struck him down with an iron object, so that he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death. 17 If he struck him down with a stone in the hand, by which he will die, and as a result he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death. 18 Or if he struck him with a wooden object in the hand, by which he might die, and as a result he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death.

⁵ 2 Samuel 12:14 However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die. Nehemiah 5:9 Again I said, "The thing which you are doing is not good; should you not walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the nations, our enemies?"

From our perspective, the Lord has exposed several areas in your life wherein you are not consistently walking in the Spirit. This disclosure is a token of God's love for you and is a call to repent from these sins that separate you from the Lord and His grace. Such areas include:

- seeking friendship with the world, while not putting the same energy into developing relationships within the Church;
- a pattern of abuse of alcohol that is both hidden at times and minimized when confronted about it (though we admit not completely denied);
- an underlying spiritual struggle with anger, evidenced by the extreme nature of your violent actions when least constrained and self-governed;
- a tendency to simultaneously acknowledge your wrong-doing, and then undermine your confession by placing the responsibility of your actions on others or highlighting the wrong-doings of others as an explanation for yours.

While these sins have furthered your own misery and placed civil consequences over you, they serve as warning signs from the Lord, indicating and exposing your fundamental need to draw near to Him in faith and repentance.

Whereas you, Christian Camery, have been found guilty of violating the sixth commandment in being publicly drunk, and in placing lives in immediate danger with the careless use of a firearm, and in causing the magistrate to arrest you to protect the public, this court, on March 1, 2022, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ sadly and solemnly suspends you from the privileges of church membership, including participation in the sacraments, until you have given satisfactory evidence of true repentance, and have been restored to good standing by this court.

To clarify, this is not an excommunication where you put one out of the Church and hand them over to Satan for the destruction of their flesh that their soul might be saved. Rather, this is a suspension, or temporary exclusion from the privileges of church membership and can be lifted on evidence of a life of repentance. *What does "a life of repentance" look like?*

1. Cooperate with all civil investigation and procedure in this matter in a way that takes responsibility for your actions and does not further harm the cause of Christ.
2. Secure further counseling to address the pattern of alcohol abuse.
3. Secure further counseling to address the underlying spiritual struggle with anger.
4. Address the Church in writing, asking for forgiveness in the way you have broken your Covenant of Communicant Membership and harmed both ours and Christ's reputation in the community.
5. In cooperation with the civil authorities, make financial and social restitution with Jaybo's bar and any other injured parties that are discovered in this process.

We do not pretend to know what is in your heart or mind, we are simply judging your recent actions and words. We do not desire to discourage you or push you away from God and His Church. Consider this, if Christ were to forsake you, it would not be now, but when He was called to take our sins upon Himself and to stand in God's fierce anger against our guilt. Since He did not forsake you then, why would He now? Therefore, John Owen says, "*Our hearts are capable of being full of unkind and unthankful thoughts towards Christ, as though upon every dark and black temptation and trial he would forsake us, but His love was such that he would not forsake us when He, Himself was to be forsaken and made a curse.*"

Finally, we encourage you with the words of Psalm 130:1-4,

*Out of the depths I have cried to You, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice!
Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.
If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?
But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.*

If you deny or desire to contest these charges, then you have a right to request that Presbytery review and correct our discipline of you. We are willing to assist you in making this appeal or direct you to the RPCNA Book of Discipline (pages E-7, 15-19).

In Service of Jesus Christ,



Shawn Anderson

Jason Camery

Greg Fisher



Robert McKissick

March 6, 2022

Dear Congregation,

Christian Camery has been found guilty of violating the *sixth* commandment in being publicly drunk, and in placing lives in immediate danger with the careless use of a firearm, causing the magistrate to arrest him to protect the public.

On March 1, 2022, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ this Court sadly and solemnly suspended Christian from the privileges of church membership, including participation in the sacraments, until he has given satisfactory evidence of true repentance, and has been restored to good standing by this court.

To clarify, this is not an excommunication where you put one out of the Church and hand them over to Satan for the destruction of their flesh that their soul might be saved. Rather, this is a suspension, or temporary exclusion from the privileges of church membership and can be lifted on evidence of a life of repentance.

As a congregation, we want to avoid the sin of gossip. At the same time you may have questions or comments about this event wherein you are looking for more information. It is not wrong to talk about the actions of the Church, but if you desire more information, please speak with the elders or Christian directly and let Ephesians 4:29-30 guard your speech, *“Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”* (Ephesians 4.29-30)

Further, please be in prayer for Christian for his repentance, restoration, and renewal in Christ. *“The prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much...My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.”* (James 5.15-20)

In Service to Christ and His Church,

The Session of Marion Reformed Presbyterian Church

(Shawn Anderson; Jason Camery; Greg Fisher; Bob McKissick)

**Marion Reformed Presbyterian Church
Marion Provisional Session Meeting
1100 W. Jeffras Ave., Marion, IN
February 16, 2023**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Shawn Anderson (Moderator pro-tem), Jason Camery, and Bob McKissick met via Zoom call. Greg Fisher was unavailable.

CONSTITUTION OF THE COURT

The court was constituted in prayer at 2:00 pm.

SHEPHERDING THE FLOCK

Since Christian Camery's suspension, he has had multiple meetings and phone calls with members of this provisional session to encourage him in his faith and repentance. The provisional session has waited for the civil judicial process to be handled before completing the church disciplinary process to ensure full restitution, reformation, and spiritual restoration. This civil process has not yet taken place. Since Christian is under the pastoral care of Pastor Aaron Murray, it would be beneficial to hand him back to his local session for his restoration from censure.

On January 23, at 5 pm, Shawn and Bob met with Christian and Aaron over zoom to discuss what steps of repentance had been completed or outstanding. The following was discussed:

- 1. Cooperate with the civil investigation and procedure in this matter in a way that takes responsibility for your actions and does not further harm the cause of Christ.**

Christian has sufficiently cooperated in every instance he has had the opportunity without causing any additional harm or shame to the cause of Christ.

- 2. Secure further counseling to address the pattern of alcohol abuse.**

Christian has not imbibed any alcohol since the incident a year ago.

- 3. Secure further counseling to address the underlying spiritual struggle with anger.**

Shawn gave Christian a resource from Paul Tripp. Christian objected to Tripp as a teacher, so Shawn gave Christian a book on anger by David Powlison. They have not had an opportunity to work through the book. The Marion session will consider if further action is needed.

- 4. Address the Church in writing, asking for forgiveness for how you have broken your Covenant of Communicant Membership and harmed our and Christ's reputation in the community.**

Christian drafted a letter, but the provisional session was awaiting civil action, initially scheduled for June of 2022, before having Christian address the Church. While this is overdue, Christian has also been able to walk out his repentance in tangible ways for the Church to see. It was agreed upon in this

discussion that it is not too late for Christian to address the Church. He can even update them on how the Lord has worked in his life over the last year.

5. In cooperation with the civil authorities, make financial and social restitution with Jaybo's bar and any other injured parties discovered in this process.

This restitution is dependent upon the decision and completion of the civil process.

Given these details, the Marion session is happy to take over primary pastoral care for Christian. The provisional session agrees that this is what is in Christian's best interest. Therefore, we see our work as a provisional session concluded, passing on what remains of Christian's restoration in censure to the original session.

Motion sustained to approve the Minutes of February 25, 2022

Motion sustained to approve the Minutes of March 1, 2022

Motion sustained to approve the Minutes of February 16, 2023

Motion sustained to send a report to Presbytery asking for Shawn Anderson and Bob McKissick to be dismissed as provisional elders of the Marion session.

ADJOURNMENT

The provisional session adjourned in prayer at 2:05 pm.

Moderator of Session (Pro-Tem)

Clerk of Session (Pro-Tem)