

The Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery (RPCNA)

June 2022 Minutes — Distr. 7/13/22

2022 STATED MEETING AT SYNOD

IWU Campus (Marion, IN) on Tuesday 6/21/22 @ 1:15 p.m.

The Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery met for its stated annual meeting during the RPCNA Synod on Tuesday June 21, 2022 on the campus of Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, Indiana at 1:15 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The moderator, Nathan Eshelman, called the court to order at 1:15 p.m., constituting the court in prayer.

2. ATTENDANCE

The assistant clerk, Dale Koons, called the attendance roll and confirmed that a quorum was present.

3. CLERK'S REPORT

Adam Kuehner presented the clerk's report, bringing its recommendations before the court.

- Recommendation 1¹ was seconded and adopted.
- Recommendation 2² was seconded and adopted.
- Recommendation 3³ was seconded and adopted.
- Recommendation 4⁴ was seconded and adopted.
- Recommendation 5⁵ was seconded and adopted.
- Recommendation 6⁶ was seconded and adopted.
- Recommendation 7⁷ was seconded and adopted.
- Recommendations 8⁸ and 9⁹ were automatically referred to the fall meeting.
- Recommendation 10¹⁰ was seconded and adopted.

¹ Rec. 1 (Clerk): That presbytery appoint the following parliamentarians (6/21-24): J. Odom, P. Pockras, J. Hughes (alt).

² Rec. 2 (Clerk): That the assistant clerk be permitted to take visual attendance at the outset of this Friday's special meeting.

³ Rec. 3 (Clerk): That presbytery prohibit all audio and/or video recordings of this meeting, and instruct the clerks to propose a standing policy on this matter at a future meeting of presbytery.

⁴ Rec. 4 (Clerk): That presbytery institute an annual fall meeting for the next 3 years (2022, 2023, 2024) to conduct presbytery business.

⁵ Rec. 5 (Clerk): That presbytery approve the minutes of the Poplin Installation Commission (FRPC-D).

⁶ Rec. 6 (Clerk): That presbytery refer GLG 22-15 (Complaint v. CCRP Session) to the Christ Church Commission for adjudication.

⁷ Rec. 7 (Clerk): That presbytery defer the following business items to the stated fall meeting, unless additional time allows for their subsequent inclusion in Tuesday's agenda by majority vote: (A) Belle Center Advisory Comte, (B) CCRP Shepherding Comte, (C) Grand Rapids Advisory Comte, (D) Internet Maintenance Comte, (E) IRPC Slander/Libel Comte, (F) Realignment Comte, (G) Clerk's Rec. #8, #9, (H) N. Shaver's Pers. Godliness Exam, (I) J. Sturm's Exp. Sermon 2 Exam, (J) J. Sturm's Church History Exam.

⁸ Rec. 8 (Clerk): That presbytery restructure the ordinary process for reviewing Session/TGB minute books as follows: (A) All minutes shall be reviewed digitally by presbyters in advance of the annual spring meeting; (B) The moderator shall send his review appointments to the asst. clerk by Dec. 31; (C) Session/TGB clerks shall submit digital minute files to the asst. clerk (or to the reviewers specified thereby) each year by Jan. 15, to be reviewed by the appointed reviewers no later than Feb. 15; (D) Session/TGB clerks shall bring physical minute books to the spring meeting of presbytery to be stamped by the asst. clerk, who shall be responsible for confirming all necessary signatures; (E) Session/TGB clerks shall bring physical minute books to the spring meeting of presbytery to be stamped by the asst. clerk, who shall be responsible for confirming all necessary signatures.

⁹ Rec. 9 (Clerk): That presbytery appoint Nathan Eshelman in advance to begin serving as assistant clerk at the spring meeting of 2023, in order to facilitate a smooth and efficient transition process for the clerks and for the court.

¹⁰ Rec. 10 (Clerk): That presbytery adopt the proposed agenda for this meeting.

- Recommendation 11¹¹ was seconded and adopted.
- It was moved, seconded, and adopted to approve the clerk's report.

4. GLG 22-13 ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Steve Rhoda presented the report of the GLG 22-13 Advisory Committee, bringing its recommendations before the court.

- Following some discussion, it was moved and seconded that presbytery lay Rec. 1¹² on the table to entertain a substitute: That presbytery rule that the evidence presented in GLG 22-13 is insufficient to warrant a trial for a censurable offense.
- The substitute motion was discussed and adopted, with Kent Butterfield and Drew Poplin registering their dissent.¹³
- It was moved, seconded, and adopted to approve the report.¹⁴

5. MOTION TO EXTEND THE TIME

It was moved, seconded, and adopted to extend the time for fifteen minutes.

6. IRPC SLANDER-LIBEL COMMITTEE

Ross Fearing presented the report of the IRPC Slander-Libel Committee, bringing its recommendations before the court.

- Recommendation 1¹⁵ was discussed and failed.
- Recommendation 2¹⁶ was discussed and failed by a vote of 15-16.
- Recommendation 3¹⁷ was discussed, after which it was moved, seconded, and adopted to adjourn the meeting.

7. PRAYER OF ADJOURNMENT

The moderator adjourned the court in prayer at 2:28 p.m.

MODERATOR OF PRESBYTERY

CLERK OF PRESBYTERY

¹¹ Rec. 11 (Clerk): 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.

¹² Rec. 1 (22-13): That Presbytery return the communication to the author with instruction that, if desired, the concerns can be brought to the Session of Second Reformed Presbyterian Church.

¹³ Butterfield-Poplin Dissent: "We write to express our dissent from the following action of Presbytery, 21 June 2022: 'That presbytery rule that the evidence presented in GLG 22-13 is insufficient to warrant a trial for a censurable offense.' Our Lord Jesus said in Matthew 12:36-37, 'But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.' During the Spring Meeting of Great Lakes- Gulf Presbytery, Mr. Faris's speech referenced in GLG 22-13 was uncharitable, untrue and not Christlike in every respect when he spoke with accusations of sins against families who have engaged the Christ Church RP Session and cooperated with the Presbytery Reconciliation Committee. These comments are not to be merely overlooked as hasty words stated in the passion of Presbytery deliberations, but as sins worthy of censure by the court of this Church. James 3:1, 6 says, 'My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation . . . And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.' Elders have a higher degree of accountability due to their office. We must never overlook the speech of an elder that speaks disparagingly of a member in good standing of the church. As it says in Colossians 4:6, 'Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.' Our Presbytery in its deliberation and by this action has contradicted the holy Law of God, and forsaken the example and teaching of our Lord Jesus. By this action, our Presbytery has demonstrated that it has a lower expectation of her ministers than it has of her members – for while this court would not even take up the charges against Mr. Faris, yet we were willing to have a committee to investigate aggrieved families of slander and libel. This ought not be so. The deliberation and actions of this court show that we care more for the reputation of our elders than taking seriously the injustice done and grief bought by Mr. Faris' public comments toward these families. For the purity and progress of the Church, Kent Butterfield and Drew Poplin, 22 June 2022"

¹⁴ Although Rec. 2 ("That this committee be dismissed.") was not acted upon formally, this is the implicit outcome of the adopted motion.

¹⁵ Rec. 1 (S-LC): That presbytery instructs parties who believe they have been slandered deliver [sic] specified charges with a request for investigation to the session or sessions with jurisdiction.

¹⁶ Rec. 2 (S-LC): That presbytery instructs all parties that if they find themselves unable to resolve matters of sin at individual level or session level, to bring them to presbytery through the establishes [sic] processes of appeal, complaint, or referral as appropriate.

¹⁷ Rec. 3 (S-LC): That presbytery advises those who believe they are slandered to consider the possibility that God intends them to receive these damages as his loving correction.

2022 SPECIAL MTG AFTER SYNOD

IWU Campus (Marion, IN) on Friday 6/24/22 @ 12:30 p.m.

The Great Lakes-Gulf Presbytery met for a special meeting following synod's adjournment on Friday June 24, 2022 at 12:30 p.m. on the campus of Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, Indiana.¹⁸

1. CALL TO ORDER

The moderator, Nathan Eshelman, called the court to order at 12:32 p.m., noting that the report of the IRPC Slander-Libel Committee will be resumed at the upcoming fall meeting in order to accommodate our IRPC delegates who were not able to be present for this meeting.

2. VISUAL ATTENDANCE

The assistant clerk, Dale Koons, took visual attendance, confirming that a quorum was present.

3. PERSONAL PRIVILEGE

Home Mission Board representative Bryan Dage shared some information on behalf of the Home Mission Board.

4. CANDIDATES & CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Adam Niess presented the Candidates and Credentials Committee report, bringing its recommendations before the court.

- Recommendation 1¹⁹ was adopted.
- Recommendation 2²⁰ was adopted, to be carried out later in the meeting.
- Recommendations 3²¹ and 4²² were referred to the fall meeting.

SERMON EXAM (Ord.) — J. Smith (UNANIMOUSLY SUSTAINED)^{RCV}

At the moderator's direction, Pastor Kyle Borg of the Winchester Reformed Presbyterian Church (Midwest Presbytery, RPCNA) led the court in prayer for Josh Smith's ordination-level sermon exam, and floor privileges were subsequently granted by the court to all RPCNA elders.

- Josh Smith came forward to preach his ordination-level sermon exam, called upon God's name in a prayer of illumination, read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12, preached from the text on Paul's pastoral care in Thessalonica, and concluded in prayer, after which comments were received, and the exam was unanimously sustained by roll call vote.

CHURCH HISTORY PAPER — J. Schwartz (SUSTAINED)^{VV}

Josh Reshey presented the report of the committee to review Jake Schwartz's church history paper, and the paper was sustained by voice vote.

HEBREW EXEGESIS PAPER — A. Murray (SUSTAINED)^{VV}

Shawn Anderson presented the report of the committee to review Aaron Murray's Hebrew exegesis paper, and the paper was sustained by voice vote.

BIBLE EXAM — N. Shaver (SUSTAINED)^{VV}

Joel Hart reported that Nathan Shaver passed his Bible exam, and the exam was sustained by voice vote.

HEBREW EXEGESIS PAPER — A. Blackwood (SUSTAINED)^{VV}

Joel Hart presented the report of the committee to review Allen Blackwood's Hebrew exegesis paper, and the paper was sustained by voice vote.

LICENSURE TO RECEIVE A CALL — A. Murray (UNANIMOUSLY SUSTAINED)^{RCV}

Aaron Murray's licensure to receive a call was unanimously sustained by roll call vote.²³

¹⁸ Moderator's Call (5/31/22): "...as the moderator, I am calling for a meeting for the examination of students on Friday, June 24th at 12:30pm or immediately following the adjournment of synod. This presbytery meeting's adjournment time is 2 hours and 15 minutes from when we are called to order. We will meet on IWU's campus in a room assigned to us."

¹⁹ Rec. 1 (C&CC): That student exams be conducted according to the schedule outlined below.

²⁰ Rec. 2 (C&CC): That Cody Work be given ten minutes to share his testimony with presbytery & be received as a student under care.

²¹ Rec. 3 (C&CC): That the suggested addition to the Student Handbook be approved.

²² Rec. 4 (C&CC): That presbytery consider increasing the monthly stipend for students under care.

²³ Note: The precise order in which these items were handled was: (1) Mr. Murray's licensure vote, (2) Mr. Blackwood's licensure vote, (3) Mr. Murray's licensure & presentation of pastoral call, (4) Mr. Blackwood's licensure & presentation of pastoral call.

- James Faris administered the licensure queries to Aaron Murray, who affirmed them and signed the queries in the minute book, after which Joel Hart called upon God's name in prayer, licensing Mr. Murray as eligible to receive a call to the gospel ministry in the name and by the authority of Zion's only Head and King, Jesus Christ.
- Joel Hart issued a charge to Mr. Murray, after which the clerk presented Mr. Murray with a pastoral call from the Coldenham-Newburgh congregation (RPCNA), instructing him to give his response to the court within two weeks.

LICENSURE TO RECEIVE A CALL — A. Blackwood (UNANIMOUSLY SUSTAINED)^{RCV}

Allen Blackwood's licensure to receive a call was unanimously sustained by roll call vote.

- Joel Hart administered the licensure queries to Allen Blackwood, who affirmed them and signed the queries in the minute book, after which Bob Bibby called upon God's name in prayer, licensing Mr. Blackwood as eligible to receive a call to the gospel ministry in the name and by the authority of Zion's only Head and King, Jesus Christ.
- Ed Blackwood issued a charge to his son, Mr. Blackwood, after which the clerk presented Mr. Blackwood with a pastoral call from the Laramie congregation (RPCNA), and he indicated his decision to accept the call.

PERSONAL GODLINESS EXAM (Ord.) — J. Smith (UNANIMOUSLY SUSTAINED)^{RCV}

Josh Smith came forward to receive his ordination-level personal godliness exam from Steve Rhoda, who asked Mr. Smith questions and received answers, after which questions and comments were received from the floor and the exam was unanimously sustained by roll call vote.

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY EXAM (Ord.) — J. Smith (UNANIMOUSLY SUSTAINED)^{RCV}

Josh Smith received his ordination-level systematic theology and distinctive principles exam from Philip McCollum, who asked Mr. Smith questions and received answers.

- Following the time for questions from the floor, it was moved, seconded, and adopted to permit a delegate to ask Mr. Smith if he takes any personal exceptions to the RPCNA subordinate doctrinal standards.
- Mr. Smith responded, after which comments were received and the exam was unanimously sustained by roll call vote.

ORDINATION ROLL CALL — J. Smith (UNANIMOUSLY SUSTAINED)^{RCV}

The court unanimously sustained Josh Smith's ordination by roll call vote.

CARE STATUS INTERVIEW — C. Work (SUSTAINED)^{WV}

Cody Work shared his personal testimony of saving faith and internal call to the gospel ministry, after which questions and comments were received from the floor and the motion to receive him as a student under care was adopted by voice vote.

Recommendation 5²⁴ was adopted, thereby receiving the report of the Candidates and Credentials Committee.

5. MOTION FROM THE FLOOR

It was moved, seconded, and adopted that presbytery appoint a five-man commission to ordain and install Josh Smith as a teaching elder on Friday August 19, 2022 at the Westminster Reformed Presbyterian Church in Prairie View, Illinois, consisting of the following delegates: Jack Baumgartner (ch.), Jerry Foltz, Bob Koch, Steve Rhoda, and Craig Scott.

6. MOTION TO ADJOURN

It was moved, seconded, and adopted to adjourn the meeting.

7. READING OF THE MINUTES

The clerk read the minutes (6/21, 6/24), and it was moved, seconded, and passed to adopt the minutes as amended.

8. PRAYER OF ADJOURNMENT

Bob Koch called upon God's name in prayer, adjourning the meeting at 3:38 p.m.²⁵

MODERATOR OF PRESBYTERY

CLERK OF PRESBYTERY

²⁴ Rec. 5 (C&CC): That our report be received.

²⁵ Clerk: Adam Kuehner (ak@streetsermon.org); Asst. Clerk: Dale Koons (dlkoons49@gmail.com); Moderator: Nathan Eshelman (n.p.eshelman@gmail.com).

GREAT LAKES-GULF PRESBYTERY
SSUMMER MEETING SYNOD, JUNE 21-24, 2022
INDIANA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY,
MARION, INDIANA
Attendance and Roll Call Voting Records
LEGEND: P-present; S-Sustain; NOT-Not Sustain,
ABS-Abstain; E-Excused

Printed July 7, 2022

SESSION 2

Congregation	First Last Name	Date Certified	Status	Notes	Session 1	Session 2	Allen Blackwood	Aaron Murray	Joshua Smith	Joshua Smith	Joshua Smith	Joshua Smith
					June 21, 1:15 to 2:30 pm ATTENDANCE	June 24, 12:30 pm to 2:45 pm ATTENDANCE	Licensure to Receive a Call	Licensure to Receive a Call	Expository Sermon Time: 25/5	Personal Godliness Time: 20/10/5	Theology and Distinctives Time: 20/10/5	Ordination Vote
Atlanta RPC	Frank Smith		E		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Belle Center RPC	Philip Pockras	03/02/22	TE		P	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Belle Center RPC	Bruce Bowers	03/22/22	RE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Bloomington RPC	Richard Holdeman	06/02/22	E		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Bloomington RPC	Philip McCollum	02/21/22	TE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Bloomington RPC	Ken De Jong	02/21/22	RE		P	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Christ Church RP	Jason O'Neill	03/03/22	ALT									
Christ Church RP	Dale Koons	03/03/22	RE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Christ Church RP	Sean Bird	03/03/22	RE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Columbus RPC	Joel Hart	03/22/22	TE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Columbus RPC	Ed Schisler	03/22/22	RE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Durham First RPC	Kent Butterfield	02/21/22	TE		P	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
Durham First RPC	Drew Poplin	02/21/22	RE		P	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)
Elkhart RPC	Wade Mann	06/02/22	E		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Elkhart RPC	Fikre Menbere	06/02/22	E		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Grand Rapids First RPC	Jake Schwartz	01/25/22	RE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Grand Rapids First RPC	Craig Scott	01/25/22	E		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Hetherton RPC	Ray Morton	05/25/22	TE		P	P				S		
Hetherton RPC	Brian Dage	05/25/22	RE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Immanuel RPC, West Lafayette	Samuel Carr	05/19/22	ALT									
Immanuel RPC, West Lafayette	Josh Karshen	05/19/22	RE		P	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Immanuel RPC, West Lafayette	Matt Wilburn	05/19/22	RE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Lafayette RPC	Adam Niess	04/28/22	TE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Lafayette RPC	Ken Nelson	04/28/22	RE		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Lafayette RPC	Robert Bibby	04/28/22	RE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Lafayette RPC	Chris Stockwell	04/02/22	ALT		P	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Marion RPC	Jason Camery	02/14/22	TE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Marion RPC	Scott Hunt	06/19/22	RE									
Orlando RPC	Nathan Eshelman	01/05/22	TE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Orlando RPC	Jonathon Schaefer	01/05/22	RE		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Second RPC, Indianapolis	James Faris	02/13/22	TE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Second RPC, Indianapolis	Jerry Foltz	03/03/22	TE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Second RPC, Indianapolis	Russ Pulliam	02/13/22	RE		P	P	S	S	S			
Second RPC, Indianapolis	David Pulliam	02/13/22	RE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Second RPC, Indianapolis	Richard Blankenship	02/13/22	ALT									
Second RPC, Indianapolis	Richard Blum	06/02/22	E		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Second RPC, Indianapolis	Donald Cassell, Jr	02/13/22	ALT									
Second RPC, Indianapolis	Justin Olson	02/13/22	ALT									
Southfield RPC, Michigan	Adam Kuehner	01/25/22	TE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Southfield RPC, Michigan	Jon Hughes	06/14/22	RE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Southside RPC, Indianapolis	David Hanson	05/10/22	TE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Southside RPC, Indianapolis	Steve Sturm	02/20/22	RE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Southwest Ohio RPC, Mason, Ohio	Dick Knodel, Jr.	02/27/22	TE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Southwest Ohio RPC, Mason, Ohio	Steven Work	02/27/22	TE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Southwest Ohio RPC, Mason, Ohio	Greg Damerow	02/27/22	ALT		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Sparta RPC	Ross Fearing	02/23/22	TE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Sparta RPC	James Odom	02/23/22	RE		P	P	S	S	ABS	S	S	S
Sycamore RPC, Kokomo	Shawn Anderson	02/16/22	TE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Sycamore RPC, Kokomo	Robert McKissick	02/16/22	RE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Terre Haute RPC	Steve Rhoda	02/12/22	TE		P	P	S	S	ABS	S	S	S
Terre Haute RPC	Russell Lodge	02/12/22	E		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Terre Haute RPC	Josh Reshey	02/12/22	RE		P	P	S	S	ABS	S	S	S
Westminster RPC, Prairie View, IL	Robert Koch	02/26/22	RE			P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Ministers, in Synod Service	David Whitla	05/31/22	E		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Ministers, Retired	Jack Baumgardner		TE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Ministers, Retired	Paul Matthews		E		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Ministers, Retired	Dennis Prutow	06/02/22	E		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Ministers, Retired	Tom Reid	06/02/22	E		E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Ministers, Retired	Bill Roberts	06/02/22	TE		P							
Ministers, Church Ministry	Zach Smith	06/02/22	TE		P	P	S	S	S	S	S	S
Notes:				Sustain			33	33	30	33	32	32
(1) Durham First RPC is no longer a part of GL-G as of adjournment of Synod on June 24, 2022				Not Sustain			0	0	0	0	0	0
				Abstain			0	0	3	0	0	0
				Total Excused	13	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
				Total Attendance	40	34						