

SUPPLEMENTAL REPORTS

MAY 10, 2011

## COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That Presbytery approve the request of the Rev. Kenneth Haines to be “released from the exercise of the ordained office” of minister of the Word and Sacrament (G-6.0600a.). Should there be a desire on Ken’s part to be “restored to the ordained office” in his future, he will make application to Shenandoah Presbytery and would be eligible to be restored without reordination (G-6.0600c.).
2. That Presbytery approve the following Commission to Ordain and Install Patrick Lanaghan on June 5, 2011, at the Burnt Church, at 3:00 p.m.:

#### MINISTERS

Rufus Burton

John Cushwa

Marcia Jaureguizar

#### ELDERS

Chester Renner, Burnt Church

Doug Sensabaugh, Massanutten Church

Michelle Elliott, Bunker Hill Church

Heather Carter, Slanesville Church

In addition, Presbytery is requested to invite the following persons to sit with the commission and to share in this service: Rev. Fred Holbrook and Rev. Tom Holden, both of Shenandoah Presbytery.

Convener – Rufus Burton

Sermon – Rufus Burton

Propound Questions to pastor – Rufus Burton

Propound Questions to congregation – John Cushwa

Charge Pastor – Michelle Elliott

Charge congregation – Marcia Jaureguizar

## **PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY**

### **For Information:**

John Craft of Tinkling Spring and Emily Peterson of Covenant have been enrolled as Inquirers.

Candidates Joan Wilson of Woodstock and Marie Mainard O'Connell of Covenant have been certified ready to receive a call.

### **For Recommendation:**

That Inquirer Walter Cantor be examined and upon affirmative answer to the question for candidates be enrolled as a candidate for ministry. Walter is a member of Cook's Creek and is attending Louisville Theological Seminary. Walter's candidacy paperwork, including his statement of faith, can be found on pages 25a-c of the Handbook.

## COMMITTEE ON CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

### RECOMMENDATION:

That Presbytery, in accordance with Book of Order G-7.0303A2, calls a meeting of the congregation of Upper Tract Presbyterian Church for the purpose of establishing Upper Tract as a chapel of Ruddle Presbyterian Church. The date of the meeting will be set in consultation with the Committee on Church Development, the Moderator of Presbytery, the Stated Clerk of Presbytery and the Moderator and the Clerk of Session of Upper Tract Presbyterian Church.

### RATIONALE

This motion comes from a request from the clerk of session from the Upper Tract Church. Upper Tract's membership has declined in the past years. Due to this decline, the session of the Ruddle Church, in discussion with the clerk of session at the Upper Tract Church, has agreed to accept the responsibility and membership of the Upper Tract Church, to continue to maintain the property, and to periodically hold worship services at the Upper Tract Church.

May 6, 2011

Pastoral Letter to the Congregations in the Presbytery of Shenandoah

Sally Hinchman, Interim General Presbyter/Stated Clerk

*May the peace of Christ be with you all.*

As of today it appears that the proposed change to the *Book of Order* G-6.0106b will be affirmed by a majority of the presbyteries during the week of May 9.

The debate and discussion on this amendment in this presbytery and across the church has been emotionally intense. I am aware that many individuals in the congregations of this presbytery were not in favor of this change to our constitution. I encourage each of us, on both sides of the debate, to continue the dialogue.

I invite each of you to read the following letter that is attached and also the “Frequently Asked Questions” sheet regarding ordination standards.

The proposed new language places squarely on the shoulders of the session or presbytery the responsibility of conducting thorough examinations of those elected to the church’s ordered ministries. If it is adopted, the session or presbytery must take seriously its responsibility to ensure that those who serve in these ministries are “persons of strong faith, dedicated to discipleship, and love of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord,” and whose lives are “a demonstration of the gospel in the church and in the world.” The session or the presbytery must assure itself through its examination that an individual for ordination or installation is both able and ready to live out the commitments made in affirmative answers to the ordination questions. (*Directory of Worship* W-4.4003 and 4.4004).

My fervent prayer is that each of us will continue to be in prayer for one another. To also remember the words to the hymn “Blessed Be the Tie That Binds”:

*Blessed be the tie that binds  
our hearts in Christian love;  
The fellowship of kindred minds  
is like that to that above.*

*May it be so.....*

May 2011

To congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

*May grace, mercy, and peace be yours in abundance (Jude 1:2).*

The debate about ordination standards has been a Presbyterian family struggle for much of the last three decades. We have sought to find that place where every congregation and every member, deacon, elder, and minister of the Word and Sacrament can share their gifts in ministry while, at the same time, the integrity of every congregation, member, deacon, elder, and minister is respected.

This year, the conversation has focused on Amendment 10-A that was passed by the 219th General Assembly (2010) and sent to presbyteries for approval. While we wait for official tallies, it appears that 87 presbyteries will approve 10-A during the week of May 9, which is the majority required for approval.

If this becomes official, the new language outlining the gifts and requirements for ordained service will say the following:

*Standards for ordained service reflect the church's desire to submit joyfully to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all aspects of life (G-1.0000). The governing body responsible for ordination and/or installation (G. 14.0240; G-14.0450) shall examine each candidate's calling, gifts, preparation, and suitability for the responsibilities of office. The examination shall include, but not be limited to, a determination of the candidate's ability and commitment to fulfill all requirements as expressed in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003). Governing bodies shall be guided by Scripture and the confessions in applying standards to individual candidates.*

This decision begins with an unequivocal affirmation that ordained office will continue to be rooted in each deacon, elder, and minister's "joyful submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all aspects of life."

This action also has important effects on our life together as a church, namely:

- in keeping with our historic principles of church order, each session and presbytery will continue to determine the suitability of individuals seeking ordination within its bounds.
- persons in a same-gender relationship may be considered for ordination and/or installation as deacons, elders, and ministers of the Word and Sacrament within the PC(USA); and
- all other churchwide standards for ordination remain unchanged.

Reactions to this change will span a wide spectrum. Some will rejoice, while others will weep. Those who rejoice will see the change as an action, long in coming, that makes the PC(USA) an inclusive church that recognizes and receives the gifts for ministry of all those who feel called to ordained office. Those who weep will consider this change one that compromises biblical authority and acquiesces to present culture. The feelings on both sides run deep.

However, as Presbyterians, we believe that the only way we will find God's will for the church is by seeking it together - worshiping, praying, thinking, and serving alongside one another. We are neighbors and colleagues, friends and family. Most importantly, we are all children of God, saved and taught by Jesus Christ, and filled with the Holy Spirit.

We hold to the strong affirmation that all of us are bound together as the church through Jesus Christ our Lord. "There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all," Paul wrote to the Ephesians (4:5-6).

**It** is Jesus Christ who calls individuals to ordained ministries, and all those who are called to ordained office continue to acknowledge Jesus as Lord of all and Head of the church. **It** is this same Jesus Christ who is the foundation of our faith and to whom we cling.

No doubt, there will be several news stories and other reports about this change in the days ahead. A number of resources, including frequently asked questions and liturgical resources, are available for you at <http://oga.pcusa.org>. In addition, for those who wish to comment on or inquire further about 10-A, please contact [ga.amendments@pcusa.org](mailto:ga.amendments@pcusa.org) or call (888) 728-7228, ext. 8202.

We invite you to join us in prayer:

*Almighty God, we give thanks for a rich heritage of faithful witnesses to the gospel throughout the ages. We offer gratitude not only for those who have gone before us, but for General Assembly commissioners and presbyters across the church who have sought diligently to discern the mind of Christ for the church in every time and place, and especially in this present time.*

*May your Spirit of peace be present with us in difficult decisions, especially where relationships are strained and the future is unclear. Open our ears and our hearts to listen to and hear those with whom we differ. Most of all, we give thanks for Jesus Christ, our risen Savior and Lord, who called the Church into being and who continues to call us to follow his example of loving our neighbor and working for the reconciliation of the world. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*



Gradye Parsons  
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly



Cynthia Bolbach  
Moderator, 219th General Assembly (2010)



Linda Valentine Executive  
Director  
General Assembly Mission Council



Landon Whitsitt  
Vice Moderator, 219th General Assembly (2010)

Frequently Asked Questions  
Amendment 10-A and ordination standards  
Office of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

**What has happened?**

In July 2010, the 219th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved a proposed amendment (10-A) to the *Book of Order*, part of the PC(USA) Constitution, regarding ordination standards. As with all constitutional changes, Amendment 10-A required ratification by a majority (87) of the PC(USA)'s 173 presbyteries (regional bodies) for it to become part of the *Book of Order*. While the Office of the General Assembly awaits official tallies, it appears that the minimum number of 87 presbyteries will be reached the week of May 9.

**What will change?**

The following provision that is currently in the *Book of Order* (G-6.0106b) will be changed:

*Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament.*

The new language (Amendment 10-A) will read:

*Standards for ordained service reflect the church's desire to submit joyfully to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all aspects of life (G-1.0000). The governing body responsible for ordination and/or installation (G.14.0240; G- 14.0450) shall examine each candidate's calling, gifts, preparation, and suitability for the responsibilities of office. The examination shall include, but not be limited to, a determination of the candidate's ability and commitment to fulfill all requirements as expressed in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003). Governing bodies shall be guided by Scripture and the confessions in applying standards to individual candidates.*

**What does this mean?**

- Ordaining bodies continue to retain the right and responsibility to determine their own memberships. A congregation continues to elect their deacons and elders and the session examines them for suitability of office. Likewise, presbyteries examine individuals for suitability to be ordained as ministers of the Word and Sacrament.
- A person in a same-gender relationship can be considered for ordination as deacon, elder, or minister of the Word and Sacrament.
- All other churchwide standards for ordination remain unchanged. (There was never a prohibition against a person being ordained based on sexual orientation, as long as that person was celibate.)

**What's next?**

Amendment 10-A will take effect on July 10, 2011 (one year after the adjournment of the last assembly). Already, the change has energized many conversations at all levels across the PC(USA) about how we can best enable the gifts of those called to service in Christ's church and have mutual respect for each other's integrity. In addition, sessions and presbyteries will review their processes for examination.

For more detailed information and additional resources: <http://oga.pcusa.org>

Includes links to: Pastoral letter to congregations of the PC(USA) - also in Spanish and Korean  
Liturgical resources - also in Spanish and Korean  
Advisory Opinion #24 - also in Spanish and Korean  
Various video pod casts - including one in Spanish and one in Korean