

Meeting of the Wycliffe Presbytery

Church of the Redeemer

West Monroe, LA

November 11-12, 2019

After supper, fellowship, and a mini-concert by the Geneva Academy Boys choir, Presiding Minister of Presbytery Steve Wilkins called the meeting to order at 7:26 pm. A quorum was determined to be present.

Member churches represented by following delegates:

Pastor Steve Wilkins and Elder Robert McBroom (Church of the Redeemer, West Monroe, LA) Elder McBroom present for Tuesday meeting only.

Pastor Randy Booth and Elder Jonathan Landrum (Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church, Nacogdoches, TX)

Elder James Nabours (Covenant Presbyterian Church, Sulphur, LA)

Pastor Oleg Volkov (Reformed Presbyterian Church, St. Petersburg, Russia)

Pastor Jeff Niell and Elder Gene Capone (All Saints Presbyterian Church, Ft. Worth, TX)

Pastor Adam McIntosh and Elder Steve Willborg (St. David's Church, Tomball, TX)

Pastor Phil Bozarth (Grace Covenant Church, Walnut Ridge, AR)

Pastor Mark Balthrop (Redeemer Reformed Church, Oklahoma City, OK, seated as a delegate after taking membership oaths)

Ordained pastors participating in discussion but not delegates:

Assistant Pastor Drew Maney (Church of the Redeemer, West Monroe, LA)

Assistant Pastor Ben Alexander (Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church, Nacogdoches, TX)

Visitors

Brad Billheimer (Redeemer Reformed Church, Oklahoma City, OK)

Dan Nash, Walt Trisler, and Ed Lang (all from Church of the Redeemer, West Monroe, LA)

Pastor Steve Jeffery (Emmanuel Church, North London, England)

PM Wilkins opened in prayer.

Elder Jonathan Landrum was chosen as clerk by acclamation.

Presiding Minister of Presbytery Report

PM Wilkins gave his report and noted 3 items:

1. Grace Covenant Church (Texarkana, AR) was officially dissolved in November 2018 and is no longer a member congregation in Wycliffe Presbytery or the CREC.
2. Pastor Joe Rosales resigned as pastor of Christ Covenant Church (San Antonio, TX), and his ordination was rescinded by the sponsoring session of Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church (Nacogdoches, TX) on October 24, 2018. He is no longer an ordained minister in Wycliffe Presbytery or the CREC. Christ Covenant Church was officially dissolved by the session of Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church on October 27, 2018.
3. Due to marital problems, Pastor John Barach resigned from Covenant Presbyterian Church (Sulphur, LA) in August 2019, and his ordination was suspended by the session. He is not currently qualified to receive a pastoral call and Covenant Presbyterian Church is seeking a new pastor.

Church reports

Pastor Todd Davis from Christ Church (Searcy, AR) was not able to attend and give his report. Pastor Booth prayed for him and his congregation.

Pastor Phil Bozarth from Grace Covenant Church gave his report and asked for prayer for new leadership (elders/deacons). Pastor Randy Booth led in prayer for Pastor Bozarth and the congregation of Grace Covenant Church.

Pastor Steve Wilkins from Church of the Redeemer gave his report and invited men to come to their Christendom lectures in January. He also asked for prayer that the Lord would add more elders and deacons for their congregation. Pastor Phil Bozarth prayed for Pastor Wilkins and the Church of the Redeemer.

Elder James Nabours from Covenant Presbyterian Church gave his report. Pastor John Barach resigned in August 2019, and requested prayer for new pastor. Pastor Jeff Neill led in prayer.

Pastor Oleg Volkov from The Reformed Presbyterian Church (St. Petersburg, Russia) gave his report. He also gave the report for The Truth and Freedom Presbyterian Church (mission church of RPC, St. Petersburg) in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. Pastor Ben Alexander led in prayer for him and their congregation.

Pastor Jeff Niell of All Saints Presbyterian Church gave his church report. They have called Pastor Steve Jeffery from London to be a co-pastor to their congregation. Considering a pastoral retreat with Pastor Booth opened to other pastors. He brought thanks from Reformed Presbyterian Church, St. Petersburg, Russia, for the help and support of Pastor Volkov. Prayer request for quick resolution of issues and timing for the Jefferys' move to TX and also for the addition of new officers.

Pastor Mark Balthrop prayed for Pastor Niell and the congregation.

Pastor Adam McIntosh of St. David's Church gave is church report. Prayer request that the Lord would use their new location for increased visibility and also for godly spouses for a number of singles in their church. Pastor Volkov prayed for him and their congregation .

Pastor Randy Booth presented the church report for Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church. Pastor Steve Jeffery prayed for him and the church.

Pastor Mark Balthrop gave a report from our candidate church Redeemer Reformed Church. Pastor Drew Maney prayed for him and the ministry of their church.

Adjourned at 8:59 pm with prayer by Elder James Nabours.

Tuesday

Called to order by PM Wilkins at 8:01 am and sang *Hallelujah Praise Jehovah*.

Prayer and devotional by Pastor Adam McIntosh from Mark 6 on feeding of the 5000. He reminded us that we don't know what God has planned for us but that our duty is to obey when God says to feed his people.

Items of Business

Without objection, the ordained ministers who were present were allowed to sit at the delegates' table and participate in discussion.

1. Introduction of Pastor Steve Jeffery visiting from Emmanuel Church, North London, England. He has been called to All Saints Presbyterian Church as a co-pastor but he hasn't been installed yet. Pastor Niell reported that Pastor Jeffery was examined in 2008 by the CREC and recognized by them then. His ministry has been supported by numerous CREC churches for a number of years. Several details are yet to be resolved and matters for prayer in the process of their move. Pastor Jeffery received several questions from the floor about his background, family, and theology. Steve is neither a minister at All Saints at this time or a delegate to presbytery. Prayer by Pastor Booth for Steve, his family, move, Emmanuel Church, and All Saints Presbyterian Church.
2. Pastor Niell recommended receiving Redeemer Reformed Church (Pastor Mark Balthrop) into presbytery membership. He spent time in Pastor Balthrop's home and also preached at RPC. Pastor Balthrop has also preached at All Saints. He is loved by the people and he loves the congregation there. His family is in order and he is confessionally sound. Motion was made and seconded to receive Redeemer Reformed Church (Oklahoma City, OK) as a member church in Wycliffe Presbytery. Passed unanimously and membership vows were administered to Pastor Balthrop.
3. Approved without objection the list of ordained ministers, ordained without call, and ordained but suspended in our presbytery. The list is as follows:

Ordained ministers with a call

Pastor Steve Wilkins and Assistant Pastor Drew Maney (Church of the Redeemer, West Monroe, LA)

Pastor Randy Booth and Assistant Pastor Ben Alexander (Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church, Nacogdoches, TX)

Pastor Oleg Volkov (Reformed Presbyterian Church, St. Petersburg, Russia)

Pastor Jeff Niell (All Saints Presbyterian Church, Ft. Worth, TX)

Pastor Adam McIntosh (St. David's Church, Tomball, TX)

Pastor Phil Bozarth (Grace Covenant Church, Walnut Ridge, AR)

Pastor Mark Balthrop (Redeemer Reformed Church, Oklahoma City, OK)

Ordained ministers without a call

Nathan Ketchen (Nacogdoches, TX)

Joseph Bailey (Monroe, LA)

Ordained minister with suspended credentials

John Barach (Sulphur, LA)

4. PMoC report: Motion made and seconded to approve the combining of the Constitutional Review Committee. Passed without objection. Motion made and seconded to approve the action of sending a delegation to Pakistan to make inquiries on behalf of the CREC. Passed without objection.

5. A. Consider proposals from council committees. Motion made and seconded to approve the following:

While acknowledging the high degree of importance and applaud the intentions behind the proposed topics and papers (drafts on “Terrorism”, paper “On Authority, Order, and Equality within the Godhead Affirmations and Denials”, “Memorial on Abortion” and the “Draft of Proposed Confessional Statement and Amendments to the CREC Constitution Re Sex, Marriage, and Gender”) it is our recommendation that further discussion take place on the role at large of memorials, and detailed position papers etc. We agree with the necessity of engaging cultural issues but question the exact form and methodology of these proposals.

We want to make clear that our desire is to engage culture, speak the truth in love and to do so boldly and unapologetically. It is the *precise* way we do this with our rather detailed papers that we are calling for more discussion.

Regarding “**Memorial E. Terrorism [2020 Draft Proposal]**,” while we regard the new proposal as an improvement over the existing Memorial on Terrorism, (and we believe that a statement of some kind may be necessary), we do not think it should be adopted [some concerns include the title itself and some of the exegesis], and we believe moreover that we should rescind the existing Memorial.

The “**paper**” on the Trinity was not helpful, and we would discourage the adoption of it in any form as an official statement from our Communion.

Regarding the **Memorial on Abortion**, rather than adopting it as a “Memorial,” we recommend that the PMoC provide a summary statement, subject to approval by the Presbyteries, to be included in the “Statements” section of our website. We also concur with the statement offered by Athanasius Presbytery (posted on the list, October 28, 2019).

Regarding the **Proposed Confessional Statement and Amendments to the CREC Constitution Re Sex, Marriage, and Gender**, we oppose this being proposed and adopted as a Confessional Statement. We have general agreement with the final four summary statements, and would recommend that these be formulated by the PMoC, with necessary modifications and prior Presbytery approval, and placed as a “Statement” on our website.

5. B. Committee on Ordination Procedures

Pastor McIntosh presented items from the committee for approval. Following discussion, presbytery instructed Pastor McIntosh to relay our comments to the committee, specifically regarding our concern that a number of pastors have taken a call to a church prior to a presbytery exam.

5. C. Sexual Abuse Prevention. The following motion was made and seconded: Regarding the proposed memorial on sexual abuse prevention, rather than memorial presented by committee, this should be presented as recommendations for churches to consider. Passed without objection.

5. D. Social media usage committee. After a summary given by Pastor McIntosh, the motion was made and seconded: We continue to oppose the recommendation that the CREC establish and maintain a social media presence. Passed unanimously.

5. E. Proposal for compensation of PMoC. After comments by Pastor Booth regarding the history of financial support for PMoC, the following motion was made and seconded: We generally agree in principle and ask council to set a budget for compensation for PMoC and related expenses and for presbytery to do the same for PM of pres. Approved unanimously.

6. Other business

Moved and seconded that Pastor McIntosh and Pastor Booth nominated to be our delegates to council and Pastor Todd Davis as alternate. Nominations were closed and they were approved without objections.

Moved and seconded that Pastor Wilkins continue for a full term as PM of presbytery. Approved by acclamation.

Discussion was had on a church planting proposal and ministerial training retreat.

Pastor Niell relayed appreciation for PM Steve Wilkins' work. Pastor Booth reminded delegates to send in money for presbytery PM and PMoC support.

Adjourn to executive session 2:30 - 3:00 pm to discuss pastoral issues concerning Covenant Presbyterian Church. Concluded with prayer by Pastor Wilkins.

Closing devotional by Phil Bozarth on Jude 20-21 and a reminder to keep looking to Christ and that our failsafe is not our self, but Christ who enables us to stand firm.

Presbytery closed by singing *Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken* at 3:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Landrum
clerk