

COMMUNION OF REFORMED
EVANGELICAL CHURCHES



2017 ANNUAL MEETING

OF

KNOX PRESBYTERY

NOVEMBER 14-15, 2017

SANDESTIN, FLORIDA

MINUTES

APPROVED

DECEMBER 5, 2017

TUE NOV 14, 2017

Preliminary Matters

- The 2017 annual meeting of Knox Presbytery was called to order at 1:15 p.m. by Presiding Minister (“PM”) Alan Burrow.
- An invitational prayer was offered by Pastor Stuart Bryan.
- Singing was led by Secretary Casey Christopher (“All Hail the Power of Jesus Name” and “Man of Sorrows”).
- Roll was called by PM Burrow and a quorum was established. (For delegates, see the list of church reports below.)
- Visitors from Tasmania, Australia were introduced and welcomed.

Church Reports

- Christ Church (Missoula, MT); Pastor Andrew Voelkel present.
- Christ Church (Moscow, ID); Teaching Elders Csaba Leidenfrost and Ben Merkle present.
 - **Motion** (Csaba Leidenfrost; Terry Tollefson) to receive Christ Church’s mission church, Valley Covenant Church (Lewiston, ID) into full CREC membership as a fully particularized church. Elders from Christ Church and Valley Covenant reported on Valley Covenant’s situation and answered questions from the floor. **Motion carried** without opposition.
 - The **oath of membership** was administered by PM Burrow to Pastor Matthew Carpenter and Elder Sam Creason on behalf of Valley Covenant Church (BOP III. 3.), and Valley Covenant was received and welcomed into full membership (BOP III. 4.).
- Valley Covenant Church (Lewiston, ID); Pastor Matthew Carpenter and Elder Sam Creason present.
- Christ Church (Spokane, WA); Pastor Kenton Spratt present.
 - Holy Trinity Church (Colville, WA) (mission church of Christ Church (Spokane)); no local representative present, but Kenton Spratt reported on Holy Trinity.
- Christ Covenant Church (Enterprise, OR); Pastor Terry Tollefson present.
- Christ Covenant Reformed Church (Billings, MT); Pastor Chris Schrock and Elder Ryan Yeager present.
- Emmanuel Chapel (Helena, MT); Pastor Jonah Barnes present.
- **Motion** (Eric Letsche of Trinity Church (Kirkland, WA); Stuart Bryan) to receive Trinity Church’s mission church, King’s Cross Church (Wenatchee, WA) into full CREC membership as a fully particularized church. Trinity Elder Eric Letsche and King’s Cross Pastor Gene Helsel reported on the situation at King’s Cross and answered questions from the floor. **Motion carried** without opposition.

- The **oath of membership** was administered by PM Burrow to Pastor Gene Helsel on behalf of King's Cross Church (BOP III. 3.), and King's Cross was received and welcomed into full membership (BOP III. 4.).
- King's Cross Church (Wenatchee, WA); Pastor Gene Helsel present.
- The King's Congregation (Meridian, ID); Pastor Alan Burrow present.
- Trinity Church (Coeur d'Alene, ID); Pastor Stuart Bryan present.
- Trinity Covenant Church (Fort St. John, BC); Elder Desmond Jones present.
- Trinity Reformed Church (Moscow, ID); Pastors Toby Sumpter and Joshua Appel present.
- **Motion** (Ben Merkle; Toby Sumpter) to authorize Christ Church (Moscow, ID) to recognize the credentials of Jack Bradley and Rich Young, ministers without call, over the course of the next year pursuant to BOP XII. 4. b. **Motion carried** without opposition.
- **Motion** (Joshua Appel; Stuart Bryan) that an exception to the local church membership requirement of CREC Constitution II. B. be granted to Francis Foucachon for the next year. **Motion carried** unanimously, as required by Const. II. B.
- Presbytery took a break at 4:00 p.m. and reconvened at 4:11 p.m.

Presiding Ministers' Reports

- **The report of Council PM Douglas Wilson** was received. PM Wilson indicated that there were no action items for Presbytery, for all action items would be brought before Council.
- **The report of Knox Presbytery PM Alan Burrow** (attached) was received, and the following action items were acted on by Presbytery:
 - **Motion** (Gene Helsel; Kenton Spratt) to ratify PM Burrow's Dec 5, 2016 action in accepting and granting Christ Covenant Church's (Grande Prairie, BC) Nov 25, 2016 notice of withdrawal from the CREC. **Motion carried** without opposition.
 - **Motion** (Stuart Bryan; Toby Sumpter) to ratify PM Burrow's action in sending out an email on Nov 5, 2016 clarifying what action Knox Presbytery 2016 had taken regarding Christ Covenant Church (Grande Prairie, BC) and the Barendregt brothers who had filed a complaint against the church's session. **Motion carried** without opposition.
 - **Motion** (Csaba Leidenfrost; Joshua Appel) to ratify PM Burrow's action in appointing the Ordination Evaluation Committee for Matthew Carpenter. **Motion carried** without opposition.
 - **Motion** (Stuart Bryan; Csaba Leidenfrost) to ratify PM Burrow's Nov 14, 2017 action in accepting and granting Trinity Church of Tri-Cities' (Richland, WA) Nov 13, 2017 notice of withdrawal from the CREC. (PM Burrow read the email and letter he received from Pastor Toby Wilson on behalf of Trinity Church, and then read the email he sent in response acknowledging and granting the same.) **Motion carried** without opposition. (This matter was added to the agenda by unanimous consent. The notice of withdrawal was emailed to

PM Burrow at 10:56 p.m. (Mtn) and received at 11:56 p.m. (Central), Mon Nov 13, 2017.
PM Burrow's response accepting and granting the withdrawal was emailed at 10:29 a.m.,
Tue Nov 14, 2017.)

- Presbytery was recessed at 5:10 p.m.

WED NOV 15, 2017

Preliminary Matters

- Presbytery was reconvened at 9:04 a.m.
- A prayer was offered by Pastor Kenton Spratt.
- Singing was led by Secretary Casey Christopher ("A Mighty Fortress Is Our God").
- An exhortation from the Scriptures was given by Pastor Joshua Appel.

Miscellaneous Matters

- **Motion** (Ordination Evaluation Committee) to recommend that Valley Covenant Church (Lewiston, ID) recognize Matt Carpenter's ordination (Southern Baptist) and install him as pastor there at Valley Covenant. Matthew Carpenter answered questions from the floor. **Motion carried** without opposition.
- Presbytery broke at 10:02 a.m. and reconvened at 10:14 a.m.
- **Motion** (Chris Schrock; Gene Helsel) to overture Council to appoint a committee of suitable presbyters to study the current controversy over the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father, to report on the issue and the current debate, as well as whether this doctrine falls within the Reformed confessions adopted by our churches. **Motion failed.**
- **Motion** (Toby Sumpter; Terry Tollefson) for the next PM of Knox Presbytery to stay in contact with Pastor Douglas Wilson as he studies the eternal subordination of the Son controversy, and that the PM report back to Presbytery in writing with any recommendations he might have. **Motion carried** without opposition.
- **Motion** (Toby Sumpter; Kenton Spratt) to adopt in principle the Pastoral Statement on Abuse prepared by representatives of the sessions of Trinity Reformed Church (Moscow, ID) and Christ Church (Moscow, ID), and to ask the next PM of Knox Presbytery to appoint a committee to revise the statement as needed in preparation for a proposal to Council 2020. **Motion carried** (9-1-3).
- **Nomination** (Chris Schrock; Joshua Appel) of Stuart Bryan to serve as the next PM of Knox Presbytery. Stuart Bryan was **elected** with no dissenting votes.
- **Motion** (Toby Sumpter; ?) to thank Alan Burrow for his service as PM. **Motion carried** without opposition.
- **Motion** (Ben Merkle; Stuart Bryan) that Knox Presbytery's 2018 annual meeting be held in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, on October 9-10, 2018. **Motion carried** without opposition.

- **Motion** (Matt Carpenter; Toby Sumpter) to adjourn. **Motion carried** without opposition.
- Presbytery adjourned at 12:04 p.m.

REPORT FROM KNOX PM ALAN BURROW



November 7, 2017

Brothers of Knox Presbytery:

Grace and peace to you.

This is my third and final report to you as Presiding Minister, and before I get into the report, let me say what an honor it has been to serve you and our denomination in this position. Thank you for the opportunity.

Christ Covenant Church (Grande Prairie, AB)

In a sad end to a sad episode, I received notice on Nov 25, 2016 (as did you all, for it was copied to Knox Presbytery and subsequently forwarded to the CREC listserv) that Christ Covenant Church (CCC) had decided to withdraw from the CREC in lieu of acceding to Presbytery's request that they accept three presbyters, whom they would approve ahead of time, to serve as advisors to their session over the next year, specifically for the purpose of helping the session and the congregation work through the loose ends remaining following the Council Court of Appeals ruling and the recommendations of the various pastoral delegations sent to Grande Prairie by Acting PM of Council Jack Phelps, as well as the Presbytery Committee I appointed ahead of our 2016 meeting to pull everything together and make recommendations. As you will recall, the Committee recommended that CCC accept two pro tem elders to serve with their session over the next year, but when that proved unacceptable during our three-and-a-half hours of floor discussion with the CCC delegation, Presbytery approved a compromise of three CCC-approved advisors. This was based on the CCC delegation's representation that they believed such a compromise would be acceptable to the CCC session. Alas, this was not to be. In October 2016, the session recommended to the congregation that they withdraw from the CREC, with a month being provided for the congregation to provide input. A month later, the motion carried, and the session notified us all of their decision.

The CREC Constitution provides that a member church "may remove themselves [from the CREC] by whatever means their respective constitutions allow" (Art. III. J.). The CCC Constitution does not

contain a specific provision for withdrawal; it simply provides that “under Christ, the ordained authority with the local church is the elders in council ... [who] act corporately to govern” (Art. 3), and further that “members shall have the right to vote on all matter presented by the eldership for vote at any congregational meeting” (Art. 2). The CCC session having given the congregation a month to provide input before voting to withdraw, and given the extensive, unsuccessful efforts of several pastoral delegations to work with the session and the congregation, I accepted the notice of withdrawal and notified the CCC session of the same in an email dated Dec 5, 2017, which I forwarded to all of you:

Theo & the Council of Christ Covenant Church, Grande Prairie, AB:

On behalf of Knox Presbytery and the CREC, I have received your notice of withdrawal from the CREC, and it is effective as of the date I received it, Nov 25, 2016. I was hopeful after presbytery that things would go in a different direction --- I mean that as a personal regret, not as an effort to question your decision.

May the grace of Christ be with you,

Alan Burrow
Presiding Minister
Knox Presbytery



- **Action Item: I ask that Presbytery ratify my action in accepting and granting CCC's notice of withdrawal.**

Letter of Clarification re CCC and the Barendregt Brothers

In the interim between our 2016 meeting and CCC giving notice of withdrawal, it was brought to my attention by a number of parties, including the session of Trinity Reformed Church (Moscow), where the Barendregt brothers and their families had been transferred by CCC, that there was a good deal of inaccurate talk making the rounds regarding exactly what action Presbytery had taken regarding CCC and the Barendregt brothers, and whether the same amounted to some sort of pronouncement (good or bad) regarding the Barendregt brothers. To calm things down, I sent out the following email with the attached letter:

Brothers:

A number of people have expressed confusion as to exactly what action Knox Presbytery took at its annual meeting in September 2016 regarding Christ Covenant Church (CCC) in Grande Prairie, AB, and the three Barendregt brothers. I have issued the attached statement to clarify the matter and quell the confusion. Feel free to distribute the statement to anyone who would benefit from it.

Blessings on you, your families, and your congregations,

Alan Burrow
PM, Knox Presbytery

[Attached letter]

November 5, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

A number of people have expressed confusion as to exactly what action Knox Presbytery took at its annual meeting in September 2016 regarding Christ Covenant Church (CCC) in Grande Prairie, AB, and the three Barendregt brothers who had filed a complaint against the session of CCC earlier in the year. The complaint was referred to a Council Court of Appeals, which rendered a decision in April 2016. The court ruled in some respects for the session of the church, and in other respects for the Barendregt brothers. The court called upon both sides to perform certain remedial actions. To assist in the process, CREC Acting Presiding Minister Jack Phelps sent two pastoral delegations to Grande Prairie. The Barendregt brothers complied with the court's directives, and the session complied with some of them. It was clear from both sides, however, that the prospects for peace and unity in the same congregation were not good. It was arranged for the Barendregt brothers and their families to peacefully transfer their memberships to a sister CREC church, Trinity Reformed Church in Moscow, Idaho. This all occurred prior to presbytery, and thus presbytery's actions in September did not concern the Barendregt brothers at all. They had already been transferred to Trinity, where they remain members in good standing to this day. Presbytery's deliberations concerned how best to minister to CCC. Presbytery requested that CCC's session agree to receive assistance from two pro tem elders over the next year, which request was declined by the CCC delegation. Presbytery then requested that the session accept three advisors—men acceptable to the session—to assist them over the next year. The session is currently considering that request. That is what occurred at presbytery. To reiterate, the Barendregt brothers' situation had been resolved prior to presbytery with their transfer to Trinity, where they are members in good standing. Presbytery did not concern them in any way.

*Alan Burrow
Presiding Minister
Knox Presbytery*

- **Action Item: I ask that Presbytery ratify my action in sending out the above email and letter.**

Ordination Evaluation Committee for Matt Carpenter

Valley Covenant Church (Lewiston, ID), mission church of Christ Church (Moscow, ID), called Matthew Carpenter, previously ordained in the Southern Baptist Convention, as pastor, and Matt and his family moved to Lewiston in June 2017. As a previously ordained minister, Matt falls under the provisions of BOP Art. XI. 4., pursuant to which he shall receive an abbreviated examination before Presbytery designed to “assist the local congregation in confirming [his] orthodoxy and competence.” To this end, “[t]he Presiding Minister will facilitate the ministerial credentials examination by appointing a committee composed of three CREC presbyters” (BOP Art. XI, 4. a. ii.). Accordingly, I appointed a credentials examination committee consisting of Pastor Joshua Appel (chair), Pastor Chris Schrock, and Elder Sam Creason. Their report urging presbytery to recommend that VCC install Matt Carpenter as pastor follows my report.

- **Action Item: I ask that Presbytery ratify my action in appointing the credentials examination committee for Matt Carpenter.**

The Presiding Ministers' Review Committee on the Sitler and Wight Sex Abuse Cases

The Committee's reports were delivered to Christ Church (Moscow) and Trinity Reformed Church (Moscow) on August 16, 2017, and the Committee was disbanded shortly thereafter.

Pertinent information about MinistrySafe and the Love & Norris law firm was provided in my 2016 report, which I will quote here for your convenience:

One of the things the committee decided early on was that, regardless of the evaluation and report, the CREC needed to receive expert training on sexual abuse, so we would be better equipped to prevent such cases in our congregations and better prepared to deal with them when they arise (God forbid). To that end, we contacted Love & Norris, a Texas law firm that specializes in the area, particularly as it relates to churches and other ministries (Kimberly Norris' father was a PCA church planter), and their training organization MinistrySafe. You can view their website here: <http://ministrysafe.com/>.

We retained Love & Norris to review the draft report so we could get the benefit of their expert advice in that regard, and we retained MinistrySafe to give us two training sessions for CREC ministers and elders, one in Seattle in conjunction with Anselm Presbytery's meeting this October [2016], and the second in conjunction with CREC Council's 2017 meeting in SanDestin, Florida. The idea behind two training sessions is to make the training more accessible, and to make it available more quickly, so we do not have to wait another year until Council meets in 2017.

Of course, none of that comes free, but we think it is vitally important. The cost of everything is about \$14,000, which the committee thought was doable if each of the seven presbyteries raised \$2000. In Knox, that would average out to about \$170 per church, not counting mission churches. To get everything rolling expeditiously, my church, The King's Congregation, fronted \$5000 to Love & Norris / MinistrySafe. We are hoping, of course, that we are not left holding the bag. To date, we have received \$300 each from Christ Covenant Church (Billings), Emmanuel Chapel (Helena), and Trinity Church (Coeur d'Alene), for a total of \$900. I urge our remaining churches to prayerfully consider supporting this initiative.

More information on the arrangement with Love & Norris / MinistrySafe can be found in Jack Phelps' current report to Council as PM pro tem of Council.

Finding a Well Qualified Candidate for Knox PM 2017-20

Without intending to discourage any other candidates, I believe it to be one of my most important duties to ensure we have at least one well qualified candidate who is willing to serve as the next Knox PM. We are blessed with a number of qualified men, but the historical challenge has been finding one that is willing to serve, it being a truism that anyone so qualified will also be so busy.

Back in the Spring, having thought and prayed about the matter, I privately reached out to Stuart Bryan, told him I thought he would make an excellent PM, and asked him to consider serving for the next term. He said he would talk to his session about it, and I subsequently joined Stuart and his session on a conference call in which I answered their questions and expressed why I thought Stuart had the qualities for the position. A while later, Stuart got back to me and indicated that his session approved the idea, and he was willing to serve.

This Fall, I got a call from Chris Schrock of Billings fame, who said his session had someone in mind to nominate, if the man was willing to serve. I asked who it was, and he said, “Stuart Bryan.” I said, “Great minds think alike. I have already reached out to Stuart, and he is willing to serve. I will give you the honor of nominating him.”

Again, this is not intended to discourage any other candidates from running, but simply to ensure that we have at least one well qualified candidate willing to serve.

Closing Remarks

Brothers, thank you again for the opportunity to serve you as PM. Blessings on you, your families, and your congregations.

Alan Burrow
Presiding Minister
Knox Presbytery