

Spring Gathering of Knox Presbytery

April 23, AD 2024

Trinity Reformed Church

Moscow, Idaho

Fellowship with Kuyper Presbytery

Knox Presbytery joined with the newly established Kuyper Presbytery to fellowship, sing, and pray.

Call to Order

The 2024 Spring Meeting of Knox Presbytery was called to order at 9:12am by Presiding Minister Toby Sumpter (King's Cross Church, Moscow).

He opened with an exhortation from 1 Cor. 16:13–14, “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all your things be done with charity.” There are beginning signs of renewal in our culture and our need is for ministers who really *mean* what they say they believe.

Roll Call (Establishment of a Quorum)

Member Churches

1. Christ Church (Moscow, ID): Douglas Wilson & Ben Zornes
2. Christ Church (Omaha, NE): George Little & Nathan Joslin
3. Christ Church (Spokane, WA): Kenton Spratt
4. Christ Covenant Church (Grand Prairie, AB): Robin Shoemaker & Jamie Soles
5. Covenant Presbyterian Church (Cochrane, AB): Chris Cousine [after Motion 2]
6. Holy Trinity Church (Colville, WA): Edwin Iverson
7. King's Cross Church (Moscow, ID): Shawn Paterson & Zach Wilke
8. King's Cross Church (Wenatchee, WA): Gene Helsel & Jess Monnette
9. Trinity Church (Coeur d'Alene, ID): Chase Fluhart & Stuart Bryan [Stuart arrived at 11am]
10. Trinity Covenant Church (Fort St. John, BC): Desmond Jones & James Zekveld

Mission Churches

1. King's Church (Spokane Valley, WA): Ben Tate (sponsored by Trinity Church, Coeur d'Alene, ID)
2. Holy Covenant Church (Mead, WA): Andre Fowlkes (sponsored by King's Cross Church, Wenatchee, WA)

Candidate Churches

1. Igreja Protestante Reformada (Joinville, BR): Thiago McHurt via Zoom (sponsored by Christ Church, Moscow, ID) [Motion 6]
2. King's Covenant Church (Tasmania, AU): Josh Downes and Kai Elliott [Motion 3]

Approve Agenda

Motion 4/23/24: 1 → Ed Iverson (Holy Trinity Church, Colville) made the following Motion:

To approve the agenda.

Second: Kenton Spratt (Christ Church, Spokane).

Motion Carried: (15, 0, 0).

Motion 4/23/24: 2 → Kenton Spratt (Christ Church, Spokane) made the following Motion:

To bring mission church, Covenant Presbyterian Church (Cochrane, AB), into full membership in Knox Presbytery.

Second: Jamie Soles (Christ Covenant Church, Grand Prairie).

Discussion took place.

Motion Carried: (15, 0, 0).

Motion 4/23/24: 3 → Ben Zornes (Christ Church, Moscow) made the following Motion:

Acknowledge King's Covenant Church (Tasmania) as a candidate church.

Second: Jess Monnette (King's Cross Church, Wenatchee).

Ben Zornes shared regarding the history and status of the church.

Motion Carried: (15, 0, 0).

Motion 4/23/24: 4 → Douglas Wilson (Christ Church, Moscow) made the following Motion:

To set aside the requirement of in-person presence for the Brazil church in this meeting.

Second: Edwin Iverson (Holy Trinity Church, Colville).

Motion Carried: (15, 0, 0).

Thiago McHertt Ordination Credentials Exam (report attached)

Thiago McHertt's credential examination committee led the examination with other delegates also asking questions.

Committee members: Ben Zornes (Christ Church, Moscow), Douglas Wilson (Christ Church, Moscow), Toby Sumpter (King's Cross Church, Moscow), and Jeff Rodland (Redeemer Community Church, Centennial, CO).

Motion 4/23/24: 5 → McHertt Credentials Committee made the following Motion:

To receive Thiago McHertt's ministerial credentials.

Second: Not required.

The committee provided background information regarding Pastor McHertt's ministry and congregation. He also answered various examining questions from his committee, PM Toby Sumpter, and other delegates.

Motion Carried: (15, 0, 0).

Motion 4/23/24: 6 → Ben Zornes (Christ Church, Moscow) made the following Motion:

To recognize Igreja Protestante Reformada (Protestant Reformed Church) in Joinville, Brazil as a candidate church.

Second: Gene Helsel (King's Cross Church, Wenatchee).

Motion Carried: (15, 0, 0).

Break. Reconvened at 11am, with Stuart Bryan (Trinity Church, Coeur d'Alene) now seated.

Presiding Minister Report (attached)

Motion 4/23/24: 7 → Douglas Wilson (Christ Church, Moscow) made the following Motion:

To ratify PM Toby Sumpter's actions of writing a letter to the churches of Brazil and forming Joe Rigney's credentials committee.

Second: Gene Helsel (King's Cross Church, Wenatchee).

Motion Carried: (15, 0, 0) [Robin Shoemaker (Christ Covenant Church, Grand Prairie) absent for vote].

PM Toby Sumpter shared background information regarding the letter from Uri Brito, PM of Council, to Pastor Michael Foster and East River Church in Batavia, OH. Discussion took place.

Motion 4/23/24: 8 → Jess Monnette (King's Cross Church, Wenatchee) made the following Motion:

To have Douglas Wilson (Christ Church, Moscow) write a position paper on a practical approach to sacramental cooperation in our communion to be submitted to the ad-hoc Council meeting in May 2024.

Second: Kenton Spratt (Christ Church, Spokane).

Motion Carried: (15, 0, 1).

Motion 4/23/24: 9 → Edwin Iverson (Holy Trinity Church, Colville) made the following Motion:

To have Douglas Wilson (Christ Church, Moscow) and PM Toby Sumpter (King's Cross Church, Moscow) serve as our Council delegates.

Second: Ben Zornes (Christ Church, Moscow).

Motion Carried: (16, 0, 0).

Motion 4/23/24: 10 → Chase Fluhart made the following Motion:

To relieve Stuart Bryan (Trinity Church, Coeur d'Alene) of his presiding minister pro-tem duties and elect Ben Zornes (Christ Church, Moscow) to replace him.

Second: James Zekveld (Trinity Covenant Church, Fort St. John).

Motion Carried (16, 0, 0).

Break at 11:50am. Reconvened at 1pm.

Shawn Paterson Ordination Exam

Shawn Paterson's Ordination Committee led the examination of Shawn Paterson with other delegates also asking questions.

Committee members: PM Toby Sumpter (King's Cross Church, Moscow), Ben Zornes (Christ Church, Moscow), Israel Waitman (King's Congregation, Boise), and Brian Brown (Trinity Church, Denver).

Motion 4/23/24: 11 → Stuart Bryan (Trinity Church, Coeur d'Alene) made the following Motion:

To enter executive session.

Second: Gene Helsel (King's Cross Church, Wenatchee).

Motion Carried: (16, 0, 0).

Motion 4/23/24: 12 → Douglas Wilson (Christ Church, Moscow) made the following Motion:

To recommend Shawn Paterson for ordination with the stipulation that he take one year of Hebrew and King's Cross Church reports back to the presbytery when that is completed.

Second: Chase Fluhart (Trinity Church, Coeur d'Alene).

Motion Carried: (15, 0, 0) [Shawn Paterson not present].

Motion 4/23/24: 13 → Stuart Bryan (Trinity Church, Coeur d'Alene) made the following Motion:

To leave executive session.

Second: Ben Zornes (Christ Church, Moscow).

Motion Carried: (15, 0, 0) [Shawn Paterson not present].

Break around 2:30pm.

Joe Rigney Ordination Credentials Exam

Joe Rigney's credential examination committee led the examination with other delegates also asking questions.

Committee members: Jared Longshore (Christ Church, Moscow), Gene Helsel (King's Cross Church, Wenatchee), and Stuart Bryan (Trinity Church, Coeur d'Alene).

Motion 4/23/24: 14 → Joe Rigney's Credentials Committee made the following Motion:

To recommend to Christ Church (Moscow, ID) to receive Joe Rigney's ordination credentials.

Second: Not required.

Motion Carried (16, 0, 0).

Memorial Proposal on Paedocommunion from Christ Covenant Church (Grand Prairie, AB) (attached)

Motion 4/23/24: 15 → Jamie Soles (Christ Covenant Church, Grand Prairie) made the following Motion:

To accept the proposed memorial on paedocommunion from Christ Covenant Church (Grand Prairie, AB) as a first reading with the two friendly amendments.

Second: Kenton Spratt.

Final approved first reading: “As elders who hold the keys, we do not exclude baptized children from the Lord’s Table, because God has incorporated them into His covenant and congregation through baptism. The covenant promises are theirs in Christ. We believe that in the sacraments God calls us to respond by faith in Christ according to our age and capacity. We affirm that faith is a necessary condition for worthy participation at the Table and that God gives such faith even to small children. Jesus said: “Let the little children come to me.”

Motion Carried: (16, 0, 0).

Prayer Requests

PM Toby Sumpter (King’s Cross Church, Moscow) asked for prayer requests from the churches and the delegates prayed for one another and their congregations.

Motion 4/23/24: 16 → Ben Zornes (Christ Church, Moscow) made the following Motion:

To meet in Moscow, Idaho again for our Fall Presbytery, Sept. 30–Oct. 2 AD 2024.

Second: George Little (Christ Church, Omaha).

Motion Carried: (16, 0, 0).

Motion 4/23/24: 17 → Edwin Iverson (Holy Trinity Church, Colville) made the following Motion:

To adjourn.

Second: Robin Shoemaker (Christ Covenant Church, Grand Prairie).

Motion Carried: (16, 0, 0).

Credential Committee for Thiago McHertt

Ben Zornes (Chair)

Douglas Wilson

Toby Sumpter

Jeff Rodland

History

Christ Church Moscow was connected with Pastor Thiago McHertt in November 2021. He was interested in exploring what would be entailed in leading his church, Protestant Reformed Church (PRC) in Joinville, Brazil to become a candidate church in the CREC. Ben Zornes began monthly calls with him to get to know him and learn more about Pastor McHertt, his church, and its history. In Fall 2022, Christ Church sent some representatives to visit the church and meet with Pastor McHertt. The fit with the CREC is a good one and strategic for advancing the Gospel in Brazil.

However, Pastor McHertt has never been formally ordained by a denomination since his church grew out of a Bible Study that he began from a group of believers who were desirous to worship in accordance with Scripture, raising their families in a robustly Christian community, and engage Brazilian culture with the Word of God. Pastor McHertt has faithfully shepherded this small flock for over seven years, and while he has sought out membership in a variety of reformed denominations he has met with a variety of roadblocks. Partially, this had to do with his coming to embrace what might be called CREC distinctives (i.e. postmillennialism, Christian education, paedobaptism/communion, psalm singing, etc.); other difficulties with joining a denomination arose from some miscommunications which led to the church being “left at the altar” with no denominational home.

Credential Examination Rationale

Ben Zornes, along with Douglas Wilson & Toby Sumpter, did an initial “internal” interview with Thiago McHertt to determine whether a full ordination exam or a credential examination would be most appropriate. Our opinion was that, given the circumstances that Pastor McHertt was functionally operating as an ordained minister already, we would do best to examine him as if he was a previously ordained minister (Cf. Article XI.E.1-2). This would allow Knox Presbytery to evaluate whether Pastor McHertt is a good fit as a pastor in the CREC, either receiving his credentials or not. If Knox determined to not receive his credentials, we would not cause an undue disruption to his church. The same might not be said if we were to inform PRC that we don’t think their pastor should be ordained. This is not an attempt to lower the bar for CREC ministers, but rather seeks to preserve the peace of a healthy congregation on the other side of the planet by adding our “Amen” to their consent to be pastored by this man.

Examination Results

Thus, Christ Church requested that PM Gene Hesel form a committee to examine Pastor McHertt's credentials. The committee is comprised of Ben Zornes (Chair), Douglas Wilson, Toby Sumpter, & Jeff Rodland. The committee requested that Pastor McHertt supply a reading list from the last 10 years, and one OT & NT exegetical paper. These he provided and we can report that he has read deeply & widely, and his papers were well executed. Since none of the committee members are fluent in Portuguese, and did not receive any pentecostal training in tongues, we recruited some additional help (Pastors Uri Brito & Evandro Rosa, Christ Church Elder Matt Meyer, and layman Joffre Swait) to listen to and evaluate three of Pastor Thiago's sermons (one OT sermon, one NT sermon, and one topical sermon). They provided the committee with their feedback, which can be summarized by saying that although Pastor McHertt is a relatively young preacher, he is a faithful & orthodox expositor, and should of course continue to refine his preaching craft.

On July 28, 2023, the committee examined Pastor McHertt for two hours covering a variety of topics (i.e. personal testimony, family life, systematic & biblical theology, Church history, ethics & cultural engagement, CREC distinctives, etc.). Thiago answered our questions thoroughly and satisfactorily (with a few areas where he could tighten up his knowledge).

Thus, the committee recommends that Pastor Thiago McHertt have his credentials received by Knox Presbytery.



KNOX PRESBYTERY

Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches

Knox Presbytery,

Three things to report to you for this Spring 2024 meeting, with two actions for you to ratify.

First, many of you will be aware that following our 2023 CREC Council meeting, and the decision of Council to clarify our denomination's practice of sacramental cooperation and reciprocity, Michael Foster's church, East River in Batavia, OH submitted a request for direction to PM of Council Uri Brito. East River and its mission church were received into Augustine Presbytery with the stated exception to our previous sacramental cooperation language, holding to an age-appropriate profession of faith prior to admission to the Lord's Supper, even for visitors or transfer members.

PM Brito consulted with the PMs of the presbyteries, and with our input, responded to East River with the following letter:

"Dear Pastor Foster,

In response to the appeal made concerning East City Church and Silver City Church to grant these two CREC congregations sufficient time to adjust and decide on whether they wish to continue to align themselves with the direction of the CREC--in light of the decision made at Council on sacramental cooperation under Article XIII--the Council responds in the following manner:

"That East River Church and its church plant in Batavia, Ohio, are welcome to remain in the CREC at least until the Council of 2026 in Nashville, TN. These two congregations were admitted into the CREC with their current confessional commitments; therefore, they are not obligated to leave. But at their request, they would like to take this time to consider complying with our new changes or leaving the CREC."

We are grateful for your labors and contributions to the CREC and pray that this season will be

Knox Presbytery (CREC)
Presiding Minister, Toby Sumpter
Senior Pastor of King's Cross Church
403 S. Jackson St., Moscow, ID 83843
tjsumpter@kingscrossmoscow.com

fruitful to both congregations as they consider how best to proceed.

Rev. Uriesou Brito, Presiding Minister of Council

January 23, 2024

There is no action on this, and there may be more to discuss amongst ourselves. I will only note here that I have been arguing that it would be very poor form for the CREC to require East River to leave over this matter. While there has been some reticence to formally “grandfather” East River and its mission church into the CREC (not wanting to create a precedence), I have been pressing us to adopt a stance that includes the language that since they entered with these stated exceptions, they are under no obligation to leave.

Second, back in January, friends in Brazil came under fierce opposition for inviting Doug Wilson to speak at a large conference there. I was asked to write a letter in support of Doug Wilson’s character and ministry, and I did so. The invitation was ultimately rescinded, citing security concerns. I do not know if/when my letter was used in the process, but the letter is attached. I would appreciate your ratification of that action.

Finally, Christ Church Moscow requested the formation of a credentials committee for Joe Rigney. I appointed Jared Longshore as the chair and he formed the committee reporting today. I also request your ratification of that action.

Blessings in Christ,

Toby Sumpter
Presiding Minister
Knox Presbytery

Knox Presbytery (CREC)
Presiding Minister, Toby Sumpter
Senior Pastor of King's Cross Church
403 S. Jackson St., Moscow, ID 83843
tjsumpter@kingscrossmoscow.com



KNOX PRESBYTERY

Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches

January 9, 2024

To Our Brothers and Sisters in Brazil:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.


I am writing in my role as the Presiding Minister of Knox Presbytery, a presbytery of the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches, a presbyterian denomination of protestant and reformational churches. All of our churches subscribe to the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and Definition of Chalcedon, and affirm at least one of the standard Protestant Confessions of Faith such as the Westminster Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, or Belgic Confession (among others). The CREC is an international denomination with churches in North America, Europe, Asia, and South America, including one member church as well as a mission church in Brazil.

I am writing because it has come to my attention that with one of our ministers, Pastor Douglas Wilson, coming to speak at a conference in Brazil in February, questions and concerns have been raised about Pastor Wilson's orthodoxy as well as certain controversies that have arisen in his church, Christ Church of Moscow, Idaho. With regard to Pastor Wilson's orthodoxy, our denomination examined him in 2004, at his request, regarding matters such as justification by faith alone, and he was found to be fully orthodox and within the bounds of our Protestant confessions. That exam is publicly available under Pastor Wilson's "Controversy Library" on his personal blog: dougwils.com.

Likewise, over the course of his ministry of many years, several very difficult pastoral situations have arisen at Christ Church, including instances of child and marital abuse. While those situations were dealt with biblically and lawfully, numerous detractors have slandered Pastor Wilson and Christ Church accusing them of covering up abuse or worse, actually defending it. Pastor Wilson has also answered these charges in his "Controversy Library," but at the request of Christ Church, the CREC also conducted its own investigation of the handling of the most significant abuse cases and found "no evidence that the leadership of Christ Church sought to protect abusers from the legal consequences of their actions." The report further affirmed that "law enforcement was involved promptly once the allegations became known..." And it states, "In the entirety of our review of the cases, we found no gross moral failings on the part of the leadership of the church." The full CREC report is available under "Documents" at crechurches.org.

I hope that this letter addresses the questions and concerns raised by some. It is the official position of Knox Presbytery and the CREC that Pastor Douglas Wilson and Christ Church are safe, healthy, and fully orthodox, and I commend them to you.

Blessings in Christ,


Toby Sumpter
Presiding Minister
Knox Presbytery

Knox Presbytery (CREC)
Presiding Minister, Toby Sumpter
Senior Pastor of King's Cross Church
403 S. Jackson St., Moscow, ID 83843
tjsumpster@kingscrossmoscow.com

Friday, December 8, 2023

To the PM of Knox Presbytery, Rev. Toby Sumpter,

The session of Christ Covenant Church of Grande Prairie submits this proposed memorial on paedocommunion for discussion at the next meeting of Knox Presbytery in April, 2024.

Proposed Memorial on Paedocommunion (83 words):

We do not exclude baptized children from the Lord's Table, because God has incorporated them into His covenant and congregation through baptism. The covenant promises are theirs in Christ. We believe that in the sacraments God calls us to respond in faith towards Christ according to our age and capacity. We affirm that faith is a necessary condition for worthy participation at the Table and that God gives such faith even to small children. Jesus said: "Let the little children come to me."

In Christ,

Rev. Nathan Zekveld on behalf of the session at CCC