**Presbytery of Northern Waters**

**Stated Meeting Minutes**

**February 1, 2020**

**United Presbyterian Church of Superior**

The stated meeting of the Presbytery of Northern Waters was called to order by Moderator, Rev. Chris McCurdy at 10:03 am with prayer. The meeting was preceded by wonderful music by Jackie Ranco.

Rev. Brett Foote greeted the Presbytery on behalf of the United Presbyterian Church of Superior.

First time ruling elders were welcomed:

Rusty Moorefield - Virginia

Linda Rice St. John - Superior Country Peace

Pat Bieber – Ely

Gary Cross introduced first time Teaching Elder, Rev. Cheryl Fleckenstein, ECLA pastor, Interim pastor at Grand Rapids.

Stated Clerk, Brad Carloss declared a quorum.

Paul Rigstad asked that the second item under B of the consent agenda be pulled.

*January 14, 2020: COM approved an extension of the agreement between the Rev. Carolyn*

*Mowchan and the Westminster Presbyterian Church, with recommendations that distinctions be made between which Sundays are CE/Vacation and which are non-preaching Sundays.*

**Presbytery approved the docket as amended and referred item to COM.**

Rev. Carloss made a motion to redress imbalance and to refer to council to take the necessary steps and report to May Presbytery meeting by adding 5 new commissioners to Presbytery.

**Presbytery approved.**

The Rev. Cheryl Fleckenstein, ECLA was seated as a corresponding member.

Rev. Dr. John Mann was appointed Parliamentarian. Amanda Keppers was appointed Roll Clerk and Betty Starkey was appointed Recording Clerk. The roll was formed by registration.

The roll, formed from the registration, follows:

Teaching Elders-Minister Members

Matthew Arneson E Corey Larsen P

Rich Blood P Elizabeth Liebenstein A

James Deters P Chris McCurdy P

Nancy Deevers E Kathryn Nelson A

Lindsay Louise Biddle E Lawrence Lee P

Dorothy Duquette P Chips Paulson E

Brett Foote P Kate Stangle P

Paula Gaboury P Kerry Clear Tomhave A

Kalvin Hanhart A

Janelle Harrison A Lon Weaver E

Kimbrel Johnson E Robyn Weaver P

Kari L. Jutila P Doug Workman E

Jeremiah Knabe P John Yingling P

Katie Kolmodin E

**Honorably retired**

Duane Aslyn – HR P Robert Hickman- HR E

Wm. P. Anderson – HR E Charles House – HR E

Barry Boyer – HR E Joel Huenemann – HR P

Bruce Calbreath – HR E Sharon J. Johnson – HR E

Bradley Carloss - HR P Nancy Knapp – HR E

Harry Colquhoun - HR E Robert Light – HR E

Peggy Cooper - HR E John Mann – HR P

David Gabriel – HR E Eric Nielsen – HR E

John D. Gibbs - HR P John Pressler – HR E

John G. Gibbs – HR E Darrel Robertson – HR E

Robert Goodin – HR P Ken Ribe – HR P

Sue Goodin – HR P Barbara Streng – HR E

Graden Grobe – HR E Arlin Talley – HR P

David T. Guthrie – HR E Roger Waid – HR E

Merle Harberts – HR E

Ron Henley-HR E

**Churches: Ruling Elder Commissioners**

Ashland-Presbyterian-Congregational

Babbitt-Woodland

Bayfield-Bayfield Steven Sandstrom

Bemidji-First

Bigfork-First

Bigfork-Bowstring

Blackduck-First

Bovey-Lawron

Brule-Brule

Calumet-Community Peggy Smith

Carlton-First Judy Tribby

Chippewa Falls-First

Cloquet-Presbyterian Church of Cloquet

Coleraine-First United

Cornell-First

Duluth – First Al Gartner

Duluth-Glen Avon Gary Cross

Duluth-Lakeside David Uttley

Duluth-Pike Lake

Duluth-Westminster Paul Rigstad

Eau Claire-First Tim Nieman

Eau Claire-North

Ely-First Pat Bieber

Goodland-

Grand Rapids-Community Barb Meyer

Hannibal-New Hope

Hibbing-First

Hurley-First

Iron River-Calvary

Ironwood-First

Keewatin-Cong. of the Good Shepherd

Lac du Flambeau-Community

Lake Nebagamon-First

Manitowish Waters-Community

McGrath-Calvary

McGregor-Round Lake

Park Rapids-Trinity

Phillips-First

St. Croix

Rice Lake-United

Silver Bay-United Protestant

Superior-Pioneer Parish Linda Rice St. John

Superior-United Jackie Ranco

Tamarack-First

Tower- St. James

Two Harbors-United Darlene Graden

Virginia-Hope Community Rusty Moorefield

Wahkon-McGrath

Willow River-First Debra Stewart

Winter-First

Wrenshall-First Carol Ankrum

**Corresponding Members:**

Rev. Cheryl Fleckenstein, ECLA – Grand Rapids

Elona Street Stewart – Synod Executive

**Commissioned Ruling Elders**

Leslie Anderson – CRE, Pioneer Parish

Chip Holt – CRE, Bemidji

Betty Starkey – CRE – Willow River

**Council Members** (Those not accounted for elsewhere)

Jan Letsos, PW Moderator

**Under Care**

**Visitors, Observers**

Doris Aslyn

Claudia Welty

Jim Dunning

Sylvia Cross

Laura Foote

Christine Merrett

**Staff**

Jay Wilkinson

Amanda Keppers

**Consent Agenda**

1. **Items approved by the Council on behalf of the Presbytery (Consent Agenda):**

**November 19, 2019:** Council approved the Minutes of the October 25-26, 2019 Annual/Stated Meeting of the Presbytery at the Presbyterian Clearwater Forest, Deerwood, MN.

**November 19, 2019:** Council approvedthe distribution of $5,000 from the Cornelius, Morris Memorial, and Peace & Global Witness funds for the PDA trip in February 2020 with a maximum of $200 being provided for each person going on the trip.

1. **Items approved by the Committee on Ministry on behalf of the Presbytery (Consent Agenda):**

**January 14, 2020**: COM approved application by Kathryn Reid Walker for $2,000 toward her Seminary Debt Retirement.

**January 14, 2020:** COM approved an extension of the agreement between the Rev Carolyn Mowchan and the Westminster Presbyterian Church with recommendations that distinctions be made between which Sundays are CE/Vacation and which are non-preaching Sundays.

**January 14, 2020:**  COM approved by email vote the agreements between Community Presbyterian Church of Grand Rapids and the part-time interim pastor Cheryl Fleckenstein as head of staff and moderator and modified the agreement with Arlin Talley as bridge pastor to reflect that.

**January 14, 2020:**  COM gave provisional approval of contracts between McGrath and Wahkon with Bill Chadwick, the First Presbyterian Church of Hurley and Donald Nickolson, and with Deb Emery and Cindy Martinson with Pike Lake Presbyterian Church. These contracts need to identify continuing education and vacation times as well.

**Information**: The Committee noted that Presbytery guidelines identify four weeks of vacation and two weeks plus $1,000 for continuing education for full time pastors but there aren’t corresponding guidelines for part time pastors. Nor are there guidelines for Sabbatical Time. Leslie Anderson and Jim Deters will work on standards to further define Continuing Education/Sabbatical Time for part time pastors. Chip Holt, Ken Ribe and Jim Deters will work on standards for part time ministry regarding continuing education and vacation. Once these recommendations are approved, future contracts will be measured accordingly.

**Information:** Jim Deters suggested Elder Training Workshop at several locations throughout the Presbytery. The Committee responded favorably, and Jim, Russ, Phil and Lawrence will work on the idea with Jim.

**Presenter**

Ruling Elder Elona Street Stewart, the first Native American to serve as a synod executive in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was the presenter for the day. Her specialty is issues of diversity and the special needs and challenges in racial/ethnic ministry. Her topic for the day was Indigenous Empowerment, Resilience, and Healing. She spoke about the Native agencies in the Twin Cities and Wisconsin that are reaching out to the Native Americans. Elona stated that sovereignty is important, and she referenced the Doctrine of Discovery. She said there are 11 Ojibway and Dakota Tribes in Minnesota and 11 in Wisconsin. She asked, “what kind of conversations have you had with your congregations along the line of diversity?” Elona is a candidate this year for Co-Moderator of the General Assembly. She had several handouts to share including: Wisconsin Native American Wordsearch, The Doctrine of Discovery Fact Sheet, Doctrine of Discovery Timeline and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.

Jackie Ranco presented Elona with several gifts.

There being some time before lunch, CPM was invited to give their report.

**Committees of Presbytery**

**Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)**

Jeremiah Knabe, Chair, asked that we pay attention in our congregations to those

who might have special gifts toward ministry and might be interested in the CRE

program.

Rev. Brett Foote offered the noon time grace and suggested there should be some great conversations around the tables.

COM met during the lunch hour.

Rev. Chris McCurdy called the meeting back to order at 1:00 pm

**Continuation of Committees of Presbytery**

**Program Strategy**

Corey Larsen, Chair, thanked Elona Street Stewart for her presentation and called

attention to the Presbytery-wide book Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership

in Uncharted Territory. There is a book available for each church.

**Program Strategy Report**

**Elona Street-Stewart**

Today we offer a warm welcome to our synod executive Elona Street-Stewart. Elona is a Ruling Elder and the first Native American to serve as a synod executive in the PC(USA). She previously served as our synod’s associate for racial ethnic ministries and community empowerment. Issues of diversity and the special needs and challenges in racial/ethnic ministry are her specialty.

**Presbytery Book**

This year our Presbytery-wide book is Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory by Rev. Dr. Tod Bolsinger. In this book, Bolsinger uses the story of Lewis and Clark to explore the kind of leadership we need to successfully navigate the uncharted territory of our rapidly changing cultural landscape. Please be sure to pick up your church’s copy today!

**May Gathering**

At our May gathering we will dig into our Presbytery-wide book, Canoeing the Mountains. We will spend time learning about adaptive leadership and explore the creative and innovative ways we are each living out Christ’s call to minister in our own ever-changing contexts.

We are also excited to learn more about the journey our friends at Bayfield Presbyterian Church are on to be better stewards of creation and hear about their process of becoming certified as an Earth Care Congregation through the Presbyterian Mission Agency.

**October Gathering**

Mark your calendars! The stated Clerk of the General Assembly, The Reverend Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II is coming to offer us a word of hope and encouragement.

**Empower and Equip**

We are currently exploring opportunities to help empower and equip our congregations and elders in 2020 for vital and life-giving ministry. If you have ideas for workshops or conferences, we welcome your suggestions. Send them to [corey@elypresbyterian.org](mailto:corey@elypresbyterian.org) or submit them online through the form at [northernwaters.net](http://northernwaters.net) on the Presbytery Meeting Page.

**1001 New Worshiping Communities**

Corey introduced Laura Foote who explained her involvement in 1001 Worshiping Communities. She is making plans to open a coffee shop which will feature positive, sustainable employment

and welcome those who are not feeling welcome in church. The coffee she will serve was served at the meeting today. If you are interested in purchasing coffee email her at [laura@lopicoffee.com](mailto:laura@lopicoffee.com) and watch for the opening of the coffee shop.

**SELF DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLE REPORT**

**February 2020**

During the Lenten season our churches will be asked to take the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. A portion of this offering is returned to our Presbytery to fund our Self Development of People projects. Please encourage your church to take this offering and to send it to our national church at their earliest convenience so that our Presbytery will receive credit for their gifts!

This year our SDOP committee gave $1,500 to The Life House in Duluth, MN. The Life House is a ministry to approximately 800 homeless teens. Our funds will be used to support their “Legitimate Hustle” program. Homeless teens are forced to “hustle” to survive on the streets. They may hustle something they own or found, something they stole, or perhaps they hustle drugs or sex. The Legitimate Hustle program is teaching teens to produce and market legitimate items. It is essentially teaching young people how to begin a business. The Life House has now opened a store front at 102 West First Street in Duluth where the teens are selling their hand made products. Our SDOP Committee is very pleased to fund this amazing program.

The Presbytery’s SDOP Committee and the faith community in the Northland suffered a tremendous loss this fall. On October 26, 2019, The Rev. Xavier Bell died of a massive stroke. He had served on our SDOP Committee for the past 12 or 13 years. Xavier was a serious warrior for justice. He was currently serving as the director of the Family Freedom Center in Duluth. Last year our Presbytery Council voted to give The Family Freedom Center $2,000 from our Peacemaking reserves to help fund their Express Yourself Project. In August 2019, 39 people participated in Xavier’s four-week program to help people find ways to discuss racism using music, art, and dance to talk about the problem. Please keep The Family Freedom Center in your prayers as they attempt to continue Xavier’s vital ministry.

Thank you for your support of our Presbytery’s Self Development of People Committee.

Most sincerely,

The Rev. Sharon Johnson,

SDOP Chairperson

**Council Report**

1. **Recommendations to the Presbytery**

* **January 21, 2020**: Council Proposes the following dates for Presbytery Meetings during 2021:
* Saturday, February 6, 2021, location to be determined
* Thursday, May 6, 2021, location to be determined
* Friday-Saturday, October 8-9, 2021, Presbyterian Clearwater Forest

Note: It is possible that if the capital campaign moves forward quickly at Clearwater Forest that the dining hall will be under reconstruction at the time of the fall 2021 Presbytery Meeting. If this is the case, the camp will notify us ASAP and we will have to find an alternative location for the meeting.

**Overtures and Bylaws**

**Recommendations to the Presbytery**

**Note:** Item I originated from the Presbytery Council. Items II and III came from the Session of the First Presbyterian Church, Eau Claire, Wisconsin;

1. The Overtures & Bylaws Committee recommends approval of the following change to the Manual of Operations developed by the Committee on Ministry. Further, that the Committee recommends that the Presbytery direct that the Stated Clerk insert these paragraphs into the Manual of Operations in such section as the Stated Clerk determines is appropriate.

**Church Development Fund**

Guidance for maintenance of and spending from the Church Development Fund (previously known as the Church Development/Redevelopment Fund:

1. That moneys distributed from this account may include earnings and/or principle.
2. That requests for grants from this account shall be directed to the Program Strategy Committee of the Northern Waters Presbytery. After initial consideration for projects beyond the committee’s scope they be passed on to either Presbytery Council or the Presbytery as a whole based on the amount of the request.
3. That Program Strategy Committee be authorized to directly approve moneys for projects not more than $30,000.
4. That Presbytery Council be authorized to directly approve moneys for projects not more than $30,000.
5. That any proposals more than $30,000 are considered and voted on the floor of Presbytery.

Also, that references to the “Church Development/Redevelopment Fund” in the Manual of Operations be changed to simply “Church Development Fund”.

**Background Information:** The Manual of Operations refers to this fund in Section 2.101 Fiscal Accountability Policies. This section of the Manual simply states that the fund will receive all of the net receipts of dissolved/closed churches, that the fund will be administered by the Finance and Budget Committee, and that all receipts and expenditures will be reported. There is no guidance in the Manual on the expenditure of this fund. This amendment is designed to correct this.

Jeremiah Knabe called attention to item 3 which should say $5,000 instead of $30,000.

**Presbytery approved the Recommendation with the change to item 3.**

1. The Session of the First Presbyterian Church, Eau Claire, Wisconsin requests that the Presbytery of Northern Waters concur with an overture from the Presbytery of Chicago, as follows:

**ON RE-AFFIRMING OUR COMMITMENT TO GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION**

The Presbytery of Chicago overtures the 224th General Assembly (2020) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to endorse the following affirmation and actions:

Affirmation:

We remember that the disciples ask Jesus when he saw them in faithful ministry and he answered, “As you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me” (Matthew 25:40).  In our country 40,000 people are losing their lives each year to gun violence. Each one of these represents to us the crucified Christ, as do their orphans, their grieving parents and families, as do the nearly 100,000 who are injured and the countless others who are traumatized by gun violence through suicides, murders, family violence and accidents; In faithfulness to the Prince of Peace, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) stands with, grieves with and calls for change alongside the victims of our uniquely-American epidemic of gun violence.

Recommendations:

1. Commend and give thanks for those who have stood with “the least of these” and taken action:

---- Every local congregation that has held a study group or conversation, reached out to the community and their elected officials or taken other actions; specifically, we celebrate the Lincoln Park Presbyterian Church and First United Church of Oak Park, congregations in Chicago that have jointly received the 2019 Peaceseeker Award of the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship for pioneering work to prevent gun violence.

----Every part of the Presbyterian family that has taken action on gun violence prevention, including:

Our General Assembly Moderators; the Office of the Stated Clerk;

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance with its film and book resources and its pastoral presence with communities that experience gun violence;

The Presbyterian Peacemaking Program & Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, for the co-sponsored webinar series, *Standing Our Holy Ground*;

The Office of Public Witness; the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy

Presbyterian News Service, the Presbyterian Writers Guild, *The Presbyterian Outlook*

The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship with its *Gun Violence Prevention Congregational Toolkit* and other resources;

Grace Presbytery in Dallas, Texas for recognizing God’s call to Rev. Deanna Hollas, ordained as the first minister of Gun Violence Prevention;

And all other entities, staff, officers and individuals in the PC(U.S.A.) that have taken action to save lives from gun violence.

----The students of America who demand change;

----The businesses such as Walmart, Dicks’ Sporting Goods and 130 other corporations that have called for common sense laws to prevent gun violence;

----The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms for banning the sale of bump stocks to convert guns into automatic weapons;

----Action of the U.S. House and Senate to update the National Background Check System; the U.S. House in passing legislation for universal background checks, greater protection of women from domestic gun violence and for restoration of federal funding for research into the causes and best solutions to gun violence ---and for all the organizations and individuals across America who call upon the U.S. Senate and all elected officials and candidates to support these actions and turn them into real change.

2.  Call upon every congregation in the PC(U.S.A.) to prayerfully consider their role in helping to prevent gun violence. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. reminded us, “Everyone can do something.”

3. Direct the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, in partnership with others, including, but not limited to the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program; the Advisory Committee for Women’s Concerns; the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee; and the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, to update the historic 2010 policy of the 219th General Assembly, ***Gun Violence, Gospel Values: Mobilizing in Response to God’s Call*** and to present this update for a vote at the 225th General Assembly in 2022 which includes:

**A. An update** of the 2010-era statistics and sources to current statistics and sources about gun violence; and an update on current legislative actions and efforts to seek common ground for saving lives.

**B. The sinful, historical intersection between guns and race.** Issues to pursue:

---The history of gun ownership being  too often a means for white people to “protect” themselves and their families from perceived threats from black, brown and native people, creating a culture of entitlement to gun ownership that is born out of racism, white supremacy and violence.

---The beneficiaries versus the populations most at risk of becoming victims due to guns without safety technology, and distribution systems at risk of theft or illegal sale.

---The acknowledgement that structural racism has perpetuated trauma in communities of color that has resulted in the gun violence that we see, and that the systematic disinvestment in these communities is a root cause that needs to be repaired.

---The sources of and solutions to gun violence in predominately black and brown communities, seeking effective solutions that do not further contribute to mass incarceration.

---The need for changes in police use-of-force training, police culture and fair prosecution of cases of police gun violence, so that all citizens feel safe in relation to those whose calling is to protect them.

**C. The impact of gun violence on women and children:** such as domestic gun violence, murder-suicides of entire families, school shootings and accidents; including review of the legal responsibility of adults whose guns are used by children and others to commit violence or accidental shootings.

**D. The affirmation, inclusion and referral to** actions of the General Assembly subsequent to 2010 on gun violence prevention (2014, 2018) and of resources to help every congregation with education, pastoral care and action as they seek God’s plan for their role in helping to prevent gun violence.

**Rationale**

In 2010, the 219th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) *unanimously* passed a major and comprehensive policy, ***Gun Violence, Gospel Values: Mobilizing in Response to God’s Call***. Based on prior General Assembly actions against gun violence since 1968, the 2010 document placed the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at the forefront of spiritual communities calling for common sense changes in gun regulations and for an affirmation that the uniquely American obsession with guns is not consistent with the love, healing and nonviolent witness of Jesus Christ. Rooted in biblical values and reform theology, this historic and excellent ten-year-old document deserves to be updated and re-issued as a contemporary policy to help our congregations and our nation heal from the escalating epidemic and tragedy of gun violence.

The 2020 overture re-affirms the work of prior General Assemblies on this issue and commends those who have led the way in faithful witness to prevent gun violence.

The overture calls on every congregation in the PC(USA) to ask for God’s guidance to them on how their congregation can faithfully respond to the challenge and reality of gun violence.

The overture proposes that the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP), coordinate an update to the 2010 policy to be presented for a vote to the 225th General Assembly in 2022. The overture does not call for a complete revision of the 2010 policy, which is excellent, but rather for an update based on changes in American culture and policy over the last ten years. There are now many outdated statistics and sources in the document, including, most unfortunately, the increase in annual gun deaths from 30,000 to 40,000.

The 2010 document does address the relation between guns and race and the impact of gun violence on women and children. However, there has been a great deal of new light shed on issues such as the historical connection between racism and gun “entitlement.” A new generation of activists, elected officials and candidates have offered new approaches to protecting women from domestic gun violence and to preventing gun violence in black and brown communities beyond the failed approach of mass incarceration.  Over the last ten years we have seen an increase in mass shootings, school shooting and police shootings. All of these difficult topics deserve review in light of current events and proposals.

1. The Session of the First Presbyterian Church, Eau Claire, Wisconsin requests that the Presbytery of Northern Waters concur with an overture from the Presbytery of Monmouth, as follows:

The Presbytery of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ overtures the 224th General Assembly to:

1. Recognize that fossil fuels have been used by humans to create a better world for many people and that the time of their usefulness is now over.

2. Recognize that divestment from fossil fuels is a viable approach to the climate emergency, which thousands of other institutions have used to hold the fossil fuel industry accountable for their inadequate responses to this emergency.

3. Commend Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) for their ongoing work with shareholder engagement to hold these industries accountable to the just and equitable values that Presbyterians seek to uphold.

4. Call on the PC(USA), The Presbyterian Foundation, the Board of Pensions, and Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program to divest from the fossil fuel industry, using the Carbon Underground 200 and the S&P Global Industry Classification Standard’s list of publicly-traded companies engaged in coal, oil and gas exploration, extraction, and production as the criteria to identify which companies are considered to be fossil fuel companies.

5. Proscribe (stop) any new investments in fossil fuel industry securities.

6. Instruct MRTI to correspond through form letter to all fossil fuel companies and presbyteries in which they are headquartered of the action and the theological and moral rationale for this decision.

7. Encourage the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation to actively seek out and invest in securities of companies whose predominant focus is in renewable and/or energy efficiency.

8. Direct MRTI to monitor the Board of Pensions and Presbyterian Foundation on actions to divest/invest and to report to the 225th General Assembly on their progress in implementing recommendations 4-7.

**Rationale:**

Presbyterians, and all people of faith, are always called to serve the earth. This is God’s call for all humanity from the very beginning (Genesis 2:15). While fossil fuels have allowed us to create a better world for many, we now know its impact on creation and future generations is threatening the life we know and cherish. As we confess that failure, we must listen to and engage with the people in frontline communities who are already experiencing climate change, to better understand the human toll climate change has taken and will continue to take on God’s children.

Here are just a couple of their voices:

“Every time there's an investment in fossil fuels, we in Africa have never been the winners of

that investment. So yes, this fight is about climate change but it's about decolonization and survival too.” - Coumba Toure of Trust Africa

“There’s 5.9 hours of sunlight on average every day in Puerto Rico [which is a lot]. But there’s

no [infrastructure for] solar or wind. Fossil fuel companies want to make money from

oil here—and that’s colonialism.” - Dr. Ediberto Lopez of el Seminario Evangélico de

Puerto Rico

Everything else we do as people of faith to rationalize the need for immediate and categorical

divestment takes root in this context and the way our church already acts in the rest of the

world. To that end, we offer the below rationale for divestment from fossil fuels from frontline

communities, according to the science, and in line with previous Presbyterian policy.

We cannot continue to invest in the past while at the same time investing in the future.

*Moral Rationale*

Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he replied. "Am I

my brother's keeper?" Genesis 4:9

‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my

family, [ you did it to me.’ Matthew 25:40

“The moral rationale that undergirds the divestment movement is driven by this logic: climate

change is harming our planet and many who inhabit it; fossil fuels are a large driver of the

climate problem; and alternatives to fossil fuels exist that can provide the core energy

requirements of modern societies. Therefore, profiting from products that drive this damage is

morally wrong and divesting from these products is a moral obligation.”

This quotation is from a 2019 statement in favor of divestment by GreenFaith, an international

and interfaith environmental nonprofit that has been the lead on faith-based divestment

movements. This is the moral foundation of the movement to divest from fossil fuels that has

been present in the PCUSA since 2013. This morality is guided by the biblical call that we

humans are created by God to serve the earth and other people as a way to love God. We

are called to love God with our whole hearts. Where our treasure is there our heart will be

also (Matthew 6:21).

We have watched as MRTI has faithfully sat at the table of fossil fuel companies, speaking

boldly to companies that have lied to the world about climate change and fossil fuels. Still,

their faithful witness has garnered slow promises that do not yet address the suffering and

injustice implicit in climate change.

And so, it is our unequivocal commissioning to leave the table and divest from the fossil fuel

industry, allowing us to reinvest in renewable energy and climate solutions. In doing so, we

live out our chief end “to glorify God and enjoy God forever.”

1 Gary Gardner, for GreenFaith, 2019.

2 Westminster Catechism, question

*Scientific Rationale*

Human use of fossil fuels has spurred economic and social growth, literally fueling the industrial revolution. However, burning fossil fuels has already raised the average temperature of the earth by 1°C (1.8°F). The latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) shows the extent of the damage we will cause to creation if we allow the earth’s temperature to rise by 1.5-2°C, the targets agreed to by all nations of the world under the Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change . Even at 1.5°C of warming, we can expect to see the extinction of over 300,000 species of animals, have an ice-free Arctic in most summers, expose 14% of people to extreme heat waves (especially in the Global South), expose 250 million people to severe drought, and raise sea levels by at least 1.3 feet.

The increase in global temperature is already causing more frequent heat waves, higher sea

levels, more severe droughts, and more frequent heavy rainfall events, resulting in billions of

dollars in damage through flooding, wildfires, intense hurricanes, and droughts. These climate

disasters have also impacted organisms and ecosystems while reducing crop yields and quality, increasing undernourishment, and damaging human health. Climate change migration is presently a fact of life for people of the Carteret Islands of Papua New Guinea, Shismaref, Alaska, and Isle de Jean Charles, Louisiana--all of whom are preparing to relocate due to the

above-mentioned climate change impacts. Sea level rise is projected to reach at least 0.8 feet

by the end of 2100 and as much as 6 feet if we do not take significant measures to reduce climate warming.

Knowing we must keep climate to 1.5°- 2°C of warming sets limits to how much fossil fuel can

be burned. We have about 10 years after GA 224 to stay within these warming limits. However, the fossil fuel industry’s own estimates show that burning the proved reserves of fossil fuels will release almost three times the carbon budget at 2°C and an astounding five times the 1.5°C budget – CO 2 that will remain in the atmosphere for hundreds of years. Despite these dire realities, oil and gas production is increasing, and PC(USA)’s money has

3 IPCC, 2018: *Summary for Policymakers. In: Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty* [Masson-Delmotte, V., P. Zhai, H.-O. Pörtner, D. Roberts, J. Skea, P.R. Shukla, A. Pirani, W. Moufouma-Okia, C. Péan, R. Pidcock, S. Connors, J.B.R. Matthews, Y. Chen, X. Zhou, M.I. Gomis, E. Lonnoy, T. Maycock, M. Tignor, and T. Waterfield (eds.)]. https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/05/SR15\_SPM\_version\_report\_LR.pdf

4 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 2015. *Report of the Conference of the Parties on its twenty-first session, held in Paris from 30 November to 13 December 2015.*

https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement

5 L. Bamber, Jonathan; Oppenheimer, Michael; E. Kopp, Robert; P. Aspinall, Willy; M. Cooke, Roger 2019. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.* Ice sheet contributions to future sea-level rise from structured expert judgment. doi:10.1073/pnas.1817205116.

6 *BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2019.* 68th edition. https://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/business-sites/en/global/corporate/pdfs/energy-economics/statistical-review/bp-stats-review-2019-full-report.pdf

7 Richard Heedea and Naomi Oreskes 2016. *Global Environmental Change.* Potential emissions of CO 2 and

methane from proved reserves of fossil fuels: An alternative analysis. doi: 10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2015.10.005

helped allowed oil and gas companies to spend over $114 Billion in 2017 to acquire new 8

deposits of oil and gas that we can’t afford to burn.

The fossil fuel industry often places new refineries and petrochemical plants in poor communities of color who lack the resources to stand in the way. This form of environmental

racism drives some of the highest rates of cancer and disease in the country. A predominantly

African American South Philadelphia community, for example, surrounds the Philadelphia

Energy Solutions (PES) refinery. That plant was already Philadelphia’s biggest single air polluter before it recently exploded, sending toxic fumes into the surrounding community of people who cannot afford to move away from them. A 2017 report said the PES complex was responsible for 72 percent of the toxic air emissions in Philadelphia, a major factor in the city’s childhood asthma rate, which is more than double the national average, as well as causing a range of other health effects including headaches and cancer. Marathon Oil (one of PCUSA’s GA9 investments), which recently spent $1.9 billion to expand their refinery in a Detroit suburb, purchased property from nearby white neighbors in the path of the refinery’s pollution clouds, leaving communities of color to suffer. While we sit at the table trying to convince these companies to change their ways, they continue to perpetuate sins against humans and all creation. We currently profit from these scientific realities and sins against our neighbor. In the face of this climate emergency, we must stand firm in a bold witness with people who have been hurt by the fossil fuel industry--we must divest.

*Criteria Rationale*

The criteria this overture calls upon the denomination to use to define which companies are

fossil fuel companies, and thereby, which will go on the divestment and proscription list, are of

vital importance. The first criterion, the Carbon Underground 200, compiled and maintained 13

by Fossil Free Indexes℠, identifies the top 100 coal and the top 100 oil and gas

publicly traded reserve holders globally, ranked by the potential carbon emissions content of

their reported reserves. This is the approach that has been most commonly used by

institutions seeking to divest. By identifying the publicly traded companies with the largest

reserves, divesting from these companies has the most immediate impact.

8 Robert Rapier 2018. *Forbes.* Oil Company Spending And Oil Reserves Are On The Rise.

https://www.forbes.com/sites/rrapier/2018/07/27/oil-company-spending-and-oil-reserves-are-on-the-rise/#20

7559c54a31

9 Lesley Fleischman and Marcus Franklin 2017. *Fumes Across the Fence-Line: The Health Impacts of Air*

*Pollution from oil & Gas Facilities on African American Communities.*

http://www.catf.us/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/CATF\_Pub\_FumesAcrossTheFenceLine.pdf

10 Frank Kummer 2019. *The Philadelphia Inquirer.* Philadelphia refinery that caught fire is city’s biggest

single polluter.

https://www.inquirer.com/science/climate/philadelphia-refinery-fire-pollution-history-20190624.html

11 Ibid

12 Rich Copely 2019. *Presbyterian News Service.* Investment group meets Detroit residents living in

refinery’s toxic shadow.

https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/investment-group-meets-detroit-residents-living-in-refinerys-toxicshadow/

13 https://fossilfreefunds.org/carbon-underground-200

The second criterion is the S&P Global Industry Classification Standard (GICS ®) listing of 14

publicly traded companies engaged in coal, oil and gas exploration, extraction, and production. The GICS was designed in response to the global financial community's need for accurate, complete and standard industry definitions. The GICS structure consists of Sectors, 24 Industry groups, 69 Industries and 158 sub-industries. Used for financial indices such as the S&P Oil & Gas Exploration & Production Select Industry Index, the GICS Industry categories Oil, Gas & Consumable Fuels (101020) and Energy Equipment & Services (101010) capture the entire industry. Using this criterion prevents proscribing investment in companies selling petroleum products while still profiting from companies engaged in exploration, extraction, and production, such as oil rig producers and independent fracking companies.

The third criterion calls for divestment. The Board of Pensions has consistently argued that

they cannot divest without undermining their fiduciary responsibility to pension holders. However, over 1000 institutions – who must also uphold fiduciary responsibility – have already

divested, representing over $11 trillion worldwide. *Clearly it is possible (and one might argue necessary) to divest from fossil fuels and still be responsible for the investments of*

*pensioners.*

In 2017 the IPCC reported we have about 10 years after GA 224 to make major changes, including a 45% reduction in CO 2 emissions by 2030 and reaching net-zero emissions by 2050 to stay within 1.5°C of warming. PC(USA)’s Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) committee currently uses a set of criteria that fail to respond prophetically to the urgency of climate change. MRTI’s methodical approach is unnecessarily time consuming when there is little time left to act. MRTI has carefully constructed an evaluation rubric consisting of 20 environmental metrics, 12 social metrics, and 12 governance metrics (with several subcategories in some of these). Such an environmental, social, and governance (ESG) evaluation is the cornerstone of modern socially responsible investing. GA222 charged MRTI with identifying these metrics in 2016. GA223 approved the metrics and identified an initial list of nine companies to consider, of which only six are oil and gas companies. MRTI *may* deliver a list of proposed divestments to GA224 – six years since GA221 first considered divestment. There is no certainty that MRTI will consider any additional companies post 2020 because such a move would require a mandate from General Assembly. In fact, current MRTI efforts will not even provide a clear idea which of these companies are moving towards a low-carbon future and which are not until 2023, making further significant action unlikely before the 2024 GA226 meeting. Additionally, the MRTI approach includes no proscription of investment in other fossil fuel companies, so PC(USA) funds divested from one oil company S&P Global 2018. *Global Industry Classification Standard.*

14https://www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence/en/documents/112727-gics-mapbook\_2018\_v3\_letter\_digitalsp

reads.pdf

15 **https://gofossilfree.org/divestment/commitments/**

16 Ibid

17 Ibid

18https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/mrti-shares-first-round-of-general-assembly-environmental-com

pliance-scores/?utm\_source=ActiveCampaign&utm\_medium=email&utm\_content=Presbyterian+Church+US

A+Weekly+News&utm\_campaign=Presbyterian+Church+USA+Weekly+News+%7C+Sep+04-10+2019&fbcli

d=IwAR1GsHB6vEJUlhx\_9gGqcWN9Tkrma2U8uBhF410dLP71kt6ly-xnBB3XZqc

could be reinvested into another. Finally, The MRTI process is too slow to make the changes

we need now to protect creation.

PCUSA Policy Rationale

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8 The PC(USA) has a long history of divestment and, in particular, of categorical divestment. The church has divested from five industrial categories – military-related products, tobacco companies, alcohol corporations, gambling businesses, and for-profit prisons. The church has also divested from particular corporations that have contributed to human rights abuses in specific times and places.

In 1984 when the PC(USA) adopted its policy on divestment it provided for “divestment of holdings in a particular firm or class of firms is both part of the normal management of funds

and potentially an occasion for Christian witness to God's call for justice and the renewal of

society”. However, in its implementation of this policy, PC(USA)’s committee on Mission

Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) has developed a policy for divestment from an

entire industrial category (class of firms). The paths to categorical divestment and the forms it

has taken have thus diverged in each case. Such flexibility has allowed the church to appropriately respond to different industries and the various social and environmental problems each creates.

The 194th General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA, for example, instructed the church to divest from corporations involved in military activities. Between 1982

and 1998, the General Assembly refined this industrial category to include (1) the five biggest

military contractors to the US government, (2) companies that receive at least 50 percent of their sales from military contracts and are among the 100 highest-earning military contractors, (3) the top five earning companies engaged in foreign military sales, and (4) corporations that produce weapons that can lead to mass civilian casualties. MRTI began recommending these measures after ten years of shareholder engagement.

The General Assembly instructed the church to divest from all tobacco companies in 1990. The overture to divest called upon MRTI to “develop annually a list of corporations ‘whose primary business is tobacco and are known as such.’” In 1996, GA directed MRTI to use the Investor Responsibility Research Center, the American Lung Association, and Corporate Campaign, Inc. to define what qualifies as a tobacco company. From these guidelines, 21 corporations were identified. MRTI did not conduct any shareholder engagement prior to the GA’s decision to divest.

Neither the General Assembly nor MRTI has ever called for divestment from alcohol or

gambling corporations. However, the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Church (USA)

19 Office of General Assembly 1984. The Divestment Strategy: Principles and Criteria. 196th General

Assembly Journal, 193-207.

Foundation have their own policies, which govern divesting/proscribing investments in all

domestic and international alcohol and gambling corporations.

The GA voted in 2003 to call for the abolition of all for-profit prisons, jails, and detention

centers. In 2012, the GA instructed MRTI to “report on the feasibility of affecting the corporate

practices of Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), the GEO Group, and any other

publicly traded corporation that directly manages or operates for-profit prisons and/or

detention centers.” MRTI determined, “while efforts could be made through shareholder

advocacy (where stock is owned in a publicly traded company), such efforts might improve

some prison conditions, but would not address the fundamental contradictions identified by

the 215th General Assembly (2003).” The GA therefore voted to divest from all publicly traded

for-profit prison companies.

The denomination has chosen to divest from each of these entire industrial categories in the

first place because the very nature of these industries has been seen as harmful to the

spiritual and biological life of God’s creation.

This overture to categorically divest from the fossil fuel industry would take a prophetic stance

to protect God’s creation and ensure a sustainable energy future for the church and God’s

world.

Rev. John Gibbs, Co-chair brought the overtures before the Presbytery and said that there are 3

different kinds of overtures: Those coming from Presbytery, those coming from Presbytery to GA

and those that have been voted on.

Jim Dunning, representative of First Presbyterian church in Eau Claire gave a synopsis of the overtures.

**DIVESTMENT OVERTURE**

**224th GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

I am here today as a representative of First Presbyterian Church in Eau Claire and as a member of Presbyterians For Earth Care (PEC), to ask you to add the support of Northern Waters Presbytery to the 2020 Divestment Overture and to send the approved document to the 224th General Assembly for their approval this summer. This overture is a continuation of a series of overtures affecting the environment that the Presbyterian Church has been approving for many years. In 1987, the Commission for Racial Justice provoked the nation’s consciousness by referring to toxic waste landfill siting in communities of people of color as “environmental racism.”

In 1990, the 202nd General Assembly approved the “Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice” Overture that supported solutions to the selection of hazardous waste disposal sites. In the years following, there were other overtures that further involved the Church’s commitment to the environment.

In 1996, the 208th GA passed “Hope for a Global Future: Toward Just and Sustainable Human Development. I attended this GA in support of this overture. This was also the year that I became of member of Presbyterians for Restoring Creation which eventually became Presbyterians for Earth Care.

In 1999, the GA passed an overture to urge the Senate to ratify the Kyoto Agreement.

In 2006, the Guide to Going Carbon Neutral Overture was passed. This asked all Presbyterians to go carbon neutral as a bold Christian Witness to help combat the effects of climate change.

In 2008, the 218th General Assembly emphasized the need to address global climate change in a policy named: “The Power to Change: US Energy Policy and Global Warming”.

The 221st GA in 2014 adopted an extensive report on Tax Justice: A Christian Response to a New Gilded Age. This encouraged taxation to serve green purposes.

In 2018, the 223rd General Assembly urged the church to “take action and respond to environmental racism and environmental injustice in all its forms”.

This is not the first divestiture action taken by the General Assembly. In the mid-eighties, the Presbyterian GA passed an overture to divest in South Africa in order to accelerate the removal of apartheid.

At our biennial Presbyterians for Earth Care Conference at Stoney Point, NY this past August, another overture that will eventually be presented to the GA was introduced. This overture is titled “Investing in a Green Future: A Vision for a Renewed Creation”.

After the conference, I was approached by Rev. Susan DeGeoge from the Hudson River Presbytery and Rev. Susan Andrews to present this overture to you for additional support at the upcoming General Assembly. The overture was originally developed by Monmouth Presbytery and by 2014 had 12 Presbyteries in support. This support has increased to 40 in 2018 and now they want to make the number of supporting presbyteries even higher.

The purpose of the overture is quite well defined in the eight points of the recommendation. It wants to use the power of money to reduce the use of fossil fuels. By joining other institutions that have already implemented divestment in fossil fuel, the pressure will increase on the corporations to reduce the production of these carbon producing products. This continues the investment responsibility that Presbyterians want to maintain.

The overture calls on the PC(USA), Presbyterian Foundation, the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program to divest from the fossil fuel industry and to reinvest in securities of companies whose predominant focus is in renewable energy and/or energy efficiency. They are also requested to notify the companies involved what will be happening and the moral rationale for this decision. The Mission Responsibility Through Investment committee is also asked to report on their progress at the 225th General Assembly in 2022.

Why Divest? (Fossil Free PC(USA)

Clearly, God’s creation and creatures are suffering from climate change caused by the burning of fossil fuels. But why divestment as one strategy toward healing?

Divestment is a powerful public statement removing moral license from big oil, gas and coal companies, which generate huge profits and overly influence public policy, even while the planet is quickly warming toward an uninhabitable state.

As a strategy, divestment communicates the urgent need to leave untapped 80% of the known carbon reserves and invest in renewable energies capable of meeting humanity's needs. The divestment movement is growing internationally, including hundreds of universities, colleges, cities, counties, and religious organizations. It is even beginning to be brought more locally. At my last visit with my investment counselor, he introduced me to funds that were selected for responsible investing. I had not even asked him for this referral.

The underlying moral imperative for the church, in keeping with God’s covenant with all things alive and yet to be born (Genesis 9), is to withdraw its support from companies that profit from destroying creation. So Why divestment?  For creation!

There was much discussion, with the following speaking for the overture: Richard Blood, Ken Ribe, Corey Larsen, Brett Foote, Lawrence Lee. Robyn Weaver spoke against the overture.

**Presbytery voted to concur with the overtures**

**Finance and Budget**

Jay Wilkinson spoke to the Finance and Budget Report and Bill Gravelle sent greetings from sunny Florida. There was a small surplus because investments did good. We are solvent.

**FINANCE AND BUDGET REPORT**

Finance & Budget Committee

Report to Presbytery

February 1, 2020

The committee has not met since the last Presbytery meeting.

The preliminary financial statements have been prepared and year end information has been sent to the independent accounting firm. Their report will be available for the May Presbytery meeting.

My review of the preliminary financials prepared by the Presbytery Treasurer follows.

**Revenues**

Per capita revenue is down from the budget estimate by $9,885. The budget was based on estimated church membership. When actual church membership was reported the budget estimated was overstated by $2,739. Unpaid 2019 per capita is $7,146.

Investment income exceeded the budget estimate by $13,436. This includes unrealized gains in the investments held by the Presbytery. In 2018, a small loss was reported.

**Operating Expenses**

Total operating expenses were under budget by $11,981. The significant variances were in the Administrative Assistant, Presbytery office expense and Presbytery Judicatory areas.

**Program & Mission Expense**

Many of the committees under this broad area had little or no expenditures during the past year with the exception of the camping program which expended its total budget.

Overall, the Presbytery is reporting an excess of revenue over expenditures of $1,180 for the year. There perhaps will be some adjustments to these financials by the outside accounting firm but they are expected to be minor if any.

Thank you to Jay for his promptness in preparing the financials and for his work as the Treasurer of the Presbytery.

Bill Gravelle

Chair Finance & Budget Committee





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**Nominating Committee**

Robyn Weaver, Chair, said that the nominating committee needs assistance to find people to

work on committees. She invited the Presbytery to “Come and play with us.”

**Presbyterian Women**

Jan Letsos, Moderator reported that four more churches have dropped their PW membership.

She reminded the women that all women are Presbyterian Women. Eighty churches applied

For the 4 grants of $500,000 this year, (including PW of Northern Waters). We did not receive

a grant this year but have been the recipient in past years. She reminded the members that Celebrate

The Gifts of Women Sunday is March 8th. In 2021 the Churchwide PW gathering will be in

St. Louis, Missouri.

**Clearwater Forest**

Paul Rigstad and Robyn Weaver are excited about the plans for renovation at Clearwater

Forest. Also, in the works, is putting some more of the land into conservatorship which will

generate approximately one million dollars

**Wrenshall/Carlton Administrative Commission**

Joel Huenemann, Leslie Anderson, and Cindy Martinson served on the Administrative Commission for the

Carlton and Wrenshall Churches as they worked together to merge. In May of 2019 the churches voted to merge.

In July they voted to sell the Wrenshall church. The name of the church will be Rivers Edge. There are still some

articles of corporation that need to be finalized. Joel stated that the time was right, they honored their past and decided to live into the future. The first joint service was on February 1.

Special prayers were asked for Rev. Dennis Morreim on the death of his wife, Jeanne.Rev. Morreim has served

the congregations for the last couple of years.

Thanks to the Administrative Commission and the two churches for all the work they have done.

**Warba Administrative Commission**

Report to the Presbytery

Warba Administrative Commission

The church real estate was sold in early December. The sale price was much lower than we originally believed would be possible. The sale price was $12,500 with the net receipt of $9,712.14 after closing costs and real estate commission.

Many thanks to the AC members Paul Rigstad and Candy Deal and the outgoing Clerk of the Warba church, Kelly Karkianen.

Respectfully submitted by Darrel Robertson, Chair.

**Suggested Action:** That the Presbytery of Northern Waters dismiss the Warba Administrative Commission, with thanks.

**The Presbytery of Northern Waters approved to dismiss the Warba Administrative Commission with thanks.**

A short break was taken to prepare for worship.

Worship was led by Brett Foote, Elona Street Stewart, and Chip Holt, CRE.

Following worship those present who were going on the PDA Mission Trip were commissioned. Present were: Rich Blood, Jim Deters, Bob Goodin and Paul Rigstad.

Dorothy Duquette, Vice Moderator, offered the Benediction.

Jay Wilkinson reported on the roll. The offering which will go to One Great Hour of Sharing had not yet been counted.

Teaching Elders 22

Ruling Elders 16

Commissioned Ruling Elders 3

Council Members 1

Corresponding Members 2

Staff 2

Visitors 6

Total 52

A motion was made to adjourn at 3:25.

Moderator, Chris McCurdy thanked the Superior Church for their hospitality. He said, “We need each other and we need to encourage each other”.

Next Presbytery meeting is Thursday, May 7th in Bayfield.

**Betty Starkey**

**Minutes Taker**