



## PROPOSED DOCKET

Thirteenth Meeting of the EPC Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest

January 21-22, 2022

First Armenian Presbyterian Church  
430 South 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Fresno, CA 93702  
559-237-6638

*Please note: The Presbytery proceedings today are being recorded.*

### FRIDAY, JANUARY 21, 2022

8:00	Breakfast	
9:00	<b>Call to Order and Opening Prayer</b>	RE Jim Conners, Moderator
	<b>Declaration of Quorum</b>	RE Mark Eshoff, Stated Clerk
9:10	<b>Welcome</b>	TE Greg Haroutunian
	<b>Introduction of Guests</b>	Moderator Conners
	<b>Installation of New Moderator</b>	Moderator Conners
	We welcome TE Lana Roberts as our new Moderator	
	<b>Recognition of Past Moderator</b>	Stated Clerk Eshoff
9:30	<b>Worship and Prayer</b>	
	<b>Call to Worship</b>	Moderator Roberts
	<b>Worship in Music</b>	First Armenian Worship Team
	<b>Sermon</b>	Mark Wright
	The sermon this morning will be given by Mark Wright, candidate for Pastor at Heritage EPC, Santa Maria, CA. He will be preaching on Jeremiah 31:31-34, a passage assigned to him by the Ministerial Committee.	
9:50	<b>Moderator's Time of Prayer</b>	Moderator Roberts
10:10	<b>Stated Clerk's Report</b>	Stated Clerk Eshoff
	Presbytery Voting Guidelines	
	Annual Teaching Elder Reports	
	Absences without Excuse (October 8, 2021)	
	Changes to the Proposed Docket	
	<b>Approval of the Docket</b>	
10:20	Break	
10:40	<b>Ministerial Committee Report</b>	TE David Abdo, Chair
	<b>Examination of Mark Wright</b>	

Mark Wright has been called as Pastor of Heritage EPC, Santa Maria, CA. He is ordained in the Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians (ECO) and is requesting to transfer from the ECO Bluewater Presbytery. Mark has signed his Ministerial Obligation Form and Ethical Affirmation Form. He has been examined by the members of the Ministerial Committee and his current Terms of Call have been reviewed and approved by the Committee. He will participate in the next Discovery Workshop.

Mark's examination began with a sermon on a passage assigned by the Ministerial Committee. The Presbytery is to examine him on his views of theology and sacraments, his faith in Christ, his calling to the ministry and the nature of the office of a minister of the Word, polity, the Reformed tradition, the Bible, and his spiritual journey. Mark has one exception to the Westminster Standards. (*Attachment 1 – pgs. A2-A15*)

**Two to three questions in each category in the following order:**

- Views on Theology, Sacraments, English Bible
- Views on the Book of Order, history of the Church and the Reformed tradition
- Christian experience, progress in spiritual growth, and the nature of the office of Teaching Elder
- Exception to the Westminster Standards

**Representatives speaking on behalf of Mark Wright**

**MOTION:** To approve the examination of Mark Wright, including his exception to the Westminster Standards, and receive him into full membership in the EPC Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest.

**MOTION:** To commission the Ministerial Committee to approve the Administrative Commission, date and time for an installation service to install Mark Wright as Pastor of Heritage EPC, Santa Maria, CA.

11:20

**Session Review Committee**

RE Janet Goodman, Chair

RE Goodman will report on the reviews from the October 2021 meeting and update the Presbytery on how Session Minutes Reviews will occur in the future.

**Scheduled Reviews for January:**

Centerpoint Community Church, Roseville  
Centerville Presbyterian Church, Fremont  
Christ Church East Bay, Berkeley  
Covenant Community Church, Vacaville  
Covenant Presbyterian Church, Reno  
Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church  
Fremont Presbyterian Church  
Hope Presbyterian Church, Folsom  
Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church  
Sierra Presbyterian Church

- 11:30      **Treasurer's Report**      RE Connie Badgley, Treasurer
- 2021 Year-end POPS YTD Financials (*Attachment 2 - pgs. A16-A18*)
  - 2021 Year-end POPS Askings Report (*Attachment 3 - pg. A19*)
  - 2021 Financial Review
- 11:40      **Ministry Update – Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church**      TE Josh Hall
- 12:00      Lunch
- 1:00      **Proposed Revisions to the Book of Government of the EPC**      Stated Clerk Eshoff
- These overtures were approved by the General Assembly in June 2021 to be sent to the EPC presbyteries for their approval. The wording of the overtures is attached (*Attachment 4- pgs. A20-A22*). You are reminded that, while we may debate the substance of Descending Overtures, we may not amend the Overtures in any way, but may only vote for or against their adoption. Under the requirements of our Constitution these overtures must be voted on individually and the vote must be counted and recorded.
- Descending Overture 21-A**  
To amend *Book of Government* 19-4.C.1 which addresses the responsibilities of the Presbytery.
- MOTION: To approve Descending Overture 21-A**
- Descending Overture 21-B**  
To amend *Book of Government* 20-4.A.3 that addresses the responsibilities of the General Assembly.
- MOTION: To approve Descending Overture 21-B**
- Descending Overture 21-C**  
To amend *Book of Worship* 7-5 which addresses the Service of Compassion.
- MOTION: To approve Descending Overture 21-C**
- Descending Overture 21-D**  
To amend *Book of Government* 9-5.E regarding the administration of sacraments by Chaplains.
- MOTION: To approve Descending Overture 21-D**
- 1:30      **Ministerial Committee Report (continued)**
- Examination of Garrett Brown**  
Garrett Brown has been called as Assistant Pastor of Administration at Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church, Fair Oaks, CA. Garrett has signed his Ministerial Obligation Form and Ethical Affirmation Form. He has been examined by the members of the Ministerial Committee and his current Terms of Call have been reviewed and approved by the Committee. He will participate in the next Discovery Workshop. He is recommended to the floor of the Presbytery for approval.

(continued)

## Examination of Garrett Brown (*continued*)

Garrett's examination begins with a sermon on a passage assigned by the Ministerial Committee. The Presbytery is to examine him on his knowledge of theology and sacraments, his faith in Christ, his calling to the ministry and the nature of the office of a minister of the Word, polity, the Reformed tradition, the Bible, and his spiritual journey. Garrett has no exceptions to the Westminster Standards. (*Attachment 5 – pgs. A23-A36*)

**Sermon:** Ephesians 3:7-13

**Two to three questions in each category in the following order:**

- Knowledge of Theology, Sacraments, English Bible
- Knowledge of the Book of Order, history of the Church and the Reformed tradition
- Christian experience, progress in spiritual growth, and the nature of the office of Teaching Elder

**Representatives speaking on behalf of Garrett Brown**

**MOTION:** To approve the examination of Garrett Brown and receive him into full membership in the EPC Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest.

**MOTION:** To approve the Administrative Commission consisting of RE's Chris Larsen and Andy Robertson from Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church, Fair Oaks, CA, (2 additional RE's TBD) and TE's Josh Hall and Cliff Graves from Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church to ordain and install Garrett Brown as Assistant Pastor of Administration at Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church on February 27, 2022 at 6:00 pm.

2:20	<b>Church Revitalization Update</b>	TE Mike Griffin, Revitalization Liaison
2:30	Break	
2:40	<b>Geographic Group Discussions</b> (see handout for discussion questions and meeting locations) <b>Clerk of Session Training</b>	
4:15	<b>Care of Candidates Committee Report</b>	TE Jay Hull, Chair
	<i>Note on examination of candidates to come under care of the Presbytery:</i> Candidates will briefly share their spiritual journey, their sense of call and why they have chosen the EPC. The Presbytery may then examine the Candidate on the following:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Christian experience and growth</li><li>• The motive for seeking ordination in the EPC</li><li>• The candidate's call to the Ministry</li></ul>	

### **Examination of Lucas Cooper**

Lucas is considering a call at a church in our Presbytery, but is not yet ordained and still has one more requirement to fulfill for his MDiv. Degree. He has served as pastor of churches in Toronto, Canada (CMA) and Scottsdale, AZ (non-denominational). Per the Book of Order, Lucas must enter candidacy status in order to pursue the Candidate's Educational Equivalency Program (CEEP) which, once completed, will then enable him to take the EPC ordination exams and be examined for ordination in the EPC.

**MOTION:** To approve Lucas Cooper to come under care of the EPC Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest and approve TE David Abdo as advisor to Candidate Cooper.

**MOTION:** To refer candidate Lucas Cooper to the GA Ministerial Vocation Committee for the Candidate's Educational Equivalency Program for the purpose of receiving a recommendation from them regarding requirements for his ordination in the EPC.

4:50

### **Examination of Alex Chiang**

Alex is ready to come under the care of this Presbytery. He is currently under care of the Session of Wintersburg Presbyterian Church, Santa Ana, CA. The Session has recommended him to the Presbytery as a Candidate Under Care.

#### **Representative speaking on behalf of candidate**

**MOTION:** To approve Alex Chiang to come under care of the EPC Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest and approve TE Jonathan Dennis as advisor to Candidate Chiang.

#### **Constitutional Questions to the Candidate**

Moderator Roberts

- As you understand God's working in your heart and life, do you continue to believe yourself called to the office of Teaching Elder?
- Do you now submit yourself to the care and supervision of this Presbytery as you prepare yourself for this office?
- Do you renew your commitment as a Christian, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, to live as becomes a follower of Jesus?

#### **Prayer for the Candidate**

#### **Charge given to the Candidate**

5:30

Dinner

Advance reservations required

7:00

Worship

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### SATURDAY, JANUARY 22, 2022

8:00 Breakfast

9:00 **Call to Order and Opening Prayer** TE Lana Roberts, Moderator

**Appreciation to the Volunteers and Staff of the Host Church**

9:05 **Worship and Prayer**

**Call to Worship** Moderator Roberts

**Worship in Music** First Armenian Worship Team

**Sermon** TE Paul Irwin

The sermon this morning will be given by TE Paul Irwin, candidate for Associate Pastor for Worship at Fowler Presbyterian Church, Fowler, CA. He will be preaching on John 10:14-18, a passage assigned to him by the Ministerial Committee.

**Moderator's Time of Prayer** Moderator Roberts

9:45 **Ministerial Committee Report** (continued)

#### **Examination of Paul Irwin**

Paul Irwin has been called as Associate Pastor for Worship at Fowler Presbyterian Church, Fowler, CA. He is ordained in the EPC and is requesting to transfer from the EPC Presbytery of the East. Paul has signed his Ministerial Obligation Form and Ethical Affirmation Form. He has been examined by the members of the Ministerial Committee and his current Terms of Call have been reviewed and approved by the Committee.

Paul's examination began with a sermon on a passage assigned by the Ministerial Committee. The Presbytery is to examine him on his views of theology and sacraments, his faith in Christ, his calling to the ministry and the nature of the office of a minister of the Word, polity, the Reformed tradition, the Bible, and his spiritual journey. Paul has one exception to the Westminster Standards. (*Attachment 6 – pgs. A37-A54*)

#### **Two to three questions in each category in the following order:**

- Views on Theology, Sacraments, English Bible
- Views on the Book of Order, history of the Church and the Reformed tradition
- Christian experience, progress in spiritual growth, and the nature of the office of Teaching Elder
- Exception to the Westminster Standards

**Representatives speaking on behalf of Paul Irwin**

**MOTION:** To approve the examination of Paul Irwin, including his exception to the Westminster Standards, and receive him into full membership in the EPC Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest.

**MOTION:** To approve the Administrative Commission consisting of RE's Paul Bedrosian from First Armenian Presbyterian Church, Fresno, CA and Tom Feaver, Tim Lewis, Dan King from Fowler Presbyterian Church, Fowler, CA and TE's Erik Buhl from Fowler Presbyterian Church, Fowler, CA and David Abdo from Easton Presbyterian Church, Easton, CA to install Paul Irwin as Associate Pastor of Worship at Fowler Presbyterian Church, Fowler, CA on February 13, 2022 at 12:00 pm.

10:35 **Ministerial Committee Report (continued)**

TE Chris Eatough Assistant Pastor at Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church has accepted a call to Memorial Park Presbyterian Church in Pennsylvania. The Session of Fair Oaks Church has approved his request for dissolution of the relationship.

**MOTION:** To approve the dissolution of the relationship between TE Chris Eatough and Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church, Fair Oaks, CA and transfer him to the EPC Presbytery of the Alleghenies pending his examination and approval in that Presbytery.

10:45 Break

11:05 **Mission Committee Report** TE Sam Knottnerus, E2025 Home Team Chair  
TE Sam Knottnerus will update the Presbytery on the current ministry to the Pashtuns. TE Jeremy Vaccaro will introduce Nathan and Kristen S. who are leaving soon to serve as EPC World Outreach missionaries in Central Asia.

11:25 **POPS Nominating Committee Report** RE Bill Myers, Chair

**MOTION:** To approve TE George Carey from Kingman Presbyterian Church, Kingman, AZ and RE John McCormick from First Presbyterian Church, Bakersfield, CA as members of the Mission Committee (Class of 2024).

11:30 **Omnibus/Consent Motion** Moderator Roberts

1. That the Minutes of the Twelfth Stated Meeting of the EPC Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest, October 8, 2021 be approved as posted (these minutes are available on the website).
2. That the Administrative Commission to install Ryan Teramoto as Associate Pastor of Assimilation and Outreach at Wintersburg Presbyterian Church, Santa Ana, CA be dismissed with appreciation for their service to the Presbytery, to the pastor, and to the congregation. The commission's minutes are on file with the Stated Clerk.

**MOTION:** To approve Omnibus/Consent Motion

11:35

**New Business**

Moderator Roberts

**Important Upcoming Dates**

January 21-22, 2022	Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest Meeting (#13) First Armenian Presbyterian Church, Fresno, CA
May 12-13, 2022	Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest Meeting (#14) Sierra Presbyterian Church, Nevada City, CA
June 21-24, 2022	EPC General Assembly Ward Presbyterian Church, Northville, MI (Detroit area)
October 4-6, 2022	POPS Pastor's Retreat Mission Springs Conference Center, Scotts Valley, CA
October 7-8, 2022	Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest Meeting (#15) Location TBD

**Hosting Opportunities**

Member churches are reminded that opportunity is available to host the Presbytery at its future meetings. Contact the Stated Clerk if you are interested in offering an invitation.

We are looking for churches to host **Discovery Workshops** in 2022. Contact the Stated Clerk if you are interested in offering an invitation.

11:45

**Adjournment and Closing Prayer**

Moderator Roberts





**Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest**  
5770 Carlson Drive  
Sacramento, CA 95819  
(916) 452-7132

**Presbytery Meeting Docket**  
**January 21-22, 2022**

**ATTACHMENTS**

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2. 2021 POPS Year-End Financial Statements	A16-A19
3. 2021 POPS Year-End Per Member Asking Report	A20
4. Descending Overtures from the 41 <sup>st</sup> General Assembly	A21-A23
5. Personal Information and Statement of Faith – Garrett Brown	A24-A37
6. Personal Information and Statement of Faith – Paul Irwin	A38-A55

## Part 2: Personal Information

(please print or type)

1. Name: Wright Mark Allen  
(Last) (First) (Middle)

Preferred Address:

8733 Latimer Way, Fair Oaks, CA 95628

Alternate Address:

Preferred Phone: 707-685-4439 ☒ Cell ☐ Work ☐ Home

Alternate Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Cell ☐ Work ☐ Home

Email: sparkiowa@yahoo.com

### 2. Work History:

Previous Ministry Positions	Dates
Pastoral Support Specialist K-LOVE/Air1 Radio (EMF)	present
Lead Pastor Community Presbyterian Church, Vacaville, CA	2005-2020
Lead Pastor, Trinity Presbyterian Church, Clarinda, IA	1997-2005
Pastor, Covelo Presbyterian Church, Covelo, CA	1993-1997
Chaplain, Sutter Medical Center, Sacramento, CA	1991-1993
Associate Pastor, Dinuba Presbyterian Church, Dinuba, CA	1988-1991
Adjunct Professor, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary	2006-2009
Present/Last Position (if you are currently not in a ministry position)	Dates

Name: Mark Wright

### 3. Ordination Status

Ordained by (church/city/state): Fair Oaks Church (PCUSA, now EPC), Fair Oaks, CA,  
transferred ordination to ECO

Ordination Date: 12-11-88

If not ordained:

Church Membership (church, city, state): \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate Under Care of (denomination and presbytery): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ since (date): \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Educational Background:

a. Name of Institution	Dates Attended	Degree Achieved
San Francisco Theological Seminary	2000-2003	D.Min.
Fuller Theological Seminary (concentration in cross-cultural studies)	1985-1988	M.Div.
California State Univ., Sacramento	1985-1988	B.A.
Clinical Pastoral Education	1993	

b. Continuing Education/Professional Development (please include dates):

Church Transformation - Church Health Initiatives 2018-2020  
Certificate in the Art of Spiritual Direction - San Francisco Theological Seminary 2001  
Clinical Pastoral Education, Advanced Certificate in Pediatrics - Sutter Medical Center, 1993

c. Community and Civic Activities:

President and Co-Founder, Nodaway Valley Free Clinic  
Co-Founder, Clarinda Community Revivals  
Co-Founder, Cowboy Church, Clarinda  
Chaplain and Engineer, Covelo Volunteer Fire Department  
Board Member, Open Gate Shelter, Dinuba, CA

Name: Mark Wright

d. Presbytery and General Assembly Activities:

Presbytery of Bluewater (ECO 2015-2020) - Preparation for Ministry, Theology Commission

Presbytery of Sacramento (PCUSA 2005-2015) - Chair of Preparation for Ministry, Presbytery Council, Lead - Committee of Counsel

Presbytery of Missouri River Valley (PCUSA 1997-2005) - Chair, Preparation for Ministry, Presbytery Council

e. Ecumenical Activity:

Visiting Professor, International Leadership Academy, Nicaragua (2003-2010)

Director, Guadalupe Teaching Center, Matagalpa, Nicaragua (2010-2014)

Vacaville Ministerial Association (2005-2020)

Clarinda Ministerial Association (1997-2005)

Spiritual Director, Terraced Hills Walk to Emmaus Conferences (2003-2005)

f. Special Interests, Hobbies:

International travel (teaching in Nicaragua), movies, hiking/walking, reading, exploring, driving/autocross

g. Languages you can speak (and level of proficiency):

English - fluent

Spanish - proficient, but not fluent

h. Types of supervision/accountability you have found helpful in your ministry:

My wife, Ruth, as confidant and ministry help

Coach in Transformation Cohort

Mentors since my earliest days in ministry

Pastor's Covenant Group - (1988 to current)

Name: Mark Wright

### Part 3: Narrative

**1. Life Story:** In one page, describe your life's journey. Include key incidents that were significant in your formation as a person and your call to ministry. State your personal ideals and goals.

I accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior during my Junior year of High School. It was shortly after that that I received a flyer in the mail inviting me to attend the youth group at the local Presbyterian Church (Fair Oaks Church, now EPC) and I became involved in everything that I possibly could: youth group, Bible Studies, youth choir, and Sunday mornings. The High School Director and Youth Pastor became my first mentors. I later served as a youth elder and youth intern and counted Dr. Henry Wells, the Lead Pastor, as one of my mentors. It was there that I first sensed a call to ministry. That church sent me on to seminary and I was ordained there in 1988.

The Fair Oaks Church also sent me as an intern to a small multi-cultural church plant in South Sacramento, where I had my first opportunity to engage in general pastoral duties, visitation, homebound communion, leading worship, programming, and even preaching. It was there, in efforts to reach out to the community, that my call to ministry was affirmed. I have served in pastoral ministry ever since.

I was ordained to a call at the Dinuba Presbyterian Church (now ECO), as Associate Pastor of Youth and Outreach, where I started new programs, developed a church-wide outreach ministry, and served with the local homeless shelter.

I moved to Sacramento to serve as a chaplain and complete my Clinical Pastoral Education, earning Advanced Certification in Pediatrics and married. After that, I accepted a call to the Covelo Presbyterian Church (now EPC) as a solo pastor where I continued to engage the community by serving in the Volunteer Fire Department, the local Christian School and alongside of other pastors in the community.

In my next call to Trinity Church (PCUSA), in Clarinda, IA, I led the church to spiritual and numerical growth, developed programs, lead minor renovation programs, and greatly expanded our outreach to the community through a growing after school children's program, Free Clinic, annual Community Revivals, and Cowboy Church - worship services specifically developed for the unchurched. I also began to teach in Campus Crusade's International Leadership Academy, training pastors and church leaders.

During my next call, to the Community Presbyterian Church in Vacaville (now ECO), my marriage experienced growing difficulties and my wife left me to live with someone else, while suing me for divorce. As devastating as the divorce was, I invested heavily in my children and their success and later married Ruth, who has been a faithful helper, encourageer, and partner in the ministry. Being married to a Nicaraguan has further augmented my sense of the importance of bridging cultures. I saw the church through a major renovation project, debt elimination, departure from the PCUSA, and most importantly, moved that congregation from an inward looking congregation to one that faced outward to serve its community and eagerly make disciples. After successfully positioning this church as a truly missional congregation, I knew that I needed to move on and am currently discipling callers at K-LOVE radio while awaiting +

Name: Mark Wright

**2. Please describe briefly** (confine your answers to space allotted):

- a. My leadership style: *(How you include others in decision-making, administrative style, ways you deal with conflict, etc.?)*

My leadership style is collaborative by nature. I seek out input from others and work with a team to arrive at solutions, plans and designs. I am perfectly capable of designing on my own, but am more effective when working with a team. Though I don't like dealing with conflict, I navigate conflict well to advocate for staff and move a congregation forward in fulfilling its mission. I adjust my approach as the situation warrants in order to help others find themselves contributing in a meaningful way to the growth and success of the church.

- b. My worship emphases: *(preaching style, preferred worship emphases and style, etc.)*

I usually preach in an expository style, but also include application. I find it extremely helpful to employ the use of story as stories have the power to affect real impact to the heart and move us further on in fulfilling Christ's mission for us. I am comfortable with and enjoy a wide variety of worship styles and experiences.

- c. My call to ministry: *(What type of ministry role are you called to? What would effectiveness look like in that role?)*

I am called to a ministry of fulfilling the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. I am passionate about seeing a church make disciples and make a difference in their community. I am tenacious in seeing a church mobilized for mission and expanding the Kingdom of God in their midst. I can fulfill that calling in a multitude of ways. As an Associate, Assistant, or Executive Pastor I will be an effective advocate for the Lead Pastor's agenda and vision. I will design programming consistent with the Lead Pastor's vision and use my extensive experience in building and leading teams to move staff and volunteers forward in fulfilling the mission of the church. As a Lead Pastor/Head of Staff, I will employ my extensive experience as Head of Staff of two churches to ensure that a church has and carries forth a vision consistent with their unique place in God's Kingdom and unique gifts given by the Spirit to fulfill Christ's mandates for us. I will preach and teach the grace and truth as brought to us by Jesus Christ and keep before us his calling and mission.

Name: Mark Wright

**3. Comment briefly on your views as relates to:**

a. Spiritual giftedness

I believe that God gives spiritual gifts to all believers in order to fulfill his work and purposes on earth. I believe that we each are called to use these gifts in obedience to the Holy Spirit in order to build up the body of Christ and expand his Kingdom. These gifts are not given for our own personal benefit, nor to measure ourselves against others, but for service.

b. Charismatic expression in worship (manifestation of spiritual gifts)

I believe that it can be appropriate to have some manifestation of the charismatic gifts in worship, but with appropriate safeguards in place and seeing that the gifts be used in humility and solely for the Glory of God, consistent with the order of the worship service.

c. Women in ordained office

I believe that Biblically, women can serve in ordained office, just as Mary was the first to proclaim the Gospel message of the resurrection, and just as Lydia, Phoebe, Priscilla, and Dorcas, among others, served as leaders in the early church.

d. Presbyterian connectional system

I believe wholeheartedly in the Presbyterian connectional system as it offers a means for substantive and valued support for one another as peers. The Presbyterian connectional system also offers a clear and effective way to incorporate Biblical accountability and discipline into our shared relationships. Though it may not be perfect, it is a faithful exercise of Scripture's call to love one another and to present one another as holy and blameless before our Lord.

**4. Do you agree with the system of government of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church?**

☒ Yes    ☐ No (please explain briefly):

**5. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the *Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms* of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?**

☒ Yes    ☐ No (please explain as part of your answer to #6 below)

Name: Mark Wright

**6. Do you take any exceptions to the *Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms*?**

☒ Yes    ☐ No

If yes, please identify the topic with the specific chapter, paragraph, or question number with which you take your exception. *(Note: you will need to submit a written statement of these exceptions to the Ministerial Committee and presbytery during the examination process.)*

I do take exception to Chapter 21, paragraph 7. I see no Scriptural evidence of the Sabbath day actually being changed following the resurrection of Christ.

**7. Do you willingly offer the sacrament of infant baptism to Christian parents?**

☒ Yes    ☐ No (please explain briefly):





A Global Movement of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches

## Candidates Statement of Faith

*Provide a brief statement in your own words for each item. Return to the Chair of the Candidates or Ministerial Committee before you are scheduled for your oral ordination exam.*

Candidate's Name Mark Wright Date 09/13/2021

### 1. The Bible (Bibliology)

The Bible is the Word of God given to people. It is infallible and teaches all that is essential for faith and life. The Bible is wholly inspired by the Holy Spirit and directly points to and glorifies the Living Word, our Lord, Jesus Christ. The Bible was recorded by human authors, yet was, and is, carefully preserved by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit also illumines our minds, allowing us to understand and live by the Holy Scriptures, so that God is glorified in our lives and so that we can live fully submitted to our Heavenly Father.

### 2. God the Father (Theology proper)

God the Father, first person of the Trinity, is eternal, infinite, unchangeable, absolutely holy, and the Creator of all things. He is the source of all beauty, all love and all life. He neither needs, nor yearns, for anything, yet out of sovereign love and grace, created all things for His glory. He made humanity in His own image to reflect his goodness and love. The only true God exists as a Holy Trinity - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who is both one essence and three persons. The three persons are consubstantial with one another, coeternal and coequal. There are not three gods, nor three parts of God, but three persons within the one Godhead.

### 3. Jesus Christ (Christology)

We in our sinfulness cannot approach God, so God approached us by entering into our humanity in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is both fully God and fully human. He is of one substance with the Father and like us in every way except for sin. In regard to His divinity, His glory fills the heaven and earth. In regard to his humanity, his glory is seen in the form of a suffering servant, most clearly evidenced when He is lifted up on the cross in our place. Jesus Christ, who existed before creation, was born of the virgin Mary, conceived by the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ came as the Son of Man in order that we may understand His humanity and be in a living relationship with Him. He is the Son of God, who laid down His life as an atoning sacrifice for sinful humanity, in order that we might see our sins forgiven. He rose from the dead in order that we could see death conquered and be brought into an eternal relationship with our Heavenly Father.

#### 4. The Holy Spirit (Pneumatology)

The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, was present in creation, inspired the Holy Scriptures, spoke through the prophets, and has always pointed to the Son, Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit was sent by the Father and the Son in order to sustain and nurture the believers and came as a rush of wind on Pentecost to birth the church. The Holy Spirit grants us faith, gives us understanding of the Scriptures, and enables holiness so that we might be witnesses of the grace of Jesus Christ to those who do not yet have a relationship with Him. The Holy Spirit continually intercedes for us, even when we struggle to pray. The Holy Spirit, calls all persons to repent, gathers us in community, sanctifies, quickens our hearts and leads us in expanding God's Kingdom.

#### 5. Mankind (Anthropology)

Humanity was made in God's image, dearly loved by our Heavenly Father, and reflecting God's glory. However, due to our choice, sin entered into our world, corrupted our hearts and, though we were still loved, brought us under the judgement of our Holy God. Apart from the saving work of Jesus Christ, we are incapable of being in God's presence or bearing the weight of His glory. Once our lives are surrendered to Christ, however, we are brought back into right relationship with God, adopted as His children, and are privileged to fulfill Christ's Great Commandment and Great Commission.

#### 6. Sin (Hamartiology)

Sin is the act of rebelling against God's gracious will. It is readily expressed in both commission and omission. Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, bringing about our fall from God's grace. Yet, we as individuals, continue to make the same choice as Adam and Eve, rejecting God's will for us and asserting our own selfish will. Our sin brings us under God's righteous judgement and there is no human act that we can perform which can earn us the right to stand before our Holy God. Our sin provides for us an incalculable debt that we can in no way repay.

#### 7. Salvation (Soteriology)

Salvation is the gracious gift of our Lord Jesus Christ for all who receive Him as Savior and Lord, accomplished for us by the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the process by which we are brought into right relationship with our Heavenly Father who receives us as His adopted children. Salvation is offered freely to all, though only through Jesus Christ, and only received by the elect. There is no other way to the Father, but through Him. Jesus Christ is the atoning sacrifice for all our sin, the one who paid our debt and sets us free for a life of joyful service to God.

## 8. Satan

Satan is the deceiver, accuser, our adversary, and a master of illusion. He is a created being who once was a bright shining "star". Lucifer was thrown from heaven in his attempt to become equal with God and now prowls, seeking to devour and destroy the saints of God. Though his power appears great to us, it is actually miniscule in comparison to the power of our Almighty God.

## 9. Angels and Demons

Angels and demons are both created beings. The Angels serve and worship God. Angels serve as messengers to and give directions to human beings. Demons serve Satan and are employed by him to help torment and deceive humans. Demons have the ability to inhabit human beings and to torture, but must submit to the authority of our Lord Jesus and His disciples.

## 10. The Church (Ecclesiology)

The church is the Body of Jesus Christ, both visible and invisible. The church worships God, proclaims and teaches the Word of God, celebrates the sacraments of baptism and communion (which are means of grace for believers and signs of Christ's covenant with us), makes disciples, and serves its local community and world in order to expand the Kingdom of God. The church lives to fulfill the Great Commandment and Great Commission. The church is the assembly of forgiven sinners, brothers and sisters who share a new identity as they have been adopted into the family of God and share one Father. Together, we bear joyful witness to the God who has transformed us and is sanctifying us.

## 11. The Spiritual Life of the Believer

The believer, having been purchased by Christ, lives a life of joyfilled commitment to Jesus and is called to love God with all their heart, soul, and mind. There is no part of the human life that is off limits to the sanctifying work of God. The believer is called to proclaim and enact the good news of Jesus Christ, to extend his Lordship to all the world, to share in the sufferings and joys of this world in order to extend His blessing to all, and to offer intercession to God on behalf of the world. In order to fulfill this mission, the believer must continually and actively seek the Living God in prayer, practice spiritual disciplines and worship.

## 12. Future Things (Eschatology)

I know that the future holds within it the glorious return of our exalted Christ. I know that He will come to claim His own and will make all things new. I know that every eye will see him and every knee will bow before him. I know that Jesus, the only worthy judge, will judge the living and the dead. I know that evil, sin, and death will be vanquished. I know that the believers will be glorified and have every tear wiped from their eyes. I know that the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands will have preserved and provided for the saints. I know that the nations and the leaders of nations will witness and walk in the glory of the Lord. The timing and particulars I do not know, nor is it my purpose to know. I know that I join with the church in living with the joyful expectation of His return.

## 13. Evangelism

Evangelism is the joyful sharing of the good news of Jesus Christ which flows from a transformed life. Evangelism is sharing good news with a darkened and despondent world, so that others may see life that is abundant and full in Jesus Christ. Evangelism is not so much a five point sermon or a formulaic proposition, but rather a dynamic display of love and grace which nudges an unbeliever closer to Christ. The Great Commission and the Great Commandment call us to be actively pursuing opportunities to develop relationships with unbelievers so that we may demonstrate love and grace to them and share who Jesus is and why a relationship with him is compelling and joyful.

## 14. Spiritual Gifts

Spiritual gifts are given by the Holy Spirit to each disciple of Jesus. They are to be used to build up the body of the Christ and to help the church achieve its mission. Since they are outright gifts, we must recognize that they are given regardless of our own merit and we must use them humbly, but boldly, before a world in need. The gifts depicted in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 and Romans 12:6-8 are not shown in Scripture to have been cancelled out or made obsolete. Therefore, I believe that they are still available to believers today and used properly within the body are meant for our mutual encouragement and for the advancement of the church.

Answer the following integration questions:

15. State your view of the Scriptures and the place the Scriptures will have in your ministry.

The Scriptures, the written Word of God are the infallible words of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit and are our authority for faith and life. The Holy Spirit enables people to understand Scripture and enables them to live under its authority and be moved by its message. As a believer, I am happily captive to the Word of God, instructed by it, and in it, ever led to new and deeper understandings of my Lord and his way with me. In my ministry, I am convicted to teach and preach the Word of God, to be a faithful expositor of Scripture and to be bound by its teachings. The Word of God is the foundation of, and shaper of, all ministry that I do or could ever hope to accomplish.

16. What distinctions of the Reformed faith appeal to you?

The perseverance of the saints, the very fact that God holds us and that our security is not based on our feeling nor subject to be withdrawn because of our failures is particularly reassuring. The truth that our loving Lord keeps us in his care, will not let us fall, is a sure sign of our Savior's unconditional love. The irresistible grace of God points us to the reassuring truth that "we love because He first loved us" (John 1:19); we are not so much finding God, as it is that God has taken the initiative to come find us. The five Solas: Scripture Alone, Grace Alone, Faith Alone, Christ Alone, to God Alone be the glory also point us to a five fold reckoning of what are our true anchors that keep us moored to the reality of God's grace revealed in Jesus Christ.

17. What/Who is the Holy Spirit and how important is His ministry?

The Holy Spirit, being the third person of the Trinity, is certainly a "Who" and absolutely vital to us as believers as depicted above. The ministry of the Holy Spirit draws unbelievers to himself, gives understanding of the Scriptures, endows the believers with spiritual gifts, and moves the church to fulfill the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. His ministry is absolutely necessary for us if we are to accomplish what Christ has set us to do. Without the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the church would become an empty shell, a social club with exalted values but utterly powerless, decrepit, irrelevant and pharisaical.

18. What is your position on women in leadership roles in the church?

I believe that Scripture affirms the ordination of women to all leadership roles in the church. Throughout Scripture we see God appointing to and using women in powerful and wondrous positions of leadership and particularly in the New Testament we see God moving in mighty ways through Mary, Anna, other Marys, the woman at the well, Lydia, Phoebe, and Priscilla, among many others, who were prophets, church leaders, missionaries, and evangelists. Yes, there are specific and localized prohibitions in Scripture that speak against women having authority over men or where they are told to be silent. However, their contexts are small and specific compared to the overarching ways that God has continually chosen to use women as messengers of the gospel and leaders telling of His grace.

19. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the Presbyterian form of government?

Some of the strengths of the Presbyterian form of government are that we well divide the functions of leadership into the distinct categories of Teaching Elder, Ruling Elder, and Deacon. Each of these is vital in carrying out the mission of the church, yet dividing these responsibilities helps to maintain proper balance and deliniation of powers, in order to make the church more effective. Presbyterian polity readily allows for orderly worship, right administration of the sacraments, and the practice of mutual discipline so that the work of the church is carried out and a broken world is ministered to. Some of the weaknesses are that even these right divisions of responsibilities are sometimes miscontrued or put to ineffective use so that the work of the church can be bogged down in committee or diluted to the point of irrelevance. Being ruled by a majority often points us to what is right, but can also mire us in what is simply acceptable.

20. Explain your philosophy of ministry.

I believe that ministry pursues the will of our God who is continually searching for those that He misses the most – those that have turned from him, but for whom He can never turn away. The lonely, lost, and self-satisfied are hungering for something they can't see and desiring a home that they can't imagine. We are here for them. God is still desiring to settle the lonely in a place of belonging (Psalm 68:6). Therefore, I desire to be the bridge builder that connects those yearning for family to those who know they have been called to welcome. Ministry is working diligently to make sure that the church body is equipped and ready, fully devoted to the cause of Christ, secure and growing in their relationship with Christ, and standing strong with open arms. I believe that we as the church, are called to be the hope of the world.



21. Describe your approach to evangelism, both personally and as a pastor in a local church.

Personally, evangelism is naturally sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with those that God places in my circle of influence and contact. It, for me, is nudging people closer to Christ and working in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, who is already prompting and drawing people to Himself. It is prayerfully asking God each day to point out to me who He wishes me to contact and to bless those opportunities to share the gospel. As a pastor in a local church, I equip and lead the congregation to do much the same, teaching simple and natural methods of sharing the gospel message so that the church sees itself as partners in God's mission and becomes excited about seeing the Great Commission fulfilled.

22. As you reflect on your life, explain your sense of call to ministry.

My sense of call to the ministry developed over time as I explored the world of mission opportunities and interned in church settings. As I used my gifts and natural talents in teaching, preaching, serving, and leadership, I began to see how God could use me and sensed a deep call from the Holy Spirit to enter into the work and joy of ministry. I thoroughly enjoyed my training throughout seminary and found my call to ministry repeatedly affirmed by the body in those early years. I still see God refining my call, moving me to specific areas of ministry, and training me for different works, yet my sense of call remains the same and my dedication to the work of the church has only grown.

23. Elaborate on your convictions about personal accountability in your life and in the lives of Christians to whom you might minister.

I am personally accountable to the one, true, living God, to whom I owe the responsibility to be faithful to Scripture and His purposes for me.

I am personally accountable to my wife and children, to whom I owe the responsibility of being a loving and dedicated husband and father. I see reflected in them the man that I ought to be and strive to be.

I am personally accountable to my peers, to whom I owe the responsibility of being an honest and sincere supporter. I see reflected in my covenant group, people who both challenge and edify me and know that I am called to do the same for them.

I am personally accountable to the Ruling Elders of my local church, to whom I owe the responsibility of being a faithful steward of the gospel and equipper of the saints. I see reflected in them the ethical mandates that I must adhere to and the boundaries that I must respect.

I am personally accountable to the Presbytery, to whom I owe the responsibility to be a faithful colleague and dedicated presbyter.

I am personally accountable to the local church body, to whom I owe the responsibility of leading well, teaching accurately, and loving profoundly. I see reflected in them the mandate to humbly and boldly follow Christ and move them to do the same.

**EPC Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest**  
**Income and Expenses (as of December 31, 2021)**



	<u>Y-T-D Actual</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>Total Y-T-D</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>	<u>Variance</u>
<b>INCOME</b>					
POP Church Support	\$126,627.58	\$7,031.42	\$133,659.00	\$147,500.00	(\$13,841.00)
Other Income	16.00	0.00	16.00	0.00	16.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$126,643.58</b>	<b>\$7,031.42</b>	<b>\$133,675.00</b>	<b>\$147,500.00</b>	<b>(\$13,825.00)</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>					
<b>Care of Candidates Committee</b>					
Chairman Salary	\$4,583.37	\$416.63	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	0.00
Travel-Chairman	900.96	-	900.96	1,200.00	299.04
Travel-Committee	<u>1,428.91</u>	<u>225.69</u>	<u>1,654.60</u>	<u>1,000.00</u>	<u>(654.60)</u>
<b>Total Care of Candidates Expenses</b>	<b>6,913.24</b>	<b>642.32</b>	<b>7,555.56</b>	<b>7,200.00</b>	<b>(355.56)</b>
<b>Church Planting Network</b>					
Focal Stipend	-	-	-	1,000.00	1,000.00
Assessments	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>200.00</u>	<u>200.00</u>
<b>Total Church Planting Network Expenses</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,200.00</b>	<b>1,200.00</b>
<b>Church Revitalization</b>					
Focal - Stipend	916.63	83.37	1,000.00	1,000.00	(0.00)
Travel	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>500.00</u>	<u>500.00</u>
<b>Total Church Revitalization Expenses</b>	<b>916.63</b>	<b>83.37</b>	<b>1,000.00</b>	<b>1,500.00</b>	<b>500.00</b>



**EPC Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest**  
**Income and Expenses (as of December 31, 2021)**

**Ministerial Committee**

Chairman Salary	27,500.00	2,500.00	30,000.00	30,000.00	-
Resources/Supplies	-	-	-	250.00	250.00
Travel-Chairman	1,540.84	-	1,540.84	5,000.00	3,459.16
Travel-Committee	<u>561.19</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>561.19</u>	<u>500.00</u>	<u>(61.19)</u>
<b>Total Ministerial Committee Expenses</b>	<b>29,602.03</b>	<b>2,500.00</b>	<b>32,102.03</b>	<b>35,750.00</b>	<b>3,647.97</b>

**Mission Committee**

Program	3,937.50	1,312.50	5,250.00	7,000.00	1,750.00
Travel- Chair/Committee	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>500.00</u>	<u>500.00</u>
<b>Total Mission Expenses</b>	<b>3,937.50</b>	<b>1,312.50</b>	<b>5,250.00</b>	<b>7,500.00</b>	<b>2,250.00</b>

**Moderator**

Other Expenses	-	-	-	300.00	300.00
Stipend	1,833.37	166.63	2,000.00	2,000.00	-
Travel	<u>1,318.09</u>	<u>310.24</u>	<u>1,628.33</u>	<u>6,000.00</u>	<u>4,371.67</u>
<b>Total Moderator Expenses</b>	<b>3,151.46</b>	<b>476.87</b>	<b>3,628.33</b>	<b>8,300.00</b>	<b>4,671.67</b>

**Other Expenses**

Leadership Training/Discovery Workshop	600.00	-	600.00	1,000.00	400.00
Nominating Committee/Chair Travel	166.28	-	166.28	500.00	333.72
Session Minutes Review Committee	-	-	-	500.00	500.00
Pastors' Retreat Subsidy	<u>216.98</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>216.98</u>	<u>2,250.00</u>	<u>2,033.02</u>
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>983.26</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>983.26</b>	<b>4,250.00</b>	<b>3,266.74</b>

**Presbytery Expenses**

Meals and Expense Subsidy	2,600.00	-	2,600.00	7,500.00	4,900.00
Resource/Teaching Honorariums	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,000.00</u>	<u>3,000.00</u>
<b>Total Presbytery Meeting Expenses</b>	<b>2,600.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,600.00</b>	<b>10,500.00</b>	<b>7,900.00</b>

**EPC Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest**  
**Income and Expenses (as of December 31, 2021)**

**Stated Clerk's Office Expenses**

Administrator's Salary	9,166.63	833.37	10,000.00	10,000.00	(0.00)
Clerk's Salary	33,000.00	3,000.00	36,000.00	36,000.00	-
Communications	675.00	225.00	900.00	700.00	(200.00)
Conference Service	-	-	-	300.00	300.00
Miscellaneous Supplies	909.85	-	909.85	1,000.00	90.15
TE Background Checks	309.75	-	309.75	300.00	(9.75)
Website and Computer Support	-	-	-	200.00	200.00
Travel- Clerk and Assistant	5,447.45	-	5,447.45	9,500.00	4,052.55
Commissions/Other Travel	-	-	-	200.00	200.00
<b>Total Stated Clerk's Office</b>	<b>49,508.68</b>	<b>4,058.37</b>	<b>53,567.05</b>	<b>58,200.00</b>	<b>4,632.95</b>

**Treasurer's Expenses**

Review of Financial Records	500.00	-	500.00	500.00	-
Office Supplies	449.26	94.60	543.86	500.00	(43.86)
Officers and Directors Insurance	2,168.00	-	2,168.00	2,200.00	32.00
Professional Support	880.00	80.00	960.00	400.00	(560.00)
Stipend Salary	3,208.37	291.63	3,500.00	3,500.00	(0.00)
Travel	745.58	-	745.58	1,500.00	754.42
Payroll Expenses	4,032.19	366.56	4,398.75	4,500.00	101.25
<b>Total Treasurer's Expenses</b>	<b>11,983.40</b>	<b>832.79</b>	<b>12,816.19</b>	<b>13,100.00</b>	<b>283.81</b>

<b>Total All Expenses</b>	<b>\$109,596.20</b>	<b>\$9,906.22</b>	<b>\$119,502.42</b>	<b>\$147,500.00</b>	<b>\$27,997.58</b>
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<b>Net Annual Income</b>	<b>\$17,047.38</b>	<b>(\$2,874.80)</b>	<b>\$14,172.58</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$14,172.58</b>
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**EPC Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest**  
**Asset and Fund Summary (as of December 31, 2021)**



<b>Description</b>	<b>Prior Month Balance</b>	<b>Current Month Inflow</b>	<b>Current Month Outflow</b>	<b>Month-End Balance</b>	
<b>ASSETS</b>					
Cash	\$ 136,481.15	\$ 8,743.92	\$ 11,452.11	\$ 133,772.96	
Other Assets	16.00	0.00	0.00	16.00	
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 136,497.15</b>	<b>\$ 8,743.92</b>	<b>\$ 11,452.11</b>	<b>\$ 133,788.96</b>	Checkbook Balance
<b>FUNDS</b>					
<b>Designated Funds</b>					
Chaplain's Travel Fund	\$ 1,910.01	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,910.01	
Disaster Relief Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Educational Assistance Fund	1,930.00	300.00	0.00	2,230.00	
New Church Development	1,155.00	300.00	0.00	1,455.00	
Pastor's Care & Support	15,889.11	1,000.00	1,492.53	15,396.58	
Pastor's Retreat	707.44	0.00	0.00	707.44	
Women's Ministries	4,140.89	12.50	53.36	4,100.03	
WO Engage 2025	12,696.46	100.00	0.00	12,796.46	
WO Translation Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
<b>Total Designated Funds</b>	<b>38,428.91</b>	<b>1,712.50</b>	<b>1,545.89</b>	<b>38,595.52</b>	
Reserve/Undesignated	81,020.86	0.00	0.00	81,020.86	
Current Income (Loss)	17,047.38	7,031.42	9,906.22	14,172.58	
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>\$ 136,497.15</b>	<b>\$ 8,743.92</b>	<b>\$ 11,452.11</b>	<b>\$ 133,788.96</b>	

**Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest  
Per Member Askings 2021**

<b>Church</b>	<b>Members 2019</b>	<b>Requested PMA</b>	<b>Actual Giving</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Centerpoint	947	\$14,205	\$11,835	83%
Centerville	343	5,145	5,054	98%
Christ Church East Bay	207	3,105	2,070	67%
Clayton Community	148	2,220	2,400	108%
CPC Danville	1614	24,210	25,200	104%
Covenant Pres Orange	320	4,800	3,750	78%
Covenant Pres Reno	185	2,775	1,200	43%
Covenant Pres San Diego	112	1,680	1,508	90%
Covenant Community Vacaville	211	3,165	1,050	33%
Easton	197	2,955	3,000	102%
Fair Oaks Pres	984	14,760	9,700	66%
First Armenian	178	2,670	2,473	93%
First Pres Bakersfield	575	8,625	7,635	89%
First Pres Fresno	599	8,985	8,775	98%
First Pres Hanford	102	1,530	1,545	101%
Fowler	165	2,475	0	0%
**Fremont	939	14,085	11,000	78%
Heritage	36	540	463	86%
Hope	110	1,650	803	49%
Kingman	129	1,935	1,680	87%
Millbrook	31	465	0	0%
Moraga Valley	763	11,445	17,535	153%
New Life, Covelo	19	285	195	68%
San Ramon	212	3,180	2,505	78%
Sanger	94	1,410	900	64%
Sierra	300	4,500	3,600	80%
St. John's Assyrian	182	2,730	0	0%
The Table	40	600	0	0%
Valley Community	50	750	750	100%
Wintersburg	379	5,684	5,684	100%
Woodlake	90	1,350	1,350	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,261</b>	<b>\$153,914</b>	<b>\$133,658</b>	<b>87%</b>

\*\*Presbytery Office

**Descending Overture from the 41<sup>st</sup> General Assembly  
Evangelical Presbyterian Church**

**Descending Overture 21-A**

To amend the *Book of Government* 19-4.C.1

Current <i>Book of Government</i> 19-4.C.1	<b>Proposed</b> <i>Book of Government</i> 19-4.C.1 <b><i>Amendments in bold italics</i></b>
1. To work with other Presbyteries and the General Assembly to create agencies for education, the orphaned, the aged, and other suitable activities.	1. To work with other Presbyteries and the General Assembly to <del>create agencies for education,</del> <b><i>identify resources for ministry to and inclusion of</i></b> the orphaned, the aged, and <b><i>the disabled.</i></b> <del>other suitable activities.</del>

**Descending Overture 21-B**

To amend the *Book of Government* 20-4.A.3

Current <i>Book of Government</i> 20-4.A.3	<b>Proposed</b> <i>Book of Government</i> 20-4.A.3 <b><i>Amendment in bold italics</i></b>
3. To create separately or in conjunction with the Presbyteries those agencies or institutions needed for education or other purposes that would enhance the life and ministry of the whole church.	3. To <del>create</del> <b><i>identify</i></b> separately or in Conjunction with the Presbyteries those agencies or institutions needed for education or other purposes that would enhance the life and ministry of the whole church.

## Descending Overture 21-C

To amend the *Book of Worship* 7-5

Current <i>Book of Worship</i> 7-5	<b>Proposed</b> <i>Book of Worship</i> 7-5 <i>Amendments in bold italics</i>
<p>The New Testament describes the concern and compassion of Christ for the conditions of people. The Church shall emulate its Head by showing special concern for the sick, the sorrowing, the hungry, and the poor. The Session shall be responsible for establishing these ministries within the congregation, and into the community. The service of compassion to those in adversity shall include such places as hospitals, retirement homes, convalescent homes, children's homes, prisons, and other public institutions. The higher courts of the Church shall seek to show compassion in these areas, including the establishment of institutions, both at home and abroad, for the care of various needs.</p>	<p>The New Testament describes the concern and compassion of Christ for the conditions of people. The Church shall emulate its Head by showing special concern for the sick, the sorrowing, the hungry, and the poor. <b><i>The Session shall be responsible for establishing these ministries within the congregation, and into the community. The service of compassion to those in adversity shall include such places as hospitals, retirement homes, convalescent homes, children's homes, prisons, and other public institutions. The higher courts of the Church shall seek to show compassion in these areas, including the establishment of institutions, both at home and abroad, for the care of various needs.</i></b></p>

## Descending Overture 21-D

To amend the *Book of Government* 9-5E and *Book of Worship* 3-1.A, by deletion of the final sentence and insertion of a footnote to *Book of Worship* 3-1A in the first sentence as follows, “‘*Lawfully ordained Minister*’ includes EPC Chaplains who are called to serve in a military or civilian organization, have been approved by their Presbytery, and have been endorsed by the General Assembly (see G.9-5E and *Rules for Assembly* X.10-1I).”

Current <i>Book of Government</i> 9-5.E	Proposed <i>Book of Government</i> 9-5E <i>Amendments in bold italics</i>
<p>E. Chaplain</p> <p>A court of the church, a hospital, the military, institutions, universities, or other appropriate fields of service may call a Teaching Elder as Chaplain if the Presbytery deems it appropriate. In such cases, the Chaplain shall always have as a primary responsibility the sharing of the Good News of God in Jesus Christ. The Presbytery may authorize the Chaplain to administer the sacraments in that role.</p>	<p>E. Chaplain</p> <p>A court of the church, a hospital, the military, institutions, universities, or other appropriate fields of service may call a Teaching Elder as Chaplain if the Presbytery deems it appropriate. In such cases, the Chaplain shall always have as a primary responsibility the sharing of the Good News of God in Jesus Christ. <b><i>The Presbytery may authorize the Chaplain to administer the sacraments in that role.</i></b></p>

Current <i>Book of Worship</i> 3-1A	Proposed <i>Book of Worship</i> 3-1A <i>Amendment in bold italics</i>
<p>3-1 A</p> <p>A. Administration of sacraments Ordinarily, only lawfully ordained Minister<sup>282</sup> may administer the sacraments...</p>	<p>3-1 A</p> <p>A. Administration of sacraments Ordinarily, only a lawfully ordained Minister<sup>282</sup> may administer the sacraments...</p>

<sup>282</sup> A ‘*lawfully ordained minister*’ includes EPC Chaplains who are called to serve in a military or civilian organization, have been approved by their Presbytery, and have been endorsed by the General Assembly. Also, a lawfully ordained minister in good standing of a non-EPC church may be authorized to serve communion in an EPC Church, with the concurrence of the Presbytery (*Acts of Assembly* 94-22 and 14-06) See also **Westminster Confession of Faith** 27-4.

## Part 2: Personal Information

*(please print or type)*

**1. Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last) (First) (Middle)

Preferred Address:

Alternate Address:

Preferred Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Cell ☐ Work ☐ Home

Alternate Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Cell ☐ Work ☐ Home

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Work History:

Previous Ministry Positions

Dates

Present/Last Position (if you are currently not in a ministry position)

Dates



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Ordination Status

Ordained by (church/city/state): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Ordination Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If not ordained:

Church Membership (church, city, state): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Candidate Under Care of (denomination and presbytery): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ since (date): \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Educational Background:

a. Name of Institution	Dates Attended	Degree Achieved
------------------------	----------------	-----------------

b. Continuing Education/Professional Development (please include dates):

c. Community and Civic Activities:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

d. Presbytery and General Assembly Activities:

e. Ecumenical Activity:

f. Special Interests, Hobbies:

g. Languages you can speak (and level of proficiency):

h. Types of supervision/accountability you have found helpful in your ministry:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Part 3: Narrative**

- 1. Life Story:** In one page, describe your life's journey. Include key incidents that were significant in your formation as a person and your call to ministry. State your personal ideals and goals.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Please describe briefly** (confine your answers to space allotted):

a. My leadership style: *(How you include others in decision-making, administrative style, ways you deal with conflict, etc.?)*

b. My worship emphases: *(preaching style, preferred worship emphases and style, etc.)*

c. My call to ministry: *(What type of ministry role are you called to? What would effectiveness look like in that role?)*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Comment briefly on your views as relates to:**

a. Spiritual giftedness

b. Charismatic expression in worship (manifestation of spiritual gifts)

c. Women in ordained office

d. Presbyterian connectional system

**4. Do you agree with the system of government of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church?**

☐ Yes    ☐ No (please explain briefly):

**5. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the *Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms* of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?**

☐ Yes    ☐ No (please explain as part of your answer to #6 below)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Do you take any exceptions to the *Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms*?**

☐ Yes    ☐ No

If yes, please identify the topic with the specific chapter, paragraph, or question number with which you take your exception. *(Note: you will need to submit a written statement of these exceptions to the Ministerial Committee and presbytery during the examination process.)*

**7. Do you willingly offer the sacrament of infant baptism to Christian parents?**

☐ Yes    ☐ No (please explain briefly):

## **Candidates Statement of Faith (Part 1)**

Provide a brief statement for each item in your own words of your own beliefs.

Candidate's Name: Garrett Brown

Date: July 20, 2021

### **1. The Bible (Bibliology)**

The Bible is God's verbally-inspired written revelation which has been directed through the words of ancient human authors into the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments. It is the final authority of faith and belief, speaks truth regarding the world and every human endeavor, and is totally sufficient in all that it teaches. Therefore the Bible is to hold the highest place of influence and regard among all believers. We are to obey what it requires, and trust all it promises. We are to diligently study Scripture in order to present clear, cogent, and godly teaching to the church.

### **2. God the Father (Theology proper)**

God the Father is the first Person of the Trinity, eternally existing in a loving unity with the other equally divine Persons of the Son and the Holy Spirit. God is the infinitely perfect, ultimate entity, the great I Am. He is absolute truth, holiness, and love, bearing limitless knowledge and sovereign power. God the Father is associated with acts of creation, providence, and election. God Himself is self-existent, without beginning or end. The Son is eternally generated from the Father, and Father and Son generate the Holy Spirit. All things exist for his own glory. All his works are according to his own purposes, and will never be executed contrary to his own holy and sovereign nature.

### **3. Jesus Christ (Christology)**

Jesus Christ is God incarnate, one Person in two natures: fully God and fully man. He is the fulfillment of Israel's messianic promise, conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a life without sin, and subjected fully to the Father, ushered in the Kingdom of God through miracles, authoritative teaching, and ultimately through his Resurrection. He was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead three days later, appeared to many in resurrected and glorified physical form. He ascended into heaven where he sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

### **4. The Holy Spirit (Pneumatology)**

The Holy Spirit, is the divine third Person of the Trinity. He was sent from Jesus to dwell in each believer whom he baptizes into union with Christ and into membership in the family of God. As the very presence of God among us, he convicts us of our sin, regenerates the repentant,

illuminates Scripture, fills the Church, and empowers believers to become more like Christ through spiritual gifts and fruit.

### **5. Mankind (Anthropology)**

Mankind was created as image bearers and stewards of God's creation. Humanity was to be the Creator's representatives of his rule on earth. Our original human parents rebelled against God after being tempted. Therefore, through Adam's sin, humans are sinners by their very nature, alienated from God and under his holy wrath. Only through the redemptive work of Jesus can man be made righteous before God, and in renewed fellowship with God.

### **6. Sin (Hamartiology)**

Sin is the resulting condition of mankind's rebellion against God. Our very nature is one of alienation and separation from God. There is no part of our lives and our persons unaffected by sin, therefore we are "totally depraved." This does not mean we are as evil as can be, rather it means that sin is rooted in the very nature of what it means to be human. We can not fix or change this condition apart from the redemptive work of Christ.

### **7. Salvation (Soteriology)**

Because of our fallen nature, we are guilty of offending a holy God. Salvation comes not through any human merit or effort, but only through the work of Jesus on the cross. As our representative and substitute, his blood provides a perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins and his righteousness is imputed to the believer. This salvation comes through faith to those whom God has predestined and elected. Salvation through Jesus' atoning death provides a means by which we are adopted as sons and daughters into covenant relationship with a righteous God.

### **8. Satan**

Satan is a spiritual entity (angelic being) who rejected God and his purposes, and whose objective is to accuse, thwart, and ultimately destroy the Church and those who follow Jesus. Jesus was tempted and confronted by Satan during his forty days in the wilderness prior to his public ministry. In no way is he a "counter" entity to God, such as dualism teaches, but rather a finite, created being. Satan is given some parameters of power and influence in the world, but his final destruction is assured through the work of Christ.

### **9. Angels and Demons**

Angel is the term we give to spiritual entities in the service of the Lord. The biblical designation is specifically one of messenger, though they serve various functions including proclamation, protection, and the divine assembly. God employs angelic beings as agents of his power and



purposes. Demons are represented as fallen angels, agents of chaos in the created order, bent on the destruction of God's purposes.

### **10. The Church (Ecclesiology)**

The Church is the gathered body of those who have been made to be in a restored relationship with God through Jesus. It resonates throughout time and location, yet is united by the Holy Spirit, and joined together through our common declaration of faith, our common proclamation of Scripture, and our common sacraments. There are many local expressions of the Church, but there is one Head, Jesus Christ. It is to the Church that God has given the task to promote the gospel of Jesus, and make disciples among all peoples.

### **11. The Spiritual Life of the Believer**

As the believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, it is under the Spirit's initiative and lead that the believer seeks the things of God as a daily posture and practice. This includes meditating on Scripture, prayer, fellowship with and service to the Body of Christ, and witness and mission to the lost. At the same time, the spiritual life should not be relegated to a list of behaviors, rather it is the byproduct of a loving relationship with Christ wherein the believer desires to love him and know him deeply.

### **12. Future Things (Eschatology)**

Jesus proclaimed for himself the title Alpha and Omega - he is the first and the last, or as the Book of Hebrews states, he is the author and finisher of our faith. Therefore Christian faith is an eschatological faith, we live with a hope for the future over which Christ is sovereign. At the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, the Kingdom of God commenced and Christ reigns at the right hand of the Father. The aspect of the Kingdom that is present triumphs through the Church in the midst of evil in opposition to Christ and his Kingdom. At the physical return of Christ, the coming Kingdom will manifest in the world where there will be the resurrection of the dead, the final judgement of believers and non-believers, and the eternal rule of Christ in the New Jerusalem.

### **13. Evangelism**

The church's great commission is the making of disciples through the spreading of the evangel, or gospel. As the constitution of the EPC states, the "first duty" of the church is to evangelize by the proclamation of the gospel in local and global contexts, leading others to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as Lord. This biblical mandate should be the lens through which all activities and priorities of the church are decided. Evangelism should be embraced both as a formal missional function of the church, as well as a lifestyle of loving and intentional relationships among followers of Jesus with those who do not know Him. While we trust in the sovereignty of God

for the hope of unconditional election, we fervently desire to fulfill the command from Jesus to proclaim the gospel and make disciples.

#### **14. Spiritual Gifts**

Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, each believer is empowered with spiritual gifts in order to edify and build up the Body of Christ. These gifts loosely fall under the categories of shepherding gifts (e.g., encouragement, giving of mercy), leadership gifts (e.g., administration, apostleship), and proclamation gifts (e.g., teaching, exhortation). Additionally, the Church has utilized miraculous gifts as expressions of the Holy Spirit's ministry. These include prophecy, speaking in tongues, and healing. On the spectrum of belief and practice from cessationist to continuationist, I would hold the middle ground, and take the position that these gifts can and should be employed under the authority and guidance of the believer's local church leadership. I do not believe that the practice of these supernatural gifts is required to live the fullness of life in Christ.

## **Candidates Statement of Faith (Part 2)**

Provide a brief statement for each item in your own words of your own beliefs.

Candidate's Name: Garrett Brown

Date: July 20, 2021

### **1. State your view of the Scriptures and the place the Scriptures will have in your ministry.**

As the Apostle Paul states, Scripture is to be employed in the church as a means of teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness. I have always understood my ministry to be a ministry of the Word, ready in season and out of season to reprove, rebuke, and exhort through the Word. This exercise of bible teaching is carried out through my preaching and teaching ministry, through smaller gatherings and discipling efforts, and through individual counseling and encouragement. I believe Scripture is the Church's final authority, and should be held in highest regard among the shepherds and leadership of the church.

### **2. What distinctions of the Reformed faith appeal to you?**

I have great appreciation for the historic reformed confessions and doctrines of God's holiness and sovereignty, especially with regard to our salvation. In ministering for several years to Silicon Valley professionals and college students, these two aspects of the character of God quell so much of our restlessness and questioning. Further, the legacy of thoughtful ministry and scholarship of the reformers, old and new, is a tremendous gift for the Church.

### **3. What/Who is the Holy Spirit and how important is His ministry?**

The Holy Spirit, is the divine third Person of the Trinity. He is sent from the Son to dwell in each believer whom he baptizes into union with Christ and into membership in the family of God. The Holy Spirit is the very life of the Church, as he is the very presence of God among us. He convicts us of our sin, regenerates the repentant, illuminates Scripture, fills and empowers believers to become more like Christ and effective gospel witnesses. The Holy Spirit anoints believers for mission and godly vocation, and provides every believer with gifts to empower and edify the Church. Those in Christ are expected to produce the fruit of the Spirit as evidence of the regenerated life within.

### **4. What is your position on women in leadership roles in the church?**

Women enjoy the same fullness of belonging in Christ and the inheritance of his promise as men (Gal. 3:28-29). Clearly, Jesus valued women and honored many female followers with access and blessing, inviting and challenging women in much the same way as he did with his closest disciples. Regarding official roles of women in church leadership, I believe there are called and equipped female church leaders and teachers. I believe that spiritual gifting and vocational

calling are not limited to men. I recognize that the passages concerning specific offices like apostle, pastor, and elder can be ambiguous in some ways and prone to varying interpretation and contextualization. Therefore, while I hold to an egalitarian view that would endorse female elders and pastors, I recognize that mature and effective church leaders can disagree on this, and do not oppose complementarian practice.

**5. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the Presbyterian form of government?**

One weakness of a Presbyterian form of government may be in the perception of an over-emphasis on rule-based polity. Such an adherence to rules, the Book of Order, and other parliamentary issues could detract from the more central message of grace.

The strengths of the Presbyterian church government lies in the shared responsibility of the pastoral and lay leadership to shepherd and lead the congregation. This values and ignites the gifts and calling of church members, and promotes a healthy culture of diversity and unity as described in the New Testament. Having spent years in a non-denominational church, I can say that the Presbyterian emphasis of interconnection and accountability among the churches provides much needed support to the pastoral staff, and cultivates a broader missional commitment.

**6. Explain your philosophy of ministry.**

My philosophy of ministry centers around three critical expressions: teaching the word, shepherding the flock, and leading the church. Some leaders are gifted in all three of these areas, but for the rest of us, it's a deliberate and conscious effort to maintain a sharp edge in each of them. I've learned that when I overemphasize one, ministry gets out of balance and can become unfruitful or unsatisfying. But when I humbly commit to all of them—especially in the context of a team of leaders with the same vision for the church—there is joy and effectiveness.

Within this framework, I often return to Paul's encouragement to his beloved church in Thessalonica: *So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us* (1 Thess 2:8, ESV). For the Apostle, there was clearly the central work of promoting the gospel, but even in this early letter, he knew that gospel ministry must be done in the context of loving relationships. Likewise, Paul's "readiness" to share the gospel hints at his disciplined approach to leadership. My philosophy of ministry is deeply influenced by this commitment to a bold gospel proclamation, a loving heart for people, and a keen hand over the leadership of the church.

**7. Describe your approach to evangelism, both personally and as a pastor in a local church.**

I am intentional about building friendships with non-Christians. My wife and I try to be involved in our neighborhood and community expressly for that purpose. I think relationship-based

evangelism is most effective, although I think there is still a place for event-based or program-driven evangelism. Alpha Course is a strong example of the latter. As a pastor, I lead by example to my team as well as the congregation. I encourage them to be friends with non-believers, get involved in their communities, and develop an ongoing prayer commitment for the lost. Further, my ministry in the pulpit provides a wide open door to clearly articulate the gospel and encourage others in evangelism.

**8. As you reflect on your life, explain your sense of call to ministry.**

As an undergrad at Biola, I volunteered with a local church, working mostly with middle school and high school kids from tough neighborhoods and broken homes. The Lord placed a heavy burden on my heart for these young lives, and I found myself growing as I learned to disciple and teach them. My third year at school I studied in Europe, and as I continued to seek God's lead for my life he used that season outside my regular rhythms to guide my steps toward vocational ministry. I received affirmation from several spiritual leaders in my life as I wrestled with this call, and knew that this was the path Christ wanted me to pursue to serve him.

Over the years, and through several different seasons of ministry, God has moved me into different areas of serving the church—some have been incredibly fruitful, while others have been extremely difficult. Yet at each stage I've only had increased gratitude for the direction the Lord has led me and my family.

**9. Elaborate on your convictions about personal accountability in your life and in the lives of Christians to whom you might minister.**

I understand the New Testament practice of church leadership and accountability to be accomplished through the overseers or elders. A pastor is a teaching elder, and is under the direction of the elder team. They keep the pastor accountable for leading the church well, and leading a Christ-honoring life. I have several circles of accountability, foremost is my wife. I trust her and call on her to bring to my attention when I fall short. I have my circle of friends in Christ whom I've known for over thirty years. And I have my current ministry colleagues, the other pastoral staff, who hold one another to account.

## Part 2: Personal Information

(please print or type)

1. Name: Irwin Paul R  
(Last) (First) (Middle)

Preferred Address:

7595 S. Peach Ave., Fowler, CA 93625

Alternate Address:

Preferred Phone: 559-832-0859 ☒ Cell ☐ Work ☐ Home

Alternate Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Cell ☐ Work ☐ Home

Email: irwinpr@hotmail.com

### 2. Work History:

Previous Ministry Positions	Dates
Pastor, Twin Tiers EPC, Big Flats, NY	2014-2020
Interim Pastor, 1st Armenian Pres., Fresno, CA	2012-2014
Pastor, Fowler Presbyterian Church	2004-2012
Assoc. Pastor, 1st Pres., San Mateo, CA	1998-2004
Pastor, White Lake Pres., White Lake, MI	1989-1998
Assoc. Pastor, St. Paul's Pres., Livonia, MI	1985-1989

Present/Last Position (if you are currently not in a ministry position)	Dates
Stated Supply Pastor	2020-present

Name: Paul R. Irwin

### 3. Ordination Status

Ordained by (church/city/state): PCUSA: St. Paul's Pres. EPC: Fowler Pres.

Ordination Date: 1985/2009

If not ordained:

Church Membership (church, city, state): \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate Under Care of (denomination and presbytery): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ since (date): \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Educational Background:

a. Name of Institution	Dates Attended	Degree Achieved
Davidson College	1972-1976	BA Psychology
Columbia Theological Seminary	1980-1984	Master Divinity

#### b. Continuing Education/Professional Development (please include dates):

October, 2018 - Study Trip to North Caucasus Bible Institute, Russia  
2014-2018 - Personal Study Leaves - homiletics, Bible, prayer  
May, 2012 Festival of Homiletics Atlanta, GA  
May, 2011 Purpose Driven Church Conference Saddleback Ch., Lake Forest, CA  
February & September, 2010 Chaplaincy Training Courses Fresno, CA  
May, 2009 Re-Jesus Missional Church Conference Walnut Creek, CA  
February, 2008 Present Future Conference Reggie McNeal Roseville, CA  
May, 2007 Visiting Scholar Program Columbia Seminary, Decatur, GA  
May, 2006 Preaching Conference Saddleback Church, Lake Forest, CA  
July, 2005 International Worship Institute Dallas, TX  
2003-2006 - Dunamis Course - Presbyterian Reformed Ministries International - 6 week-long training conferences in Spirit-empowered ministry - San Mateo, CA  
2003 - Study/Mission Trip to India

Name: Paul R. Irwin

c. Community and Civic Activities:

Participated 7 years in a row at Hope of Christmas event in downtown Elmira, NY - giving out socks and blankets.

Worked on numerous Habitat for Humanity builds around Elmira.

d. Presbytery and General Assembly Activities:

Engage 2025 Committee - Presbytery of the East. 2017 - 2020

New Church Development Committee - EPC Presbytery of the East. 2014-2017

New Church Development Committee - EPC Presbytery of the West. 2009-2013

Regularly attend Presbytery and General Assembly meetings



Name: Paul R. Irwin

e. Ecumenical Activity:

2015-2020 Leadership Team: Love Your City Summer Urban Mission Trip, Elmira, NY  
2017 - 2020 Worship Team: Fusion Ministries at Lake Street Presbyterian Church,  
Elmira, NY (Weekly Saturday evening service)  
2015 - 2020 Leadership Team: Twin Tiers Ministerial Association  
2004 - 2012 Worship Team Leader and Pastor: Central Valley Walk to Emmaus  
weekends.  
2004 - 2010 Worship Leader: Celebrate Recovery, Fresno, CA  
2008 - 2012 Habitat for Humanity Steering Committee Fresno CA  
2001 - 2016 Worship Leader & Pastor PRMI Dunamis Fellowship  
1998 - 2004 Worship Team Member Mid-Peninsula Hispanic Outreach, San Mateo,  
CA  
2004 - 2013 Chairperson - Fowler Ministerial Alliance

f. Special Interests, Hobbies:

Producing worship CD's for various artists in my recording studio  
Playing in worship bands  
Collecting music CD's, instruments and electronic musical equipment  
Hiking in the mountains and walking at the beach  
Shortwave Radio

Name: Paul R. Irwin

g. Languages you can speak (and level of proficiency):

I have studied French, Greek & Hebrew but it's been a long time

h. Types of supervision/accountability you have found helpful in your ministry:

Monthly Pastoral activities reporting to Session

Annual performance review by Personnel Committee

Regular lunches / prayer / sharing with peers in ministry

Keeping up with Christian friends by Facebook, email, phone calls, visits

Name: **Paul R. Irwin**

### Part 3: Narrative

**1. Life Story:** In one page, describe your life's journey. Include key incidents that were significant in your formation as a person and your call to ministry. State your personal ideals and goals.

I am a fourth generation Presbyterian Minister on my mother's side. I believe I first experienced the call to ministry when I was eight years old, after a two-hour conversation with my uncle, who is a Pastor. Our family was active in our Presbyterian Church and I was President of the High School Youth Group. My friends and I formed a Christian band and performed at churches and youth retreats.

I arrived at Davidson College in 1972 with a Pre-Ministerial Scholarship. I led worship frequently in chapel and performed at local colleges and universities singing and playing the guitar. Ultimately, I enrolled at Columbia Seminary in Decatur, Georgia and began to work toward ordination.

I was ordained in 1985 and served for four years as an Associate Pastor at a large Presbyterian Church in suburban Detroit. One night before I was to preach, about a year into my ministry, I came to the realization that all that I was doing was in my own strength, and I knew that I was coming up short. I lay down in the pulpit of that deserted sanctuary and confessed that my pride and sense of self sufficiency had led me astray. I asked the Lord to help me. Immediately, I believe the Holy Spirit came upon me with power and transformed my heart and my ministry from that moment on.

I went on to become a solo Pastor at a Presbyterian Church on the edge of metro Detroit. During my time there, we built a new building in a new location and our membership tripled. After nine years there, I was called to become an Associate Pastor specializing in worship and music at First Presbyterian Church, San Mateo, CA. Over the years, the Lord brought together an amazing team of worship musicians, dramatic writers and performers and those interested in sanctuary décor and design and He used us to create many innovative worship experiences for the church family and wider community.

For eight years, I have served in Fowler, CA as Senior Pastor. Then, I served one year as the Interim Senior Pastor at First Armenian Presbyterian Church in Fresno. For 6 years I served a start up church in western NY. We tripled in membership and completely renovated a 175 year old church building.

I love the discipline of preaching every week and I feel blessed that the Lord gives me a "Pastor's heart" for our people. I also lead the team in our "blended" worship music for our services. I love to participate in music and worship outside of our walls.

I believe the Lord is calling me to continue to call unbelievers to faith in Jesus Christ, to equip believers to go deeper in their walk with Him, to lead worshipers into His real presence through preaching and music and to care for hurting people in His love. I am thrilled that the Lord has called me into ministry and has empowered me to serve Him over all these years.

I have been blessed to be married to Ann for 39 years now. We have a married daughter, Chelsea, who is 32 and a great son-in-law, Seth. They have two young daughters and live in Novato, CA

Name: Paul R. Irwin

**2. Please describe briefly** (confine your answers to space allotted):

- a. My leadership style: *(How you include others in decision-making, administrative style, ways you deal with conflict, etc.?)*

As a Pastor, I'm called to be at least aware of every aspect of the life of the church through personal contacts and attendance at many meetings. I moderate discussions, pray with leaders and offer suggestions, sometimes using the relative authority of my office when things seem to get bogged down. I believe that if we have the same Lord and if we're truly seeking His guidance and direction, we'll ultimately find our way together. I attempt to be a peacemaker and an energizer in the service of the church. I recognize that even though the Session has the ultimate responsibility for leading the congregation, in my role as Pastor, I have a certain amount of influence. I'm comfortable offering my perspectives as I believe I'm being led by the Spirit. As Pastor, I realize I have the responsibility to cast a vision for the congregation from the pulpit and in interactions with leaders and members. I recognize that I have to walk closely with the Lord and seek His guidance for the church from week to week. However, humility is always in order. I've found that oftentimes other leaders hear reliably from the Spirit as well. So, my leadership style involves a lot of listening to God, to each voice in the elected boards and also to the congregation. Sometimes the ultimate direction that the Session determines isn't pleasing to every person, so I'm comfortable with a certain level of ongoing debate at times, confident that God will bring unity eventually. I am there to be a resource, to offer an encouraging word, and to lend a hand when I'm able as the Session leads the church, guided by the Holy Spirit.

- b. My worship emphases: *(preaching style, preferred worship emphases and style, etc.)*

The 25 or so minutes of preaching on Sunday mornings are the high point of my week as a Preacher. I know that nothing I might have to say would be worth a congregation's time, but I'm confident that the Lord has a Word for His people every single week. It's up to me as the Proclaimer, to study the text, pray for guidance, look at commentaries and online resources and then come up with a way to help the people understand what God is saying to them today. I also have to help them imagine ways they can apply His Word to their day-to-day lives.

As Presbyterians, we call ourselves, "People of the Word." We are called to base our lives, our work as the Church and our witness to the world on the Word of God. In a service of worship, God calls us into His presence. We praise Him in song and in prayer. We reflect in quiet times, we present our offerings to his work in the world and we experience fellowship with other believers.

I believe that since we generally want to draw younger people into the church, we should use mostly contemporary worship songs and modern instruments these days. There are many great themes and melodies in the old hymns, which can be redeveloped in a more modern style. Of course, there is a great wave of new music coming out today and I love to blend it all together to draw people into God's presence. The church's music should represent the joy, enthusiasm, diversity and reverence of His people. I love to be a part of a community that is seeking the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit consistently in corporate worship. I think that a church should also offer alternative opportunities for worship in addition to the conventional Sunday morning service.

Name: Paul R. Irwin

c. My call to ministry: *(What type of ministry role are you called to? What would effectiveness look like in that role?)*

I believe the Lord has given me a gift for clear communication - in writing, conversation and preaching. Believers need a steady diet of the Word of God in their lives and I'm awed by the responsibility to proclaim God's Word week by week as I study it and am challenged by it myself. I have always taken seriously my call to visit the sick and shut-in folks; to befriend, as much as possible, all those who attend services; to manage the staff, as a part of their team, and to be sure that all the "bases are covered" in the church's programs. I understand computer, projection and sound systems, and office equipment. I have worked with choirs, worship teams, mission trip groups, youth groups, children's ministries, seniors, building and grounds volunteers, Bible study and prayer groups and everything in between. I believe the Lord has given me a friendly personality to interact with all ages in the congregation.

I have a lot of experience in worship design and leadership, using music and Word. Of course, worship leadership grows out of a person's own heart for personal worship and devotion to the Lord Jesus. Obviously, we're never done growing in this. I have observed that all ministry grows from our prayer-life. As a Pastor, I must seek the Lord in prayer with my whole heart. Church staffs, boards, committees and ministry teams all need to start their work in prayer, day by day.

I appreciate the importance of working with other churches to accomplish Christ's wider aims for the entire community and have worked for years to reach out to fellow clergy. I also seek to involve the congregation in hands-on mission work outside of the church building, both locally and globally.

**3. Comment briefly on your views as relates to:**

a. Spiritual giftedness

I believe that every person has multiple giftings from the Spirit of God. The church can help people discern what these giftings are by first, getting to know them and then placing them in a variety of ministry experiences. The leadership of the church has the responsibility to train volunteers to excel in the tasks they agree to take on. Then it can aid them in evaluating their effectiveness and deciding about future service. Some are called to high-profile roles and others to behind-the-scenes ministries. Of course, all are important in God's eyes. None of us can achieve anything of lasting value for the Kingdom in our power, but through the inspiration and infilling of the Holy Spirit, we can accomplish miraculous things, just as Jesus promised.

Name: Paul R. Irwin

b. Charismatic expression in worship (manifestation of spiritual gifts)

If the "charismatic movement" means believers seeking to be filled with the Holy Spirit for ministry and sensing the power of the Spirit in worship, I'm all for it. Some criticize the "movement" - that it only values believers' "feelings" and momentary inspirations - and therefore, that it's not based on the bedrock of the unchanging Word of God. My sense of charismatic worship and practice is that it's extremely focused on the Word of God. I see much more of a respect for the authority of scripture in "charismatic" circles than in many others in the wider church. I want to see worship freed from convention and boredom and liberated by the real presence of the Holy Spirit who transforms us from the inside! If the Spirit's not in it, I don't want to be there! I do want to see lives changed as people encounter the Living God!

c. Women in ordained office

This issue is a challenging one for evangelical congregations. I believe there are reasonable biblical arguments in favor of the ordination of women. Certainly, there are strong female leaders in every church and denomination. Yet, if we say we base all our practices in ministry on scripture, it's difficult to get around Paul's admonitions to women. I believe God is calling us to listen closely to His Spirit in this matter. I appreciate the fact that the EPC has called this a "non-essential" issue and makes allowances for congregations to come to their own conclusions about it. I have appreciated the opportunity to serve with female colleagues in ministry in the EPC. And, I must say, I value the anointed spiritual leadership of so many women with whom I have served in many churches.

Name: Paul R. Irwin

d. Presbyterian connectional system

I appreciate the system because we can hold each other accountable to clear standards of Reformed theology. I would have a concern about being involved in a "non-denominational" church primarily because subtle theological biases or errors could creep in and there would be no authority to provide oversight or correction. I also believe that there are many benefits to partnering with other like-minded and related churches, large and small, in order to carry out projects or ministries that would be impossible for a single congregation. A church's denominational affiliation makes a statement to the surrounding community regarding its identity and beliefs. Also, I must say, I appreciate the connectional system because I enjoy the collegiality I experience at Presbytery and General Assembly meetings in the EPC.

**4. Do you agree with the system of government of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church?**

☒ Yes    ☐ No (please explain briefly):

**5. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the *Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms* of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?**

☒ Yes    ☐ No (please explain as part of your answer to #6 below)

Name: Paul R. Irwin

**6. Do you take any exceptions to the *Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms*?**

☒ Yes    ☐ No

If yes, please identify the topic with the specific chapter, paragraph, or question number with which you take your exception. *(Note: you will need to submit a written statement of these exceptions to the Ministerial Committee and presbytery during the examination process.)*

I stated my very minor concerns at ordination, primarily regarding the idea that a Pastor can't take Sunday as his "Sabbath," but must choose another day off. Actually, I have a profound respect for the Westminster Confession.

**7. Do you willingly offer the sacrament of infant baptism to Christian parents?**

☒ Yes    ☐ No (please explain briefly):





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## Candidates Statement of Faith

*Provide a brief statement in your own words for each item. Return to the Chair of the Candidates or Ministerial Committee before you are scheduled for your oral ordination exam.*

Candidate's Name Paul R. Irwin Date 12/06/2021

### 1. The Bible (Bibliology)

The Bible is God's Word for humanity. The 66 books of the Old and New Testaments were written by human beings at various times and places but the Holy Spirit inspired these writers to convey God's redemptive love, His law, His interactions with His creation and the history of His people as well as passages that are intended to inspire and encourage us who seek to follow His way. The Word of God is infallible in matters of faith. While it is important to understand historical context and translation issues, biblical interpretation should seek the plainest meaning of the Word whenever possible. God worked through the process by which the church Fathers determined the Canon in order that we would have precisely the particular books we know as our Bible. All preaching and all church practice must be based on a clear understanding of God's Word. We must not seek to "interpret" the Word of God to the point of altering it to make it more palatable to our culture.

### 2. God the Father (Theology proper)

The Bible uses the term "Father" to describe God who is the Creator of the vast entire universe. It refers to Jesus as His Son and Jesus referred to God as His Father. God exists everywhere and outside of time - He never began and will never end. Our human minds can't fully conceive of who God is, yet He has chosen to reveal His love, His personality, His standards for our behavior and His eternal plan for our salvation all through His written Word. We call God the Father "sovereign" He rules over the earth and over the whole universe. He sees the entire sweep of human history outside of time, yet He gives us free will to choose how we will act and whether or not we will believe in His Son.

### 3. Jesus Christ (Christology)

Jesus Christ is a member of what we call the Trinity. He was not created but existed with the Father and the Holy Spirit without a beginning or end. He rules eternally in heaven but was willing to be born on earth for the purpose of making salvation possible for those who place their faith in Him. While He was here, He was fully God yet fully human. He experienced the full range of human life and therefore can personally understand everything we go through. Jesus demonstrated the Father's love and compassion through His ministry of healing, deliverance, miracles and teaching. Jesus died on the cross and shed His blood as payment for our sin. He was bodily resurrected and then ascended into heaven and "sitteth on the right hand of God the Father." He is still a living presence in the hearts of those who believe. He is also actively present in our worship and sacraments in the Church. As believers, we can have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ in our day to day life.

#### 4. The Holy Spirit (Pneumatology)

The Holy Spirit is also a member of the Trinity. The Spirit has existed for all time and was present at the creation of the universe. (The Holy Spirit did not come into being on Pentecost has some misunderstand, but has been active throughout history and certainly in Old Testament times.) The Holy Spirit was breathed into the Church on Pentecost and empowered the Apostles, who previously had been hiding in fear. They began to preach in the name of Jesus Christ which resulted in the explosive worldwide growth of the Church. The Holy Spirit always points to Jesus. It is only through the Spirit's power that we can accomplish anything for God. The Holy Spirit enlivens our worship, helps us in our prayers, opens our minds to understand the Scriptures and the ways of God and draws us together in the Church as the people of God. The Holy Spirit also gives us the gift of discernment to perceive if something is "of God" or not. The Spirit is active in our lives in the process of our ongoing sanctification - making us more like Christ.

#### 5. Mankind (Anthropology)

God created the human race and gave us the ability to choose. Adam and Eve were blessed to live in paradise yet chose to sin, which resulted in their banishment and ours. As their descendents, we are born in sin and live in a world where Satan still has the freedom to do great evil. God loves every person and yet only the elect only those whom He has chosen will ultimately find it possible to place their faith in the blood of Christ for their eternal salvation. As believers in Christ, living in the world of human beings, we are called to share our faith in Christ with all who will listen and to demonstrate by our lives our devotion to Him. We are to be "in the world but not of it." In this fallen creation, we as human beings struggle with physical ailments, temptations, discouragements and sometimes broken relationships. We're also blessed at times to experience profound worship, exultation and love in our families and in our church. Each of us is called to use our God-given talents to bring glory to Him and to serve others in His name as we look forward to an eternity in His heavenly kingdom.

#### 6. Sin (Hamartiology)

Because of the fall of Adam and Eve, every human being is born into a state of sin, which is separation from God. We sin by any action, thought or attitude that is contrary to His Word. We can also sin by failing to do what God calls us to do. The penalty for sin is eternal death and all human beings are by nature sinners. However, God by His grace made it possible for us to be forgiven not by anything we could do or say but only as a free gift when he places His Spirit in our minds which makes it possible for us to come to faith in Christ. As He shed His blood on the cross, Jesus paid the price for our sin once and for all. (We are no longer required to sacrifice animals in the Temple in order to receive temporary forgiveness through that shedding of blood.) Though we continue to sin in a variety of ways even as believers in Christ, we can repent at each step of the way with the full assurance that God will forgive us and empower us by His spirit to "go and sin no more."

#### 7. Salvation (Soteriology)

Eternal salvation is promised in God's Word to those who believe: we receive justification for our sins through faith in Jesus Christ. Because of this assurance of our salvation, we can be filled with joy while we live here on earth. We understand that we did nothing to merit this salvation so we're deeply thankful every day and we live to please God, obeying His law as an expression of our gratitude. Our salvation means that we will get to live in heaven for eternity when our life on earth is over and that we will be among the throng of worshipers around God's eternal throne, singing His praises. The Bible doesn't give us very much information about heaven, but we're assured that it is a place where there is no more sorrow, injustice, pain or death. Once we know that we're saved, we long to share our faith with others so that they can be saved too.

## 8. Satan

Satan is a real spiritual being. The Bible tells us he once dwelt in heaven, yet led other angels to rebel against God so they were all banished. Scripture refers to Satan as the "prince of this world." He has the power to blind human beings to spiritual realities, to tempt them to sin and to inspire mayhem, warfare, torture and murder here on earth. Satan will ultimately be defeated by the armies of heaven led by Jesus Christ. He will no longer be able to trouble believers in Christ once they're safe in heaven.

## 9. Angels and Demons

The Scriptures refer frequently to spiritual beings known as angels and demons. In many cases angels serve as God's messengers to people on earth. The shepherds witnessed angels singing praises to God at the time of Christ's birth. The Bible speaks of armies of angels empowering human warriors and also battling demonic forces at the end of history. Demons, as I mentioned, are fallen angels banished from heaven with Satan for rebelling against God. Jesus cast out many demons who were living in the hearts of human beings, tormenting them. These demons had no power as they faced the Living Christ. Many who minister in the Third World seem to encounter the same sorts of demons and are gifted by the Holy Spirit to cast them out as a step in leading people to Christ. In our culture with its scientific worldview, we apparently encounter this phenomenon more rarely. Yet, if we do, we're not to quake in fear at the demonic realm but by the power the Holy Spirit we can order evil spirits to leave in the name of Jesus.

## 10. The Church (Ecclesiology)

The Bible refers to the Church as the Body of Christ. The creeds refer to the "holy Catholic Church," meaning the Church universal — the Church with a capital "C." All who truly place their faith in Christ are part of His worldwide Church. Only God knows who these elect people are. As Christians, we're called to be a part of a local church. The Apostle Paul makes reference frequently to the church functioning as a "body." Each part of the body has a specific function. The Holy Spirit empowers the church to proclaim the Word of Christ, to serve the poor in His name, to be a place where hurting people can come to find comfort and where each member experiences fellowship and Christian love. The Church is meant to be a light in this dark world. Though the Devil tries to destroy Christ's Church, he ultimately lacks the power to do it. In the Church, the Word of God is proclaimed, the Sacraments are offered and the worship of God draws believers together.

## 11. The Spiritual Life of the Believer

When we place our faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior, the Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit dwells in us. When we're filled with the Spirit, we begin to display the "fruits of the Spirit" listed in Galatians 5. The Spirit empowers us to pray — to share our every thought and concern with Jesus. As we grow in Christ, the Father begins to make us more like Him each day. We look to the Gospels to see how Jesus acted and operated in this world. We see those who struggle and suffer with His eyes and reach out to serve them with His heart. The Spirit inspires us to study God's Word and His law and as we do this, every thought and action begins to be directed by Him. God is love and He fills us with His love daily by His Spirit within us. This love propels us into relationships into which we can bring God's healing, grace and reconciliation. When we walk in the Spirit, He enlivens our mind, our body, our heart and our soul. When Christ, by the Holy Spirit, lives in us our very life proclaims our faith perhaps even more than our words.

## 12. Future Things (Eschatology)

As I mentioned, God is not bound by time as we are. He sees the beginning, middle and end of history all together. He has revealed some aspects of His plan for the future of the human race in His Word. Evidently, as human history draws to a close before the return of Christ, the Church will experience persecution and those outside of the Church will descend deeper and deeper into sin. Great warfare will break out and will conclude with a decisive battle. Jesus Christ and His armies, along with those on earth who follow Him, will be victorious. These prophecies were apparently given so that those who will live in this tumultuous future will be strengthened and encouraged. Jesus said that we can observe the life of a tree and perceive the passing of seasons. Many today look at the news and perceive that the time of apocalypse may be drawing near. Until that time, whenever it may be, we're called to proclaim faith in Jesus Christ to a lost world.

## 13. Evangelism

Jesus' last command to His church before He ascended into heaven was to "go into all the world and make disciples" for Him, baptizing them in His name. Because He gave us this Great Commission, we can assume that evangelism has got to be our primary task. Most Christians will agree with this in concept but find it hard to really carry it out. Today in our postmodern culture, it becomes increasingly difficult to convince people that they are sinners and that they need a Savior, yet the need for people to turn to Christ has perhaps never been greater. The Bible speaks of a great revival sweeping out over the world as history draws to a close. The Church must expend whatever resources are necessary to train and equip its members to share their faith in Christ to do the work of evangelism so that as many as possible can be drawn to faith in Jesus while it is still possible. This cannot be only the work of ordained ministers but must be seen as the work of every believer.

## 14. Spiritual Gifts

The New Testament makes many references to spiritual giftings within the body of Christ, His Church. Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12 both speak of a variety of roles that individual members can fill based on their giftedness in the Spirit. A spiritual gift is more than just a natural talent. Sometimes the Lord, who has a sense of humor, will make a former stutterer a dynamic proclaimer of God's Word. Other times he might take a person who's the CEO of a big company and make him a kindergarten Sunday School Teacher. Nowadays when we hear the term "spiritual gifts," there's an implied reference to Pentecostal worship with messages given in tongues and interpreted as prophetic words. In some church cultures, these particular gifts aren't frequently observed. But really, almost any task that a believer performs in the life of the church requires an anointing or gifting from the Holy Spirit to do it well. We don't want to be seen as taking credit for offering some good service to the church. We give the glory to God who empowers us by His Spirit to serve.



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Answer the following integration questions:

**15. State your view of the Scriptures and the place the Scriptures will have in your ministry.**

I believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are God's revealed Word to the world, to His church and to me as His Minister. In my ordination vows, I affirmed that I believe "the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, totally trustworthy, fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, the supreme, final, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice." In my preaching ministry, I'm called to study the Bible, to seek to understand its clear meaning and then to proclaim it to the congregation week by week. I rely on the Holy Spirit to illumine my mind so that I can comprehend the truths of Scripture not only for my preaching but in my own walk of faith. As a leader of the congregation, I seek to apply biblical principles to the management and ministry of the local church. In my pastoral as well as personal relationships I use the Scriptures as a guide as I speak and act. In the Scriptures, the triune God reveals His personality, His standards for behavior, His lordship over history and His love for His creation. As I live and work with the congregation, I seek the mind and heart of God as He guides me to the portions of Scripture that are pertinent to the church's life for that week. The Bible is God's Living Word to His people.

**16. What distinctions of the Reformed faith appeal to you?**

I have come to increasingly appreciate the Reformed system of doctrine over the years. Against the prevalent postmodern, New Age viewpoint that human beings are basically good, my experience tells me that human beings are by nature sinful and desperately need a Savior. Against the Arminian system, I see that nothing that a human being can attempt in his own power can possibly earn salvation apart from the grace of God. Our culture views the Bible either as a somewhat obscure "holy book" that isn't particularly relevant to their lives or as a bunch of ancient myths that some people use to impinge on others' "personal freedoms." Of course, I view the Bible as the Word of life and the only reliable source of information about our Creator and the possibility of eternal life. I like the Reformed churches' emphasis on proclamation of the Word as the backbone of worship. I appreciate the fact that Reformed churches seek to conduct their ministries "decently and in order."

**17. What/Who is the Holy Spirit and how important is His ministry?**

As I've stated earlier, I understand the Holy Spirit to be a member of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit indwells the believer and empowers him or her for service and even authority in the face of error or evil. The Holy Spirit draws individual members of the church into fellowship and enlivens the church's worship. The Spirit gives us the ability to discern God's truth and can even give us the words to speak under pressure. In my preaching ministry, I frequently point out that we can get discouraged when we measure our own life against the standards of Scripture, but we must not despair because the Holy Spirit will give us the power to live as God commands. When conflict arises in the church, I remind people that we are called to seek the unity of the Spirit in all our dealings.



**18. What is your position on women in leadership roles in the church?**

Of course I am aware of the instances in Paul's writings that tell women to keep silent in worship, to cover their heads and to avoid positions of leadership. Yet I also see that God anointed and empowered great female leaders in Scripture, in the first and second century church and in the modern church. I believe it's legitimate to see Paul's exhortations in the historical context of the first century when women were considered property and not full participants in civic or commercial life. Just as I believe that slavery is wrong but that, in order to further the cause of the gospel at that time, the Apostles did not choose to take on the cause of slavery, I believe they also did not perceive the need to make women's rights a part of their ministry at that time in history. My own Mother was an ordained Pastor and I have served with many gifted and anointed female leaders in ministry over the years. I would be embarrassed to say to them that their ministry was not legitimate or useful in the cause of the Kingdom because I believe this would be patently false. I appreciate the position of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church which makes allowances for those who do feel Paul's comments about women's ministries are normative for their congregations yet does not see this matter as an "essential." I have served churches that either avoided or explicitly prohibited women from serving in ordained ministry but my preference, as I believe I'm being guided by the Lord, is to allow for this and to celebrate it.

**19. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the Presbyterian form of government?**

I believe there are more strengths than weaknesses in the Presbyterian style of government. I see the wisdom in our polity which places authority in the local church in a board of elected Elders rather than in a denominational hierarchy or in an individual Pastor. I've observed many churches veering off into error when their Pastor was considered a "sole authority" and personally fell into some theological confusion. In some of these non-denominational systems, I've seen it become a challenge to overcome unsound leadership if it goes wrong. I have seen the Lord guide individual congregations through the wisdom of a group of anointed leaders who, at first, disagreed but then experienced the unity of the Holy Spirit in the course of their deliberations. I like the Presbyterian system which allows local congregations to select Pastoral candidates and Presbyteries to authorize and oversee their ministries. The idea of a Bishop moving pastors around like chess pieces doesn't appeal to me. A downside of the Presbyterian system as I've experienced it is that sometimes important initiatives get referred to committees who then study them to death but never expedite anything. Some churches have such inflated organizational charts with regard to the number of their members that it's hard to get things actually accomplished.

**20. Explain your philosophy of ministry.**

I believe the Lord has called me to guide unbelievers to faith in Jesus Christ, to equip believers to go deeper in their walk with Him, to lead worshipers into His real presence through preaching and music and to care for hurting people in His love. In my ministerial role, I realize I have the responsibility to cast a vision for the congregation from the pulpit and in interactions with leaders and members. I recognize that in order to do this, I have to walk closely with the Lord and seek His guidance for the church from week to week. However, I've found that oftentimes other leaders hear reliably from the Spirit as well. So, my ministry involves listening to Christ, to each voice in the elected boards and also to the congregation. Sometimes the ultimate direction the Session determines isn't pleasing to everyone, so I'm comfortable with a certain level of ongoing debate at times, confident that God will bring unity eventually. I am there to be a resource, to offer an encouraging word, and to lend a hand when I'm able as the Session leads the church, guided by the Holy Spirit.

**21. Describe your approach to evangelism, both personally and as a pastor in a local church.**

Because Jesus' final word to His disciples was the Great Commission, I have always seen evangelism as the "main thing" the Church is to be about. As a believer in Christ, it needs to be the main thing that I am about. Yet, like many, I sometimes struggle to keep up with this task, balancing it with all the other responsibilities I have. Sometimes, I sense that bringing up the topic of eternal life or following Christ might not be particularly welcome in a conversation and I decide not to bring them up. Of course, there are times that the Spirit may guide us to hold back while we build a relationship. But other times, we're called to be bold but we may fail to take advantage of an opportunity to lead someone to faith in Christ because we worry that they'll think we're fanatical. So, when I preach or teach about evangelism, I share my own struggles with it. I have always taught courses on faith sharing in the churches I've served. I believe it's crucial not only for the Pastor to be an evangelist but, really, every member of the congregation. It isn't something I can preach about only once and then assume it will become a way of life for the congregation. Evangelism needs to be featured again and again in a preaching ministry. God expects us to work to make His kingdom grow and while some people are brought to faith through mass rallies, I believe many more come to faith as result of personal relationships with believers.

**22. As you reflect on your life, explain your sense of call to ministry.**

I am a fourth generation Presbyterian Minister on my Mother's side. I believe I first experienced the call to ministry when I was eight years old, after a two-hour conversation with my Uncle who was a Presbyterian Pastor. Our family was active in our Presbyterian Church and I was President of the High School Youth Group. My friends and I formed a Christian band and performed at churches and youth retreats.

I arrived at Davidson College in 1972 with a Pre-Ministerial Scholarship. I led worship frequently in chapel services and Bible study groups. After graduation, I moved back to Detroit and tried to establish a Christian music and drama ministry with some friends, but when that failed to get off the ground, I went out on the road with secular bands, including the Platters, and began a four-year period away from the Lord and the Church. Fortunately, the God's call on my life was more powerful than my rebellion.

I had a dramatic experience one morning at sunrise when Jesus spoke to my heart and told me that He still loved me and that He would allow me to return to faith and to His Church. He renewed my call to ministry at that moment. Ultimately, I enrolled at Columbia Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. I was ordained in the PCUSA in 1985 and have served six churches since that time. The Lord has renewed my call actually week by week and year by year as I've served these congregations.

**23. Elaborate on your convictions about personal accountability in your life and in the lives of Christians to whom you might minister.**

I'm very suspicious of anyone who claims to be a "solo Christian." I believe that when we make the decision to follow Christ, He places us in community. However, it's easy to attend worship services and get lost in the larger congregation hearing God's Word proclaimed but struggling to live it out. The early church was established in individual homes with small groups of believers. These small groups then also gathered in the Temple to worship. I have found that it's extremely important to share the joys and struggles of the Christian life with people who really know me and will hold me accountable. I know the Lord has used me in personal relationships to help others in this way as well. I have worked to establish small group ministries in the churches I've served and I've seen this effort bear great fruit. Even within the small groups, I have encouraged people to pair up with a friend of the same gender, to meet outside of the group to share personally and deeply. The Lord has always gifted me with one or two strong relationships with other Pastors or Worship Leaders where I don't always have to be "Pastor Paul." I know that many sitting in the congregation week by week would benefit from having an accountability partner and I will continue to encourage this in my ministry.