

# PROPOSED DOCKET



**Twentieth Stated Meeting of the EPC Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest  
May 16-17, 2024  
Fair Oaks Church  
11427 Fair Oaks Blvd. Fair Oaks, CA 95628**

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

## THURSDAY, MAY 16, 2024

- 1:00 pm    **Call to Order and Opening Prayer**    RE Brian Wyatt, Moderator  
              **Declaration of Quorum**    RE Mark Eshoff, Stated Clerk
- 1:10        **Welcome**    TE Donny Butkus  
              **Introduction of Guests**    Moderator Wyatt
- 1:20        **Worship**  
              **Call to Worship**    Moderator Wyatt  
              **Worship in Music**    Fair Oaks Worship Team  
              **Sermon**    Rachel Dorsey  
              The sermon this morning will be given by Rachel Dorsey, candidate for Assistant  
              Pastor for Outreach and Mission at Centerpoint Community Church, Roseville,  
              CA. She will be preaching on Acts 26:19-23, a passage assigned to her by the  
              Ministerial Committee.  
              **Moderator's Time of Prayer**    Moderator Wyatt
- 2:00        **Stated Clerk's Report**    Stated Clerk Eshoff  
              Presbytery Voting Guidelines  
              Absences without Excuse (January 26-27, 2024)  
              Pastors Retreat  
              Changes to the Proposed Docket  
              **Approval of the Docket**
- 2:10        **Ministerial Committee Report**    TE David Abdo, Chair  
              **Examination of Rachel Dorsey**  
              Rachel Dorsey has been called as Assistant Pastor for Outreach and Mission by  
              the Session of Centerpoint Community Church, Roseville, CA. She is seeking  
              ordination in the EPC and has signed her Ministerial Obligation Form and Ethical  
              Affirmation Form. She has been examined by the members of the Ministerial  
              Committee and her current Terms of Call have been reviewed and approved by  
              the Committee. She is recommended to the Presbytery for approval.  
              Rachel's examination began with a sermon on a passage assigned by the Ministerial  
              Committee. The Presbytery is to examine her on her knowledge of theology and  
              sacraments, faith in Christ, calling to the ministry, and the nature of the office of a

minister of the Word, polity, the Reformed tradition, the Bible, and her spiritual journey. Rachel has no exceptions to the Westminster Standards. (*Attachment 1 – pgs. A2-A18*)

**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

**Representatives speaking on behalf of Rachel Dorsey**

**MOTION:** To approve the examination of Rachel Dorsey and receive her into full membership in the EPC Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest.

**MOTION:** To approve the Administrative Commission of TE's Bryan Yeo from Centerpoint Community Church, Roseville, CA and Nancy Duff from Covenant Community Church, Vacaville, CA and RE's Marlana Sprague, Julie Battenfield, and Cyndi Parks from Centerpoint Community Church and Rebecca Duvall from Covenant Community Church to ordain and install Rachel Dorsey as Assistant Pastor of Outreach and Mission at Centerpoint Community Church on June 2, 2024 at 4:00 pm for a term of 3 years.

2:50      **Treasurer's Report**      RE David Sylvester, POPS Treasurer  
RE Sylvester will brief the Presbytery on:

- 2024 Year-to-Date POPS Financials (*Attachment 2 – pgs. A19-A20*)
- 2024 Year-to-Date POPS Askings Report (*Attachment 3 – pg. A21*)

3:00      Break

3:20      **Special Presentation**      TE Marcos Ortega  
We are pleased to welcome Marcos Ortega, a member of the Ad-Interim Committee to compose a Pastoral Letter on Racial Lament and Hope, who will share the initial draft of the letter and answer questions regarding its purpose, content, and the process for input and approval. (*Attachment 4 – pgs. A22-A37*)

4:05      **Ministerial Committee Report** (continued)

**Examination of Rick Dorr**

Rick Dorr has been called as Commissioned Pastor for Cornerstone Woodlake Church by the Session of the church for a term of 3 years. 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 and is recommended to the Presbytery for approval.

Rick's examination begins with a sermon on Ephesians 1:3-6, a passage assigned by the Ministerial Committee. The Presbytery is to examine him on his knowledge of

theology and sacraments, faith in Christ, calling to the ministry, polity, the Reformed tradition, the Bible, and his spiritual journey. Rick has no exceptions to the Westminster Standards. (Attachment 5 – pgs. A38-A47)

### **Commissioned Pastor Call**

*Note on examinations of candidates for Commissioned Pastor:*

Our Book of Order states:

*A Ruling Elder may be temporarily authorized by Presbytery as a Commissioned Pastor for a congregation without a Pastor to preach the Word, evangelize, moderate a Session, administer the sacraments, perform marriages (if civil law allows), preside at funerals, and provide pastoral care.*

*A. Authorization shall be for a term up to three years and may be renewed. Such authorization shall specify those powers granted and shall stipulate in which church(es) or ministry contexts those powers are authorized. Such powers shall be exercised only in those contexts.*

*B. Potential Commissioned Pastors shall be examined by Presbytery and found to have sufficient knowledge in the areas in which they will be serving.*

We will conduct the examination using the structure below, inviting two-three questions from each category in order. Please refrain from moving to suspend examination until we cover all these categories of questions. While we are to examine him on the areas below, a Commissioned Pastor is not held to the same standards of knowledge as that of a teaching elder, so our examination should not be as in-depth as that of a teaching elder.

- Theology, sacraments, English Bible
- Book of Order, history of the Church and the Reformed tradition
- Christian experience, progress in spiritual growth, and nature of the office of Commissioned Pastor

### **Representatives speaking on behalf of Rick Dorr**

**MOTION:** To approve the examination of Rick Dorr and affirm his call as Commissioned Pastor of Cornerstone Woodlake Church, Woodlake, CA to preach the Word, evangelize, moderate the Session, administer the sacraments, perform marriages, preside at funerals, and provide pastoral care, and to assign TE Dave Fenska as supervisor to Elder Dorr.

**MOTION:** To approve the administrative commission of RE's Sandra Crawford, Jeff Seaward and Al George from Cornerstone Woodlake and Priscilla Dack from Easton Presbyterian Church and TE's Lana Roberts (Active Retired) and Ron Owens (Associate Retired) to install Rick Dorr as Commissioned Pastor for Cornerstone Woodlake on June 2, 2024 at 6:00 pm for a term of 3 years.

4:55

### **Mission Committee Report**

TE Dave Fenska, Chair

Chairman Dave Fenska will announce the mission speakers for this year's GA Gospel Priorities Summit in Memphis, and explain how these sessions can be accessed from home. E2025 Home Team chair TE Sam Knottnerus will update us on the progress of finding pray-ers, players and pay-ers for our efforts with the P people.

5:15      **Ministry Focus – World Relief, Sacramento**      Colin Ruan  
TE Bryan Yeo will introduce Colin Ruan from World Relief, who will share about the opportunity for churches to work together in Good Neighbor Teams to support Pashtun and other refugees in the Sacramento area.

5:30      **Retirement Recognition – TE Cliff Graves**  
Cliff became a Christian during the Jesus Movement his senior year of college at San Jose State (1972). He got his first taste of ministry shortly thereafter as a Young Life leader and then as a youth leader at his home Church; Centerville Presbyterian in Fremont, CA. During this time, he was employed at Whitaker Pavilion Mental Health Center an inpatient Mental Health Facility, until deciding to go to Fuller Seminary. At Fuller he earned a Master of Divinity in Theology/Marriage & Family Therapy ('83), and later a Doctor of Ministry ('97).

He was ordained at Centerville Presbyterian Church by UPCUSA on 3/4/84 ("March Forth"). His first call was to Christ Community Church in Carmichael, CA where he served for 8 ½ years working with Single Adults. In 1994, he was hired as a Pastoral Counselor by Fair Oaks Presbyterian Church. During that time, he became licensed as an MFCC with the State of California. After being a pastoral counselor for 16 years, Fair Oaks Church called him to be the Associate Pastor of Congregational Care (2009). His hiring date was again March 4th of that year. With that call he transitioned over to the EPC. Over the course of his tenure at FOC he has overseen Congregational Care ministries and numerous adult programs.

Cliff and his wife Jayne have been married for 20 years. They often do hospital and home visitation together. Jayne has enriched the lives of many women at FOC and been a source of love, support and prayer to her husband's ministry, a true "joint heir of the Grace of life".

**MOTION : To approve the Change in Status of TE Cliff Graves from Associate Pastor of Care at Fair Oaks Church to Associate-Retired effective June 30, 2024, with great appreciation for his service to Christ's Church.**

5:45      **Meeting Recess and Dinner**

7:00      **Presbytery Worship Service**  
The POPS Worship Service will be led by TE Donny Butkus and the staff and leaders from Fair Oaks Church. Communion will be served, and an offering will be received for the POPS Pastor Support and Care Fund.

# PROPOSED DOCKET



## Twentieth Stated Meeting of the EPC Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest May 16-17, 2024

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

### FRIDAY, MAY 17, 2024

8:00 am Breakfast

9:00 **Call to Order and Opening Prayer** RE Brian Wyatt, Moderator

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

9:10 **Worship and Prayer**

**Call to Worship** Moderator Wyatt

**Worship in Music** Fair Oaks Worship Team

**Sermon** Justin Kim

The sermon this morning will be given by Justin Kim, candidate for Pastor at Wintersburg Presbyterian Church, Santa Ana, CA. He will be preaching on Romans 6:20-23, a passage assigned to him by the Ministerial Committee.

**Moderator's Time of Prayer** Moderator Wyatt

9:50 **Ministerial Committee Report** (continued) TE David Abdo, Chair

#### **Examination of Justin Kim**

Justin Kim has been called as Pastor by the congregation of Wintersburg Presbyterian Church, Santa Ana, CA. He 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 is seeking to transfer from the PCA Korean Capital Presbytery and is recommended to the Presbytery for approval.

Justin'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. Justin has no exceptions to the Westminster Standards. (*Attachment 6 – pgs. A48-A65*)

#### **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

**Representatives speaking on behalf of Justin Kim**

TE Ryan Teramoto  
RE Ken Wakamoto

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

**MOTION:** To approve the Administrative Commission of TE's Ryan Teramoto from Wintersburg Presbyterian Church, Santa Ana, CA, and (TBD), and RE's (TBD) from Wintersburg Presbyterian Church and (TBD) to install TE Justin Kim as Pastor of Wintersburg Presbyterian Church on August 18, 2024 at (TBD).

10:30

**Change in Status – TE Matt Young**

The congregation of Covenant Presbyterian Church, Orange, CA has called TE Matt Young as Associate Pastor of Outreach and Engagement. He currently serves there as Assistant Pastor of Outreach and Engagement.

**MOTION:** To approve the change in status of TE Matt Young from Assistant Pastor of Outreach and Engagement to Associate Pastor for Outreach and Engagement at Covenant Presbyterian Church, Orange, CA effective May 17, 2024.

**MOTION:** To approve the Administrative Commission consisting of TE's Scott Larson from Covenant Presbyterian, Orange, CA and Dave Fenska (Active -Retired), and RE's Ken Davis and Stephen Morris from Covenant Presbyterian, Orange, CA and Carlos Gutierrez and Masaaki Uchida from Wintersburg Presbyterian, Santa Ana, CA to install TE Matt Young as Associate Pastor of Outreach and Engagement at Covenant Presbyterian Church, Orange, CA on May 19, 2024 at 10:15 am.

**Honorary Change in Status – TE Jim Barstow**

The congregation of Centerpoint Community Church, Roseville, CA has requested that the Presbytery confer the title of Pastor Emeritus for retired TE Jim Barstow. This title comes with no pastoral authority or duty but is an association requested by the church out of affection and gratitude for TE Barstow.

**MOTION:** To approve the title of Pastor Emeritus for TE Jim Barstow in association with Centerpoint Community Church, Roseville, CA effective May 17, 2024.

10:45

**Ministry Update – 2024 Next Gen Summit**

Debbie Rattan

Debbie Rattan is the Minister to Children and Families at Fremont Presbyterian Church, Sacramento, CA. She will report on the recent GA Next Gen Summit held in St. Louis, MS which she attended with two other representatives from POPS: Klarissa Pool (Centerpoint Community) and Kayden Regan (Christ Community).

11:05

Break

11:25	<b>Q &amp; A with TE David Burke</b> David Burke has been called by the POPS Council to serve as POPS Chaplain, a ministry to the teaching elders in the Presbytery.	
12:00	Lunch Clerk of Session Training	
1:00	<b>Care of Candidates Report</b>  <b>Examination of Jamie Davies</b> Jamie Davies is ready to come under the care of this Presbytery. He is currently under care of the Session of First Presbyterian Church, Bakersfield, CA. The Session has recommended him to the Presbytery as a Candidate Under Care and he has met with the POPS Care of Candidates Committee.  The Candidate 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> <b>Representative speaking on behalf of Candidate</b>	TE Matt Young, Chair   

1:50	<b>Care of Candidates Report (continued)</b>  <b>Examination of Steve Gold</b> Steve Gold is ready to come under the care of this Presbytery. He is currently under care of the Session of Clayton Community Church. The Session has recommended him to the Presbytery as a Candidate Under Care and he has met with the POPS Care of Candidates Committee.  The Candidate 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> <b>Representative speaking on behalf of Candidate</b>	TE Dave Constance
	<b>MOTION: <u>To approve Steve Gold to come under care of the EPC Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest and approve (TBD) as advisor to Candidate Gold</u></b>	
	<b>Constitutional Questions to the Candidate</b>  <b>Prayer for the Candidate</b>  <b>Charge to the Candidate</b>	Moderator Wyatt
2:30	<b>Ministry Focus – Influencers</b> Ryan Balbi (Candidate Under Care) from Christ Community Church, Carmichael, CA will introduce David Eichinger, who will share about the effectiveness of the Influencers Ministry.	David Eichinger
2:45	Break	
3:05	<b>Church Health Update</b>	TE Mike Griffin, POPS Church Health Coordinator
3:25	<b>Care of Candidates Report (continued)</b>  <b>Examination of Chris Beard</b> Chris Beard is ready to come under the care of this Presbytery. He is currently under care of the Session of Kingman Presbyterian Church, Kingman, AZ. The Session has recommended him to the Presbytery as a Candidate Under Care and he has met with the POPS Care of Candidates Committee.  The Candidate 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> <b>Representative speaking on behalf of Candidate</b>	TE Joe Tolin



**MOTION: To approve Chris Beard to come under care of the EPC Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest and approve (TBD) as advisor to Candidate Beard**

**Constitutional Questions to the Candidate**

Moderator Wyatt

**Prayer for the Candidate**

**Charge to the Candidate**

4:05 Break

4:25 **Church Planting Update** TE Shawn Robinson, POPS Church Planting Coordinator

4:45 **Omnibus Motion** Moderator Wyatt

1. That the Minutes of the Nineteenth Stated Meeting of the EPC Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest on January 26-27, 2024, be approved as posted (these minutes are available on the POPS website)
2. That the Administrative Commission to install Joe Tolin as Pastor of Kingman Presbyterian Church, Kingman, AZ 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 the Omnibus actions**

4:50 **Important Upcoming Dates**

June 18-20, 2024	44 <sup>th</sup> EPC General Assembly Location: Hope Church, Memphis, TN
October 8-10, 2024	POPS Pastors Retreat Location: Del Oro Conference Center, Nevada City, CA
October 11-12, 2024	Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest Meeting (#21) Location: Community Presbyterian Church, Danville, CA
January 24-25, 2025	Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest Meeting (#22) Location: Centerpoint Community Church, Roseville, CA

**Hosting Opportunities**

Member churches are reminded that opportunities are available to host the Presbytery at its 2025 meetings. Contact the Stated Clerk if you are interested in offering an invitation. We are looking for churches to host **Discovery Workshops** in 2024. Contact the Stated Clerk if you are interested in offering an invitation.

5:00 pm **Adjournment and Closing Prayer**

Moderator Wyatt



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

**Presbytery Meeting Docket**  
**May 16-17, 2024**

**ATTACHMENTS**

- |    |   |         |
|----|---|---------|
| 1. | Personal Information and Statement of Faith for Rachel Dorsey | A2-A18  |
| 2. | 2024 POPS Year-to-Date Financial Statements                   | A19-A20 |
| 3. | 2024 POPS Year-to-Date Per Member Asking Report               | A21     |
| 4. | Pastoral Letter of Racial Lament and Hope (DRAFT)             | A22-A37 |
| 5. | Personal Information and Statement of Faith for Rick Dorr     | A38-A47 |
| 6. | Personal Information and Statement of Faith for Justin Kim    | A48-A65 |

Name:

## Part 2: Personal Information

### 1. Name:

(Last)

(First)

(Middle)

Preferred Address:

Preferred Phone:

☐ Cell ☐ Work ☐ Home

Alternate Phone:

☐ Cell ☐ Work ☐ Home

Email:

### 2. Work History:

Current and Previous Positions (ministry or otherwise)

Dates

Name:

**3. Volunteer Experience** (applicable to a pastoral role)

Dates

**4. 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):

Name:

**5. Educational Background:**

a. Name of Institution	Dates Attended	Degree
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b. Continuing Education/Professional Development	Dates
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**6. Other Experience:**

a. Types of professional supervision and personal accountability you have found helpful in your life and ministry:

Name:

b. Community and Civic Activities:

c. Presbytery and General Assembly Activities:

d. Ecumenical Activities:

e. Special Interests, Hobbies:

f. Languages (other than English) you can speak, and level of proficiency:

Name:

### **Part 3: Narrative**

- 1. Life Story:** In one page, describe your life's journey. Include key incidents (such as how you came to faith in Christ) that were significant in your formation as a person and your call to ministry.

Name:

**2. Self-Appraisal:**

a. Briefly describe your leadership style:

- How you go about making decisions:

- Your administrative style:

b. Talk about how you handled a recent conflict. What did you do well? What areas of conflict resolution do you need to be more effective at?

c. What do you enjoy about working as part of a team? What is challenging to you?



Name:

d. Briefly describe your worship preferences: (*preaching style, preferred worship style [e.g., liturgical, modern, traditional, blended, etc.]*)

e. Share your sense of your call to ministry:

- What type of ministry role are you called to? And what would effectiveness look like in that role?

- What are your personal ideals and long-term goals?

Name:

- f. What are the ways you are nurturing your relationship with God in everyday life?
- g. What are your character strengths?
- h. What are five key gifts/skills/abilities you would bring to a ministry position?
- i. The New Testament teaches us that no one Christian—not even the pastor—possesses every spiritual gift, but we are meant to work together as members of Christ’s one body (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12). What are the spiritual gifts you will need other team members to bring in order to complement your leadership and make the church effective in its ministry?

Name:

### 3. Views:

- a. What opportunities do you see for the church to reflect the reality of Christ's Kingdom in our present context?
- b. What are your views on charismatic expression in worship?
- c. What are your views on women in ordained office?
- d. What are your views on human sexuality and gender?

Name:

#### Part 4: Denominational Alignment

1. Do you affirm the “Essentials of Our Faith” without exception? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If “No” please briefly explain:

2. Do you agree with and can you submit to the system of government of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If “No” please briefly explain:

3. 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

If “No” please briefly explain:

4. Do you take any exceptions to the *Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms*? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If “Yes,” identify the topic with chapter, paragraph, or question number you take your exception with. State your alternate view with biblical support. Include additional page if necessary.

*(An “exception” means that you disagree with a statement in the Westminster Confession, believe it to be wrong, have Scriptural support to justify your belief, and have Scriptural support of an alternative view.)*

5. Do you willingly offer the sacrament of infant baptism to Christian parents? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If “No” please briefly explain:



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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 \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. The Bible (Bibliology)

2. God the Father (Theology proper)

3. Jesus Christ (Christology)



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4. The Holy Spirit (Pneumatology)

5. Mankind (Anthropology)

6. Sin (Hamartiology)

7. Salvation (Soteriology)



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8. Satan

9. Angels and Demons

10. The Church (Ecclesiology)

11. The Spiritual Life of the Believer



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## 12. Future Things (Eschatology)

## 13. Evangelism

## 14. Spiritual Gifts





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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.

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

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



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

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

20. Explain your philosophy of ministry.



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

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

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



Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest

**Income and Expenses**

March 31, 2024

	CURRENT MONTH			YEAR-TO-DATE			ANNUAL
CATEGORY	ACTUAL	BUDGET	VARIANCE	ACTUAL	BUDGET	VARIANCE	BUDGET
INCOME							
POPS Church Support	\$8,177	\$12,667	(\$4,489)	\$28,443	\$38,000	(\$9,557)	\$152,000
Other Income -Church Health Subsidy	0	250	(250)	0	750	(750)	3,000
Other Income- Church Planting Subsidy	0	1,000	(1,000)	0	3,000	(3,000)	12,000
Other Income - Miscellaneous	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Income	8,177	13,917	(5,739)	28,443	41,750	(13,307)	167,000
EXPENSES							
Personnel	\$9,094	\$9,983	\$890	\$27,281	\$29,950	\$2,669	\$119,800
Travel	948	1,617	668	4,286	4,850	564	19,400
Presbytery Office	487	225	(262)	676	675	(1)	2,700
Moderator	0	17	17	0	50	50	200
Care of Candidates	0	67	67	0	200	200	800
Church Planting	0	17	17	0	50	50	200
Church Health	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mission	1,000	583	(417)	1,000	1,750	750	7,000
Nominating Committee	0	42	42	0	125	125	500
Session Miniutes Review Committee	0	42	42	0	125	125	500
Presbytery Meetings	0	792	792	2,766	2,375	(391)	9,500
Leadership and Training	0	233	233	0	700	700	2,800
Accounting and Finance	125	300	175	3,461	900	(2,561)	3,600
Total All Expenses	\$11,654	\$13,917	\$2,263	\$39,470	\$41,750	\$2,280	\$167,000
NET INCOME	(\$3,477)	(\$0)	(\$3,477)	(\$11,026)	\$0	(\$11,027)	\$0



Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest

**Balance Sheet**

3/31/2024

DESCRIPTION	BALANCE at 3/31/24	BALANCE at 12/31/23
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Cash	\$116,142	\$131,079
Investments	0	0
Other Assets	0	0
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$116,142</b>	<b>\$131,079</b>
<b>FUNDS</b>		
<b>Designated Funds</b>		
Pastor's Care & Support	\$2,780	\$5,780
Church Planting	2,233	2,538
Educational Assistance Fund	3,945	2,842
Chaplains Travel	2,308	2,308
World Outreach E2025	3,666	3,116
Pastors Retreat	1,249	1,249
Church Health	7,220	7,220
Women's Ministries	2,933	3,066
<b>Total Designated Funds</b>	<b>26,334</b>	<b>28,119</b>
<b>Reserve/Undesignated Funds</b>	<b>100,834</b>	<b>84,065</b>
<b>Current Income (Loss)</b>	<b>(11,026)</b>	<b>18,895</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<b>\$116,142</b>	<b>\$131,079</b>



Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest  
**Percentage of Income (POI)**  
 April 2024

CHURCH	REPORTED 2022 INCOME	REQUESTED POI	ACTUAL GIVING	% of TOTAL
Centerpoint	\$2,495,179	\$12,476	\$0	0%
Centerville PC	1,504,686	7,523	1,122	15%
Christ Church East Bay	1,483,879	7,419	0	0%
Christ Community Church	2,586,263	12,931	3,750	29%
Clayton Community	703,198	3,516	0	0%
CPC Danville	6,193,415	30,967	10,324	33%
Cornerstone Woodlake	138,061	690	690	100%
Covenant PC - Orange	471,556	2,358	2,186	93%
Covenant PC - Reno	421,358	2,107	1,350	64%
Covenant PC - San Diego	659,485	3,297	900	27%
Covenant Community Vacaville	504,929	2,525	590	23%
Easton PC	232,000	1,160	1,160	100%
Fair Oaks	2,642,304	13,212	1,962	15%
First Armenian PC	623,434	3,117	581	19%
First PC - Bakersfield	1,438,643	7,193	2,274	32%
First PC - Fresno	1,428,390	7,142	7,193	101%
First PC - Hanford	227,875	1,139	285	25%
Fowler PC	394,677	1,973	0	0%
Fremont PC**	2,175,527	8,478	4,000	47%
Heritage EPC	65,222	326	94	29%
Hope PC	318,705	1,594	0	0%
Kingman PC	195,781	979	490	50%
Millbrook PC	87,353	437	0	0%
Moraga Valley PC	2,042,000	10,210	2,553	25%
New Life, Covelo	20,096	100	100	100%
San Ramon PC	880,627	4,403	0	0%
Sanger Community	207,000	1,035	0	0%
Sierra PC	561,967	2,810	937	33%
St. John's Assyrian PC	112,851	564	0	0%
The Table	138,112	691	691	100%
Valley Community	111,004	555	0	0%
Wintersburg PC	1,691,770	8,459	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$32,757,347</b>	<b>\$161,387</b>	<b>\$43,230</b>	<b>27%</b>

\*\*Presbytery Office

**A PASTORAL LETTER OF RACIAL  
LAMENT AND HOPE**



## INTRODUCTION



The goal of the writing committee is to provide a tool for Teaching and Ruling Elders, helping them shepherd followers of Jesus as they address racism and race-related topics in their churches or communities. This work is part of the larger movement of God within the EPC to engage with our churches, communities, and country on this divisive topic. Our committee looks forward with hope to the further work of the EPC as we continue deploying the Gospel in racism-eradicating ways. To that end, we write:

To our beloved EPC brothers and sisters in Christ, Teaching and Ruling Elders—shepherds all.

We thank God as you faithfully follow our Lord in loving service to all under your care and as you teach and guide, comfort and warn the sheep with the Word of God that they may flourish to his glory. In sharing their lives through a multitude of changing, challenging, and troubling matters and relationships, you have built into their being, helped bear their burdens, and shown sacrificial love.

We write to you, elder shepherds, mature in the faith, as you care for your flock.

We write to you, young shepherds, mindful of your youth as you undertake to care for those older in years and in the faith.

We write to you, shepherds, caring for those who regularly stand in harm's way in service to our country.

We write to you, shepherds, serving in hospitals and institutional settings.

We write to you, shepherds, serving our Lord in formal educational settings by honing minds and stretching hearts.

We write to you, shepherds, proclaiming the Gospel on far-flung frontiers amid myriad uncertainties.

We write to you, shepherds, who know the sting of racism and loneliness in ministering.

We write to you, shepherds, who enter this discussion uneasily.

## OUR COMMISSION

We write with heavy hearts of a matter that so troubles our flocks and deeply affects our faithful obedience to our Lord's command in John 13:34-35: "Just as I have loved you, you should also love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." Sadly, the bitter reality of racism is not restricted solely to culture wars fostered, fomented, and fought by groups in our society. Our sinful nature has permeated every human institution and system with the world's values, including Christ's bride. Systemic injustice (which we will define and discuss later in this letter), based on advantages/disadvantages, favor/disfavor and bias/prejudice in service of



vested interest, exists due to a host of factors including perceived race, ethnicity, gender, economic levels, and educational attainment. We must not pretend that the EPC is immune from the poisonous influence and impact of racism. As such, the 42<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly appointed our committee to write to you about the difficult subject of racism, both personal and structural, and explore its presence in the EPC.

We can feel some of you shudder or balk as we use words such as “racism”— “institutional” and “systemic.” We, too, wrestle with secular nomenclature and charged vocabulary attached to a variety of agendas, so *how* we talk about racism is as important as actually talking about it. The world and its language, biases, politics, and perspectives cannot rule over a Christian’s perspective. And while we seek to be culturally relevant, we write to you as fellow shepherds in the EPC with the aim to remain true to our evangelical,<sup>1</sup> Presbyterian, and church identity. This three-fold identity shapes our language as we deliberate and carve a way forward through this troubling reality toward reconciliation and hope. Throughout this letter you will find references to the Westminster Standards in hope that you seek further confessional reflection on this topic. As the Church, we hold scripture as the final rule in all matters of faith and life: the Bible must remain our North Star. Let our conversations remain grounded in and from the biblical perspective, our Reformed and confessional heritage, and the shared experiences of our brothers and sisters.<sup>2</sup> And so, we attempt to set forth a common language to have this discussion.

## DEFINITIONS

**Race.** There is one human race. “And he made from one man every nation (*ethnos*) of mankind to live on all the face of the earth” (Acts 17:26). Each person shares 99% commonality in DNA with every other person. Over time, slight differences in genetic information combined with environmental factors created physical distinctions among people groups. The term **race** often is used to categorize physical characteristics of skin color, facial form or eye shape and may include ancestry, shared culture or historical affiliation.<sup>3</sup> In current cultural conversations, **race** is the frequently used term. Yet, our research and discussions reveal that race is not a neutral term. Historically, this term has been used to divide the divinely ordained one human race into a *hierarchy* of races, legitimizing a multitude of abuses. These days, when race means distinguishing and defining by color, such use narrows the diversity of ethnicities that contribute to who we are. It strips away the depth of individual contexts, connections, and varied histories, reducing identity to a single word.

**Ethnos/Ethnicity**, as used in common language and in Revelation 7:9, more accurately defines the grouping of people sharing a common and distinctive culture, religion or language, and incorporates aspects of geography, historical background, allegiance or association.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, as we examine racism, the use of *ethnicity*, not *race*, is the biblical, more accurate descriptor of diversity within humanity.<sup>5</sup>

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1 *Evangelical* also is a highly charged word in our culture but in our context captures the “Essentials of the Faith” as set forth by the EPC.

2 *Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms in Modern English*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Livonia, MI: EPC, 2010), 1.10.

3 *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. “Race”; National Human Genome Research Institute; *Cambridge English Dictionary*, s.v. “Race”; US Census Bureau.

4 *Cambridge English Dictionary*, s.v. “Ethnicity”; National Institutes of Health; *Merriam-Webster*, s.v. “Ethnicity.”

5 One of the crimes of racism is that many who descend from slaves cannot discover their ethnicity through genealogical ancestries. Our preference for the use of the term “ethnicity” should not be understood to discount this wrong or to discourage the use of the term “race” in popular discourse. Rather, our preference for the term “ethnicity” should be understood as an eschatological hope, a protest of the way things are and a longing for the day when every person’s knowledge of ethnic identity is restored.

**Racism** is the unbiblical belief that there is a *causal link* between ethnicity and traits of personality, intellect, morality, and behavior, typically resulting in personal or collective discrimination or favoritism.<sup>6</sup> Racism is not a binary Black/White problem, nor one unique to the United States, but is historically entrenched within the whole human race, sowing deep discord and distrust as those of minority ethnicities are marginalized.

**Institutional and Systemic Racism** have varying culturally popular meanings that sow immediate discord and raise presumptions interfering with an honest discussion on how racism impacts institutions, even within the EPC. We begin with first discussing what **Institutional/Systemic Racism** is *not*. We do not believe the United States is irredeemably racist. Nor do we believe that people in any given institution or system are presumptively individual racists. Nor are individuals personally guilty of or complicit in past actions committed by others of the same ethnicity.

However, as Americans, we inherit a national history that includes heinous ethnic discrimination, most notably the enslavement of Africans with all its atrocities, the displacement and slaughter of Indigenous peoples, and internment of Japanese-Americans; all deep stains on the American soul. The impact of racism on our society's institutions—educational, judicial, financial and even religious—continues to reverberate to present day injustices. Therefore, our commission charges us with addressing this reality.

**Institutional/Systemic Racism** refers to behaviors, policies or practices of an organization or system that result in or otherwise support an unfair advantage to some people, and/or unfair or harmful treatment of others, based on ethnicity. Too often we fail to see and empathize with the suffering of those under the continuing oppression of racism that permeates perceptions, expectations and even systems of law, economics, culture and church culture. Indifference is the great ally of bias and racism. We fail to see why dealing with racism matters and that indifference, in turn, perpetuates the reality of racism at work in human systems.

## THE SIN OF RACISM

Racism is a sin because it violates God's principles and commands. Racism belittles and dehumanizes people, stripping them of their created dignity as image bearers of God.<sup>7</sup> The doctrine of adoption stated in *WCF* 12.1 leaves no room for misunderstanding our equality before God.

God guarantees the adoption of all those who are justified in and for the sake of his only son, Jesus Christ. Those adopted enjoy the liberties and privileges of God's children, have his name put on them, receive the Spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, and are enabled to cry, Abba, Father. They are pitied, protected, provided for, and disciplined by him as a father. They are never cast off, however, and are sealed until the day of redemption and inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation.<sup>8</sup>

We must also recognize racism as a poisoned fruit of spiritual warfare—a powerful attack on God's people by the ancient enemy Satan and his allies, cosmic powers and spiritual forces of evil.<sup>9</sup> Our enemies' strategy is to fracture the Body of Christ, assault our identity as God's people, distract and divide us from our unity in and with Christ.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Gal. 2:11-14; James 2:1-10.

<sup>7</sup> *WCF* 4.2.

<sup>8</sup> *WCF* 25.2, 35.1. See also *Westminster Larger Catechism* Q.62, Q.63, Q.74; *EPC Essentials of our Faith* #5.

<sup>9</sup> Eph. 6:11-13; Rev. 12:7-9.

<sup>10</sup> 1 Jn 2:9-11; *WCF* 16.6, 26.1,2.

Racism blinds us to the anticipation of the glorious gathering to come revealed to us in Revelation 7:9. “A great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands” is God’s triumph of all his people together. Having our lives hidden with Christ in God does not obliterate our uniqueness or consume us in a bland sameness. To be in Christ, with all glory directed to him, undergirds the preciousness of every created distinction.

## **CATEGORIZING/OTHERING**

As people who understand that all humanity suffers from total depravity and the pervasive effects and deadly consequences of sin, we cannot be surprised that hateful attitudes and actions, violence, injustice, brokenness, fear of others and profound distrust abound.<sup>11</sup> Ever since the Fall, human beings have been ‘othering’ each other. Every human heart is prone to make such judgments. Every human group is prone to utilize such distinctions to the extent it has power to do so. We distinguish others and then make judgments, elevating some qualities and denigrating others. We group, actively and subconsciously, around shared distinctives and exclude based on differences, from children bullying on the playground to ethnic genocides. We deny. We tribalize. We accuse. We excuse. And this sin of partiality and even hatred is most inappropriate, hurtful and toxic when found among God’s people.

Whether personal or collective, through actions or indifference, such behavior compromises our witness, questions our integrity, and diminishes the goodness of the Gospel we proclaim and our ability to go into the world and make disciples. As followers of Christ, our response to the sins of racism should reflect an uninhibited resolve to love one another and reach the nations with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>12</sup> Yet racism directly harms our mission because these sins necessarily deny that all humans are created in the image of God and relativize the atonement according to perceived differences that affect how people are valued.

## **WITHIN THE EPC**

As Presbyterians, we are united in a shared confessional commitment that faithfully presents the system of doctrine contained in scripture. The theology of the Westminster Standards leaves no room for participating in sins of racism and partiality. It provides the framework needed to develop a Reformed understanding of ethnic diversity and kingdom unity. Throughout the Bible, the sins of racism are condemned while proclaiming redemption by the Triune God. Through this redemption, God is creating a kingdom mosaic of his children from all people groups, bringing glory to himself.

Racism, as Satan’s tool against this redemption, promotes divisions that prevent us from truly loving one another. As a predominately majority culture denomination, we usually go about our church business without considering why it matters that we become a denomination more reflective of a Rev. 7:9 reality. We neglect to address who is unreached and welcomed into our churches. Ingrained biases can make it hard to recognize the abilities, strengths, and spiritual gifts of those from other ethnicities. These same biases also keep us from seeing how little power and influence we share with people not of our ethnic majority. We also are largely unaware that there are pastors in the EPC who have been deeply wounded by sins of racism. People of color often experience the need

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<sup>11</sup> Isa. 53:6; Rom. 3:23; *WCF* 6.

<sup>12</sup> Matt. 28:19-20; *Essentials* #7.

(actual or implied) to prove that they are Reformed or conservative *enough* for the EPC, experiencing suspicions that cast shadows on their viewpoints and question the validity of their stories. Graduates of various seminaries, and historically Black seminaries in particular, find their qualifications examined more strenuously and their opportunities to serve the church fully in leadership and decision-making roles more limited. The Gospel calls us beyond such diminishing to the robust valuing Jesus embodied (WLC Q. 131, 132).

In communities or churches with little to no exposure to people of other ethnicities, the issue of racism may seem overstated and harder to recognize. “I have no problems with those people.” “These things do not happen where we live.” “*Our* police are not abusive.” While acknowledging another racist or racially-charged event has occurred, physical distance seems to allow or excuse detachment or lack of empathy which settles into wrongly thinking, “This is not my problem. I don’t know anyone there.” However, we are *Presbyterians*, bound together as a global Church family. Whether or not these hurts are in our particular community, they impact our Church. If something causes pain and suffering to a fellow Christian, whether or not we can understand it or relate to it, we are called to weep with those who weep. The pain and injury, grief and fear experienced by members of our church family should not go unrecognized or unacknowledged.

Indifference to the pain of our brothers and sisters or to the sin that causes their suffering is not the call of kingdom people. Scripture teaches us to think differently. We are not to conform to the world and its values, but to love one another genuinely, with brotherly affection and outdoing one another in showing honor (Rom. 12:2-3,9-10). In the church there “is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you all are one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:27-29). We are called to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which we have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:1-4). How can we say that we love God while merely tolerating or even distrusting our brother or sister in Christ?

We live in a time when the EPC is more exposed to and aware of the sin of racism and its many manifestations than ever before. A key purpose of this letter is to invite our shepherds to lament the suffering and sorrow racism has created in our nation. And, while it may not be within the power of the EPC to end racism in our country or culture, we are charged to recognize and end racism in our denomination and prophetically shine light into the world: to seek the welfare of the city wherein we dwell (Jer. 29:5-7). We are to tell our story of God’s perfect creation, our tragic fall, Christ’s costly redemption, the church’s world-reaching mission and the glorious final re-creation of heaven and earth. Our hope contradicts narratives that view humanity merely through a story of unguided emergence, brute survival, oppression, struggle, liberation, and eventual earthly utopia. This letter is not about convergence with worldly values. Rather, we seek to identify the world’s wounds within our church and apply the salve of Christ’s sorrow, mercy, and love.

We feel burdened that the EPC has left this widespread, multifaceted, and profoundly troubling issue largely unaddressed. We are called to bravely consider how our beloved denomination has participated in our neighbors’ continuing experience of racism. To truly love our brothers and sisters in obedience to our Lord, together we will reflect deeply on racism and learn to recognize its sinfulness in our own lives. We want to give voice in lament on behalf of those who suffer from, or otherwise experience, racism.

## WHAT IS LAMENT?



Lament is a biblical way to publicly grieve our sorrows and express our anger to God: sorrow and anger we experience in the face of suffering, sin, and brokenness. It is the response of believers when confronted with unabating, faith-shaking injustice and gives voice to an equally persistent faith—refusing to give up hope. We are invited to bring our real concerns to the throne of grace, pouring out our hearts before the God who loves us, and know that he hears us (Heb. 4:16). Laments are expressed in words of hope that the God who is in covenant with us because of his word will once again remember his people, forgive our sins and rescue us. Unlike the grumbling of the Israelites in the wilderness, a lament always has hope, however apocalyptic its anchor. The hope is that although a solution to my plight may be elusive, I trust that despair will not have the last word.

### LAMENT IN THE BIBLE

Lament characterizes much of scripture and varies from personal to corporate expressions. The Psalms are replete with prayers of lament; over one-third of the Psalms fit in this category. Some examples are:: Psalm 3; 10:1,12,16-18; 12; 77:1-20; 88 (which contains no resolution). Lamentations records the prophet's heart-rending lament over the fall of Jerusalem.

Why is lament such a prominent feature in the Bible? Because suffering sits at the center of sin-plagued human experience. We live in a fallen world, with nothing but our groans and our wordless idols to give us respite. And so we groan, even if only with the voice of the Holy Spirit who groans on our behalf when we ourselves are wordless (Rom. 8:18-26). This experience is common for God's people and, as Bruce Waltke argues from the prayers of Israel, normal for those living in a fallen world.<sup>13</sup> R. W. L. Moberly similarly finds:

The predominance of laments at the very heart of Israel's prayers means that the problems that give rise to lament are not something marginal or unusual but rather are central to the life of faith.... Moreover, they show that the experience of anguish and puzzlement in the life of faith is not a sign of deficient faith, something to be outgrown or put behind one, but rather is intrinsic to the very nature of faith.<sup>14</sup>

Psalm 13 is a paradigmatic lament that helps us understand the posture and structure of this form of prayerful expression.

Verses 1-2 are an expression of pain.

*How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever?*

*How long will you hide your face from me?*

*How long must I wrestle with my thoughts*

*and day after day have sorrow in my heart?*

*How long will my enemy triumph over me?*

<sup>13</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, James M. Houston and Erika Moore, *The Psalms as Christian Lament: A Historical Commentary*, Kindle ed. (Eerdmans), 1.

<sup>14</sup> R. W. L. Moberly, "Lament," *NIDOTTE*, IV, 879.

Verses 3-4 contain an appeal to God for help.

*Look on me and answer, LORD my God.*

*Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,  
and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"  
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.*

Verses 5-6 are an expression of faith in God.

*But I trust in your unfailing love;*

*my heart rejoices in your salvation.*

*I will sing the LORD's praise,*

*for he has been good to me.*

As we encounter suffering, pain, and injustice, let us discipline ourselves to turn to God in lament, knowing that he is the holy and righteous one who can and will make things right.

## **LAMENT DOES NOT REQUIRE PERSONAL GUILT**

Sometimes we resist the call to lament because we think it necessarily includes an admission of personal guilt; the Bible teaches us otherwise. We see in scripture the people of God joining the heart of God in lamenting the brokenness of the world. Daniel cried out in prayer to God over the sin of all Israel and asked the LORD to turn his wrath away from Jerusalem (Dan. 9). Nehemiah, too, confessed sin on behalf of the people of Israel and called on the LORD to keep his covenant promises (Neh. 1:4-11). The idolatry witnessed by Paul in Athens prompted him to make a faithful declaration of the Gospel (Acts 17:16-34).

Scripture also teaches us that lament is not unique to humans: our triune God himself expresses lament. In Genesis 6:6, God observed the wickedness of humanity. "The LORD regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled." The LORD also expressed lament in the face of Saul's disobedience, saying to Samuel, "I regret that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions" (1 Sam. 15:11). The Holy Spirit can be grieved by human sin (Isa. 63:10; Eph. 4:30). The Lord Jesus expressed lament in the face of sin and the suffering it brings.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord' (Matt. 23:37-39).

And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, 'Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation' (Luke 19:41-44).

Jesus also grieved and lamented over the death of his friend Lazarus (John 11:33, 35, 38). As he faced his crucifixion, he experienced deep grief and cried out in prayer to the Father (Matt. 26:36-46; Mark 13:32-42; Luke 22:39-46; Heb. 5:7). Does our being in Christ, who offered up prayers of lament, shape us as a people who do likewise?



## WHY LAMENT NOW?

The scars of racism have afflicted our world for millennia. In our nation's history, we can see pivot points of racial strife and their impact on society: the Civil War and emancipation; the Sand Creek massacre; the Chinese exclusion laws; the Montgomery bus boycotts and Rev. Martin Luther King's assassination – to name a few among several. These moments coagulate groups unified in an agenda, and likewise provoke a response from those who disagree or otherwise disregard that agenda. Polarization and conflict many times are the fruit of these events, with the church weaving its way through in an attempt to insert the peace of Christ.

In our day, among many racially charged tragic moments, the death of George Floyd particularly stands out. While we may not want to revisit the painful details, it is important for us not to flinch or otherwise look away; the heart of lament is to enter into the pain caused by sin and to cry out to the Lord in response. Vividly captured on video, Floyd's death became a pivot point in our national conversation about racism. To summarize, during a police encounter in Minneapolis on May 25, 2020, for over 9 minutes an officer knelt on the neck of an unarmed Black man suspected of buying cigarettes with counterfeit money. Three other officers stood nearby and did not intervene. As the officer knelt on his neck, Floyd repeated, "I can't breathe!" until he died.

This tragic event, resulting in a conviction of the officer for second-degree murder, sparked a firestorm of racial unrest in the U.S. It also prompted protests in other parts of the world. Before Floyd's murder, many in the U.S. thought that racism was a problem of the past or confined to isolated areas of our country. But cell phone video footage and social media have universalized local events, causing many to rethink that optimistic position. Unfortunately, this horrific crime was not an isolated incident. Notwithstanding gains made toward legal justice and equality, persistent acts of racial injustice, indignities, and police brutality continue. Floyd's death raised awareness of how violence, and even deaths, remain overlooked.

Our society, and even our churches, are polarized on who is to blame in these events and the root causes of violent crime. Yet, the church can and should grieve the loss of life, the societal causes of these deaths, and the public divisions these pivotal moments expose.

And so we pray...

*How long, LORD? How long will you allow the powerful to crush the powerless?*

*You who are near to the brokenhearted, will you not bring justice to the earth? You have sent Jesus, your Messiah, into the world to usher in peace, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim the year of your favor. He took our sin upon himself and paid the penalty on the cross. Your Spirit raised him from the dead, and he lives and reigns in victory with you. When will he return to bring final victory to the earth? When will Jesus come to judge the living and the dead?*

*As we wait, LORD, comfort us in our grief. Bring peace to those whose minds are filled with terror. Bring justice through the imperfect working of our courts. Keep us from perpetuating violence. Reassure us that vengeance is yours, that you will repay those who do evil deeds and do not bend the knee to you in repentance.*

*You are our only comfort and hope, LORD. You are the one we trust when no one else is trustworthy. We look to you. Come, Lord Jesus!*

## THE WESTMINSTER STANDARDS AS GROUNDS FOR RACIAL LAMENT

Despite clear and consistent teaching in our Standards on unity, we acknowledge that our practice of that unity has not been consistent. Sadly, living into the adoption shared by all God's children has been and still is a stumbling block.

Adoption is an act of God's free grace in and for his only son, Jesus Christ, by which all those who are justified become his children, have his name put on them, have the Spirit of his Son given to them, are provided for under his fatherly care, are welcomed to all the liberties and privileges of the sons of God, and are made heirs of all the promises and fellow-heirs with Christ in glory (WLC A. 74).

WCF Chapter 26 teaches on the fellowship of all believers united to Jesus Christ and therefore to each other.

26.1 All believers are united to Jesus Christ, their head, by his Spirit and by faith, and have fellowship with him in his grace, suffering, death, resurrection, and glory. United to one another in love the saints have fellowship in each other's gifts and grace and are obliged to perform those public and private duties which nourish their mutual good, both spiritually and physically.

26.2 By their profession of faith saints are bound to maintain a holy fellowship and communion with each other in the worship of God and in the performance of other spiritual services for their mutual improvement. They are also bound to help each other in material things according to their different abilities and needs. This fellowship is to be offered, as God gives the opportunity, to everyone in every place who calls on the name of the Lord Jesus.

When we participate in the sacraments, we are celebrating the covenant relationship we have in and with Christ and with all others who are in Christ regardless of their tongue, tribe, or ethnicity. In the sacraments, we bear witness to the essential oneness we share in Christ and practice "holy fellowship and communion with each other." Speaking of baptism, Richard Mouw stated in 1978, "To make covenantal promises on behalf of a black child is to commit ourselves to the black struggle. If society tries to treat him like a second class citizen, we will have to protest on his behalf since he is our brother in a holy nation!"<sup>15</sup>

## LAMENTING RACISM

Being in covenant together means that when one part of the body has trouble, it becomes trouble for all and prompts us to lament accordingly. Scripture clearly teaches us to care about and share in our brothers' and sisters' pain:

Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep (Romans 12:15).

If one part [of Christ's body] suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it (1 Corinthians 12:26).

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2).

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others (Philippians 2:3-4).

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15 Richard J. Mouw, "Baptismal Politics" *Reformed Journal* 28, no. 7 (July 1978): 2-3.



The EPC has people of color who experience the ongoing painful effects of racism. When we acknowledge the pain and destruction brought about through racism and prejudice, we see the wounds of our brothers and sisters and join our voices together, crying out to our God for intervention. Put another way: when we consider the damage done through racist attitudes, words, and actions, it may not be your fault, but it is *our* problem. Together as the people of God, we can maintain our holy fellowship with one another in Christ through the practice of lament in the face of hatred and injustice. We lament a situation that does not reflect God's design for his world, and we turn to him for justice, comfort, and transformation.

As we live into our covenant union, listening to one another's expressions of pain and lament creates awareness of ways in which we possibly participate in the racial brokenness of the world. The Holy Spirit may prompt us to turn to God in confession and repentance. Lament can open our hearts to one another and to God and invite the healing work of Christ's Spirit, overcoming our earthly divisions (Eph. 2:11-22) and demonstrating the truth of the Gospel (John 17:20-23).

If we refuse to join our brothers and sisters in lament, or if we move too quickly to gospel victory without taking time to grieve with those who are hurting, we communicate to them that their pain is their own—we are not part of the same body. In so doing, we fail to bear one another's burdens, and the chance for unity and solidarity is lost.<sup>16</sup>

The depth of human depravity and the unrelenting fruit of the sin of racism means that lament can never be "one and done." As long as there is suffering on the earth, the people of God will join their voices in lament. As long as there are brothers and sisters who experience the pain of hatred and injustice, we will persist in crying out to the Lord.

When we hear of, see, or experience the dehumanization of those created in God's image, how can we *not* express our pain and disgust to the Lord? How can we not turn to the Holy One for relief when we reflect on the suffering and destruction wrought by racial division?

*Heavenly Father,*

*We acknowledge your eternal goodness and the gracious covenant you have established with us. It is not our own righteousness that has brought us into this relationship but the righteousness of Christ, covering us and restoring us to our purpose as image bearers chosen to reflect your glory.*

*We grieve over how individuals who bear your image and likeness are subjected to abuse. We lament the discrimination and denial of dignity experienced by those in America who have been marginalized, not only by those distanced from you but even by those who declare Jesus as Lord. Regrettably, the church has fallen short in taking action, speaking out against and publicly or privately condemning and lamenting racism in any form toward any individual or group. This racism is evident in acts of antisemitism, ethnic hate, and immigrant hate. We lament racism in both personal and structural contexts.*

*We humbly pray for healing, unity, and justice. May your love permeate our hearts and communities, transforming us into reconciliation agents and advocates for equality. Grant us the strength to confront and dismantle the structures that perpetuate discrimination and grant us the courage to stand against racism in all its forms.*

*We pray in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Amen.*

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<sup>16</sup> Waltke, Houston and Moore, *The Psalms*, 2.

## OUR HOPE



The realism of lament can seem like a path only of gloom, but the opposite is the case! When we enter the grief of people without dismissing, qualifying, or blaming, we find ourselves bearing one another's burdens and showing love, in communion with Jesus who gave himself utterly on the cross. Engaging in lament, we live out our faith that Jesus will bring a new heaven and a new earth. In that hope we live and minister.

As Christ's people, let us seek the opposite of ethnic-discrimination and race-hatred. Let us long for the communion of true *kingdom harmony*. Scripture pictures a unity that does not obliterate ethnic distinction, but weaves uniqueness into oneness. The church, in the power of the Spirit, can demonstrate this vision to a world weary from ethnic strife. Let's consider how.

### JESUS RECONCILES US TO GOD AND ONE ANOTHER

Amidst the constant human tendency to tribalize around ethnic distinctions, we have yet one great reason for hope. "In Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them" (2 Cor. 5:19). Through Jesus' sinless life, atoning death, mighty resurrection, and glorious ascension, the great divide has been crossed and a new and living way to God is open.

Moreover, Jesus has created in himself reconciliation for humanity with one another. "For he himself is our peace," wrote Paul to the variety of ethnicities in the Ephesian church. Christ "has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility" (Eph. 2:14). Jews and Gentiles, people intently declaring "the other," discovered a deeper oneness.

Every person who is united to Jesus by the Holy Spirit through faith and repentance becomes a new creation. We die to the sinful self. Paul testified, "I have been crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2:20). Previous identity markers recede before the primary identity of being in Christ. Let us repent of any identity marker we held as supreme. Nation, language, social class, education, ethnicity in all their manifestations remain part of us, but they yield in priority to the one supreme marker, signified in baptism, of our having died and risen with Christ Jesus. Nothing from the old humanity may remain elevated above the new Adam, Jesus. "The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Cor. 5:17).

This dying to self and rising in Christ, being joined to his humanity as the only reconciliation with God, *is also the only basis of being truly reconciled to others*. Kingdom harmony can only occur if the very basis for relationship is set at this deeper, grace-filled level—to deal with personal sin, of course, but also to provide the bridge whereby we can find connection, even unity, turning "others" into "one another." An angry, polarized world cannot provide real reconciliation. This is why the church takes responsibility to engage this topic of racism in all its forms.

## THE WORK OF RECONCILIATION

Regarding this unifying work, “We should also harbor charitable thoughts, love, compassion, meekness, gentleness, and kindness. Our speech and behavior should be peaceful, mild, and courteous. We should be tolerant of others, be ready to be reconciled, patiently put up with and forgive injuries against us, and return good for evil” (WLC A. 135).

These reconciling actions arise from understanding how people of diverse ethnicities share *equal* standing in Christ. “Equals are required to pay attention to the dignity and worth of each by honoring each other above themselves and by rejoicing in each others’ gifts and success as if their own” (WLC A. 131). In other words, we live out the prayer our Lord taught us: “Your kingdom come, your will be done, *on earth*, as it is in heaven.

Our evangelism, our telling of this good news, will be real when we live out visibly this kingdom harmony. Our witness can shine brightly as we demonstrate reaching across ethnic lines. We can pursue the unity that exists in Jesus only as we lay down our own cherished identity markers for finding deeper identity with one another in Christ. Then our blood-washed robes will dazzle. Our songs will be beautiful.

Before we get there, may we each bow on our faces at the foot of the cross. Let us acknowledge our inability to save ourselves or cleanse our sins of racism. From that common ground we will look up and see in Christ’s nail-pierced palm all the names of the redeemed written, including our own. And from that common ground, we will look left, right, fore and aft, and see each other, see every other whose name is also engraved in the Redeemer’s hand. And we will say, “You, too? Hallelujah!”

## EXERCISING THE GIFTS ALREADY GIVEN

Through the person and work of Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit, the EPC already has:

**1) Power to engage** humbly in the lives of people from different ethnicities and *ask to listen*. Kingdom harmony requires two sides to meet, listen, work out problems and pursue unity. We can intentionally set aside time on a regular basis to allow open discussions between ethnicities to occur. Candidness and respect for diversity will be the key to successful conversations. We encourage participation and input from every tribe and nation represented in the Kingdom of God. This is a crucial first step. Truthful discussions will allow for forgiveness and lament to occur. Truthful discussions transform hearts. Truth gives hope. We deeply desire to be in line with the Word of God by pursuing racial reconciliation on the basis of Ephesians 2 and the vision of Revelation 7. We already see our churches taking responsibility to vigorously pursue activities that will foster such kingdom harmony. We can strive for steps that will produce meaningful progress.

One example is Hope EPC in Memphis which developed a course called *Ethnos*. It is an 8-week multi-ethnic, intergenerational small group which includes three outside joint class spiritual adventures. *Ethnos* features a hot meal eaten together, Bible studies, guided table-talk and biblical deliberation on ethnicity and culture from a Scripture-centered view, not just a socio-economic viewpoint. Active listening, praying, caring, and sharing each other’s life experiences allow the group to appreciate and celebrate their God-given varieties, while breaking through the barriers of ignorance or fear to promote kingdom harmony and their commonality in Christ.

**2) Courage to embrace** the lives of the overlooked, gazing in love until we are deeply moved with compassion out of which arises Spirit-prompted acts of love. As relationships develop, we can risk an exchange of ethnic stories. This would include, in time, sharing experiences of the effects of racism. Those whose stories express pain and suffering will find such exercises riskier and more burdensome. Those whose ethnic stories have nurtured and sustained us will want to be grateful for the effort it takes to tell painful stories. We all want to be patient as we begin noticing as precious people those we have not seen or seen only through a lens of dismissal or blame.

Congregations could recognize and celebrate the different ethnicities in their congregations. If a church is largely homogenous, the congregation could seek relationship with another church in its community. For example, the staff of First Presbyterian in Baton Rouge met with the staff of a neighbor church, Abounding Love Ministries. They shared stories of their history, their people. In particular, the mainly Caucasian staff of FPC listened, grieved, and prayed over the stories of those who grew up Black in Louisiana. A few weeks later, together they visited the River Road African American Museum together, and then over lunch, processed the visit, sealing their friendship in gentle tears.

**3) Commitment to lament alongside** others who have experienced the effects of racism. We know that the Spirit leads us into the sorrow of creation over the Fall of humanity (Rom. 8:22-23). This includes daring to grieve racism and its consequences before trying to defend, justify, deny or possibly even own our part in the destruction wrought by racism. Regular confession of sin lays down the tracks along which regular, honest, and healing lament over racism can occur. Every week we willingly participate in Reformed worship with its sacred emphasis on calling each and all of us to confess our sins before God and one another. We frequently offer prayers aloud for sins we may not personally have committed that week, but we confess in solidarity with the body of Christ and in humble awareness that we have the capacity, if not the propensity, for those very sins.

Similarly, our worship services could regularly include prayers of confession that draw us to lament and repent of various aspects of racism. Ethnic indifference, blindness to racial pain, acts of diminishment, discrimination or hostility, stereotyping and blaming can all be acknowledged. Such lament is healing and uniting. We can dare it because we possess the wonderful heritage of the declaration of pardon. All we name goes to the cross of Jesus for cleansing that enables us to live in a new way.

In our wider communities, we can find a model in Mother Emmanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC. In 2015, a racially motivated shooter killed nine members gathered at the church. At the shooter's bond hearing, family members of the slain openly grieved, named the wrong and then deliberately offered forgiveness. The pastor of the church has since begun a ministry called One New Humanity, which in November 2022, organized a Prayer Procession through seven places in Charleston, including the Old Exchange Building where slaves had been traded. The multi-ethnic event focused on lament, repentance, forgiveness, and unity. Such creative ways of shared sorrowing for sin can lead the church to a richer experience of faith, hope and love.

**4) Do justice** in our communities. As our churches take responsibility to address racism and its effects, we can seek more just communities. This can include churches partnering with public schools or even creating Christian schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Jobs and training programs can open paths for prisoners returning to society. Our churches

can encourage members to serve on town/city councils and task forces that address transportation access, housing, policing, and economic initiatives. Churches can host or organize community festivals that welcome a variety of ethnicities to participate. There are limitless possibilities for creative engagement cultivating kingdom harmony.

**5) Knowledge to resist narratives** that respond to the pain of racism without lament, empathy, confession, repentance or reconciliation in Christ. Genuine resolution can only come by being born from above, out of the old self and into the new creation begun by Jesus the last Adam.

We want to become aware of and counter the non-Gospel strategies which define liberation as moving *into* more of ourselves and our tribes. These philosophies set people of different ethnic, economic or social groups against one another. We know they are doomed to fail, dividing others and furthering hostility. We offer the Gospel as the truly freeing alternative. We require liberation *from* ourselves into Christ, by whom alone forgiveness for sins committed against us as well as by us can occur. The EPC can encourage teaching that clearly distinguishes true from false models for kingdom harmony.

**6) Authority to wield** scripture, prayer, and the truths of our Confession against the principality of racism in the church. Even as we expose errant narratives of liberation, we are also bold to shine the light of scripture into our individual hearts and the ways racism has affected the EPC as a whole. We can find energy and motivation to pursue kingdom harmony when we courageously allow the truth of scripture and the Confession to speak to our racial/ethnic sins. We may well come to realize how we have overlooked the painful effects of racism on our own members and in the culture to which we bring the Gospel.

Revelation 7 envisions glorious multi-ethnic worship of the true God. It offers a great picture of unity and equality. Has our largely homogenous denomination intentionally opened doors for service and leadership by those not of the majority ethnicity? Have we risked our preferred styles of worship to be enriched and challenged by the worship flavor others may bring? The Word slices even to the division of joint and marrow, soul and spirit. Let us more boldly proclaim a message of kingdom harmony, and the change it calls for, even at risk of creating initial discomfort or anger.

**7) Inspiration** to plant more multi-ethnic churches, to encourage mono-ethnic churches to envision a widening reach in worship and mission, and to engage varied and creative interaction with believers across ethnic lines. At the presbytery level, we are encouraging new church development leaders to focus more intentionally on fostering churches whose initial DNA is living now the future promised in the Word.

For example, Forge Church is an EPC multi-ethnic church plant in Greensboro, NC. Their leading edge of evangelism is through children's sports leagues. *Pay It Forward* promotes multi-ethnic and socio-economic integration by offering participation at no charge. Sports for children becomes an invitation for families to participate in the church. Multi-ethnic sports leagues have readily led to a diverse worshipping community.

**8) Finally, the joy to celebrate** the many places and ways in the EPC where the biblical vision of kingdom harmony is occurring now. We're beginning to tell the stories of people of color in our own church history. The Tim Russell Memorial Scholarship prepares African American EPC candidates for church leadership. Intentionally multi-ethnic churches in

places such as Houston, Ferguson, Cleveland, Greensboro, Memphis, New York, Detroit, Philadelphia, and other cities live forward our vision. Ministries in and with non-majority ethnic communities display our commitment to kingdom harmony. Increasing ethnic variety in leadership of churches and General Assembly indicates our willingness to share influence and authority. We embrace the great joy of meeting together around the table of the Lord who makes us one body, one temple, one church and one new reconciled humanity in which each member offers a consecrated distinctness to enrich the whole.

## CONCLUSION

Writing this letter has brought us the sad realization that throughout our country's history, there have been Presbyterians participating in, or even benefitting from, racism. At the same time, we've given thanks that we serve in a denomination that courageously confronts this reality. We've sought to engage in honest self-reflection about our failures. But we've also rejoiced that there have been Presbyterians at the forefront of abolition, civil rights, ethnic equality, and continuing reform. We stand on their side. The purpose of our letter has been to lament any complicity, by omission or commission, in racism. Yet, alongside lament, we rejoice in the atoning, harmonizing, embodied grace of Jesus Christ. Our beloved EPC bravely seeks to reflect the kingdom harmony envisioned in Revelation 7. We pray for your energy, courage, imagination, and zeal in *lamenting* racism with us, so deeply that the *hope* of the Gospel flows in a river of tears that Christ Jesus is making new as a river of everlasting life.

## BENEDICTION

May the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus, to whom be glory forever and ever (Heb. 13:2-21).

With you in Christ,

*The Ad Interim Committee*

TE Sean Boone  
RE Ken Chang  
TE Gerrit Dawson, chair person  
TE Joe Kim, assistant chair person  
RE Linda McDaniel  
TE Marcos Ortega  
TE George Robertson  
TE Annie Rose  
RE Carol Williams

TE Michael Davis, GA Staff  
TE Rufus Smith, Advisor

Scan below to submit feedback  
on the pastoral letter:



Name: Rick Dorr

## Part 2: Personal Information

1. Name: Dorr Rick Dale  
(Last) (First) (Middle)

Preferred Address: 2606 E Cherry Ave, Visalia, CA 93292

Preferred Phone: 559-736-4959

☒ Cell ☐ Work ☐ Home

Alternate Phone: 559-633-6516

☐ Cell ☒ Work ☐ Home

Email: rick@rickdorr.com

## 2. Work History:

Current and Previous Positions (ministry or otherwise)	Dates
Stallion Springs Community Church, Stallion Springs, CA	2006-2016
Meadows Fellowship Church, Las Vegas, NV	2003-2005
Shafter Community Fellowship, Shafter, CA	1993-2003
Posey Community Church, Posey, CA	
Chico Church of God, Chico, CA	
Bowdle Church of God, Bowle, SD	
Velva Church of God, Velva, ND	

Name: Rick Dorr

**3. Volunteer Experience** (applicable to a pastoral role)

Dates

Music Ministry and Worship Leader

Church Council Member

Sunday School Teacher

Adult Bible Study Teacher

Life Group Leader

Missionary Team Leader (Several Countries)

Administrative/Executive Pastor Role

**4. Ordination Status**

Ordained by (church/city/state): Stallion Springs Community Church  
Stallion Springs, CA 93561

Ordination Date: 2006

If not ordained:

Church Membership (church, city, state):

Candidate Under Care of (denomination and presbytery):

since (date):



Name: Rick Dorr

## 5. Educational Background:

a. Name of Institution	Dates Attended	Degree
Lee University	2012-2014	BS Bible/Theology
Northwest Bible College	1983	
American River College	1976	
BIOLA University	1973	

b. Continuing Education/Professional Development	Dates
Summit Bible College, Bakersfield, CA. 93308	2015
Pastor's Network Church Growth	2011-2012
See my resume for all training courses taken	

## 6. Other Experience:

- a. Types of professional supervision and personal accountability you have found helpful in your life and ministry:

In every church I pastored, I had accountability partners that kept me accountable for my life and ministry.

Each church either had a church council, a board of deacons or elders that also held me accountable.

I have also been involved in local Ministerial Associations for fellowship and accountability with other pastors.

Name: **Rick Dorr**

b. Community and Civic Activities:

1. Member of the American Legion, Chapter 18, Visalia, CA
2. JayCees
3. Habitat for Humanity
4. Kawainis Club
5. Ministerial Associations

c. Presbytery and General Assembly Activities:

I attended the Presbytery Meeting for the Prebsytery of the Pacific Southwest (POPS), January 25-27 and was interview by the COCC and the Prebystery for my Ordination.

d. Ecumenical Activities:

1. I conducted two (2) missionary campaigns in the Phillipines. I was the lead speaker. Each missions trip lasted for two weeks and I shared the gospel in multiple cities. I took a team of ministry leaders with me.
2. Missionary trip to build ministry facilities in Honduras
3. Missionary trip to Mexico where we worked with orphanages and preached at the Bible College in the evenings.
4. Construction of ministry training center in Honduras

e. Special Interests, Hobbies:

I write and sing songs with my guitar.  
I enjoy hunting and fishing.  
I am an avid reader.

f. Languages (other than English) you can speak, and level of proficiency:

English Only

Name: **Rick Dorr**

### **Part 3: Narrative**

- 1. Life Story:** In one page, describe your life's journey. Include key incidents (such as how you came to faith in Christ) that were significant in your formation as a person and your call to ministry.

I was raised in a Christian family and went to church my entire life. My family was involved in Sunday School, Sunday morning and evening worship services and mid-week Bible studies. In 1972, I joined the US Air Force. While in the military, I felt the calling from God to go into full-time ministry.

After getting out of the military, I went to Bible College at Northwest Bible College in Minot, ND. While there, I pastored my first church in Velva, ND and after college I transferred to Bowdle SD where I pastored the Bowdle Church of God.

Those events led me into a full-time ministry career that spanned almost 50 years as the lead pastor of 7 churches. During those years, I completed my Bachelor's Degree in Bible and Theology at Lee University in Cleveland, TN, graduating in 2014.

I have conducted multiple Christian crusades in the Philippines and parts of South America.

I also started the School of Ministry and licensed 8 individuals for ministry. Several of those graduates went on to become senior pastors themselves.

I am an avid student and have spent hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars in learning how to lead and build churches.

## 2. Self-Appraisal:

### a. Briefly describe your leadership style:

I have a visionary-leader style of leadership. I believe in doing things as a team and working with key leaders and elders to set goals that build up the congregation. In past ministries I had annual leadership retreats to set the annual calendars for the church. However, with that being said, I also believe that the Teaching Elders and Ruling elders (Session) govern the affairs of the church. As the chief visionary for the church I share that vision with the Ruling Elders, and with the consensus of the Session, we share that vision with the congregation.

- How you go about making decisions:

I hold to the democratic leadership style because it encourages everyone to participate in all processes of the church, allowing others to share their opinions, and know that their opinion and suggestions matter.

- Your administrative style:

My ministry style is one of delegation. I believe in delegation of church leadership and ministry responsibilities. I believe everyone has a spiritual gift and that gift should be discovered, cultivated and used for the Kingdom of God. I am not a lone ranger, handling the majority of church responsibilities because I don't think anyone else can do it better than me.

### b. Talk about how you handled a recent conflict. What did you do well? What areas of conflict resolution do you need to be more effective at?

I recently had a conflict with one of my co-workers. I was his trainer when he first began on the job but now he continually expects me to do his work for him and becomes angry when I am unable to help him in the way he demands. I had to sit down with him and let him know much I appreciated him but I let him know that I am no longer able to be his continual go-to person. I shared how busy I am and that he has been in the role for over a year and needed to learn how to handle his own work load. When it comes to conflict resolution, the one area where I need to be more effective is to handle the conflict quickly and not let it continue.

### c. What do you enjoy about working as part of a team? What is challenging to you?

I love the camaraderie that comes from working as a team. There is a collaborative spirit in teams that creates a dynamic synergy and makes the work load lighter and more enjoyable. Also there are a lot of creative ideas that come from working as a team. The biggest challenge in working with teams is the conflict that comes when one or more individuals don't get their way and cannot agree with the decision of the majority.

Name: **Rick Dorr**

- d. Briefly describe your worship preferences: *(preaching style, preferred worship style [e.g., liturgical, modern, traditional, blended, etc.])*

I have multiple styles of preaching. I have done expository preaching through books of the Bible, but my preferred style is sermon series where I will spend several weeks or months exhausting a particular subject.

I enjoy both contemporary worship music as well as hymns. I believe that all styles of music can glorify God and uplift the congregation.

When I pastored in Stallion Springs Community Church, we had two services. The first service was more liturgical with hymns as the worship style and the Lord's prayer and the doxology recited at every service. The second service was more of a contemporary style of service.

- e. Share your sense of your call to ministry:

I am called to be a Teaching Elder. I have served in other supportive roles, but I flow in my gifts as a lead pastor. As the lead pastor, I believe I am being effective when individuals become fully developing followers of Christ and use their gifts and talents to build the Kingdom of God.

As pastor, it is my privilege to lead people into the discovery of their gifts that can be used to build up the body of Christ. Church growth is the positive outcome of growing a church of committed followers.

- What type of ministry role are you called to? And what would effectiveness look like in that role?

I am called to be a Teaching Elder. I have served in other supportive roles, but I flow in my gifts as a lead pastor. As the lead pastor, I believe I am being effective when individuals become fully devoted followers of Christ and use their gifts and talents to build the Kingdom of God.

As lead pastor, it is my privilege to lead people into the discovery of their gifts that can be used to build up the body of Christ. Church growth is the positive outcome of growing a church of committed followers.

- What are your personal ideals and long-term goals?

I have spent several thousands of dollars in studying church growth and what 8 systems need to be in place for the church to grow. By implementing these teachings, I was able to take a small church of 55 people in Stallion Springs, in a community of 2,500 people, to a congregation of over 300. During that time we went from 1 to 3 services on the weekend, added a multi-purpose facility which housed our administrative offices, fellowship hall, and children's ministries. We also added multiple staff members to the church. My goal is to take these same strategies of church growth and implement them into the church at Woodlake and grow the congregation.

Name: **Rick Dorr**

- f. What are the ways you are nurturing your relationship with God in everyday life?  
I start everyday with personal devotions. It has been my practice for years to read the Bible through annually. I also have daily times of prayer. My goal is to read a spiritual book monthly and take leadership courses annually.
- g. What are your character strengths?  
Integrity, enthusiasm, perseverance, kindness, love, creativity, open-minded, love of learning, teamwork and team player, leadership, self-control, disciplined, humor, optimism, gratitude, vision casting, goal oriented, prudence, appreciation of beauty and excellence.
- h. What are five key gifts/skills/abilities you would bring to a ministry position?  
1. My key strengths lie in leadership and leadership development.  
2. I am a visionary and vision caster and can get others to buy-in to the vision.  
3. I am a goal-setter and can bring goals into reality by setting daily, weekly, monthly, and annual tasks.  
4. I have strong administrative skills and am proficient in most Office programs.  
5. I am a gifted preacher and teacher and can expound on the Word of God.
- i. The New Testament teaches us that no one Christian—not even the pastor—possesses every spiritual gift, but we are meant to work together as members of Christ’s one body (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12). What are the spiritual gifts you will need other team members to bring in order to complement your leadership and make the church effective in its ministry?  
Gifts of serving others; teaching; exhortation; generosity; leadership; kindness; evangelism; wisdom and knowledge; faith; helps; administration; preaching and pastoral gifts; and music (both singers and musicians).

### 3. Views:

- a. What opportunities do you see for the church to reflect the reality of Christ's Kingdom in our present context?

The current state of the world makes this the greatest time in history and the opportunities for leading and growing a church are huge. Jesus was clear that He would build His church and we have the opportunity to partner with Him to see the church grow. The church brings hope and stability to people and helps us take our focus off this world and onto Christ's Kingdom.

We have the opportunity to help people find meaningful Christian relationships through the church. People are more fragmented and disconnected than ever before even with the creation of so many social platforms.

We are able to minister to the homeless and needy by being a church of compassion and benevolence.

- b. What are your views on charismatic expression in worship?

I believe that all the gifts are still active in the church today and as previously stated, each believer should discover their gifts and talents and use them for the Kingdom of God.

All the gifts, when in operation, are used to build up the believer and the church. The church should emphasise spiritual gifts, but one should not receive any more importance than any of the others. As such, charismatic Christianity is a form of Christianity that emphasizes the work of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts as an everyday part of a believer's life.

- c. What are your views on women in ordained office?

I believe that women can be gifted ordained pastors and elders. I have had several women pastors on my staff and have licensed women as pastors.

- d. What are your views on human sexuality and gender?

I believe God created the human race as male and female and there are no other genders. God ordained marriage to be between a man and a woman.

Name: **Rick Dorr**

#### Part 4: Denominational Alignment

1. Do you affirm the “Essentials of Our Faith” without exception? ☒ Yes ☐ No

If “No” please briefly explain:

2. Do you agree with and can you submit to the system of government of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church? ☒ Yes ☐ No

If “No” please briefly explain:

3. 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

If “No” please briefly explain:

4. Do you take any exceptions to the *Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms*? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If “Yes,” identify the topic with chapter, paragraph, or question number you take your exception with. State your alternate view with biblical support. Include additional page if necessary.

*(An “exception” means that you disagree with a statement in the Westminster Confession, believe it to be wrong, have Scriptural support to justify your belief, and have Scriptural support of an alternative view.)*

5. Do you willingly offer the sacrament of infant baptism to Christian parents? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If “No” please briefly explain:



Name: Justin J. Kim

## Part 2: Personal Information

1. Name: Kim Justin Jungsup  
(Last) (First) (Middle)

Preferred Address: 4407 326th NE, Carnation, WA 98014

Preferred Phone: 452-949-9437 ☒ Cell ☐ Work ☐ Home

Alternate Phone: ☐ Cell ☐ Work ☐ Home

Email: jungstin@gmail.com

## 2. Work History:

Current and Previous Positions (ministry or otherwise)	Dates
Doxa Church in Redmond, WA (Generations Discipleship Pastor)	10/17/22 - Present
Bethel Grace Church in Irvine, CA (Senior Pastor)	08/2015 - 10/2022
New Life Fellowship in Bothell WA (Senior Pastor)	01/2009 - 04/2015
Korean Presbyterian Church in Fairfax, VA (Pastor of English & Korean)	06/2006 - 12/2008
Korean Presbyterian Church in Orlando, FL (Worship & Youth Pastor)	08/2003 - 05/2006
McLean Korean Presbyterian Church in McLean, VA (Pastor of English & Korean)	05/2000 - 08/2003

Name: Justin J. Kim

**3. Volunteer Experience** (applicable to a pastoral role)

Dates

**4. Ordination Status**

Ordained by (church/city/state): Korean Capital Presbytery (PCA): Korean  
Presbyterian Church of Washington / Fairfax /  
Virginia)

Ordination Date: April 2008

If not ordained:

Church Membership (church, city, state):

Candidate Under Care of (denomination and presbytery):

since (date):

Name: Justin J. Kim

## 5. Educational Background:

a. Name of Institution	Dates Attended	Degree
Reformed Theological Seminary	2000 - 2006	Master of Divinity
James Madison University	1995-1999	B.A. English
		B.S. General Education
		B.S. Computer Information Systems

b. Continuing Education/Professional Development	Dates
Arrow Leadership Program	10/2013 - 09/2015

## 6. Other Experience:

- a. Types of professional supervision and personal accountability you have found helpful in your life and ministry:
- Worked as a computer consultant for Project Performance Corporation in McLean, Virginia.
- I also served as a campus staff for Agape Christian Fellowship at James Madison University.

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b. Community and Civic Activities:

c. Presbytery and General Assembly Activities:

d. Ecumenical Activities:

I served as a council member for the Sola Network.  
I served as a board member for East Asia Missions.

e. Special Interests, Hobbies:

Reading, Hiking, Mountain Biking, Traveling.

f. Languages (other than English) you can speak, and level of proficiency:

Korean

Justin J. Kim  
Name:

### Part 3: Narrative

- 1. Life Story:** In one page, describe your life's journey. Include key incidents (such as how you came to faith in Christ) that were significant in your formation as a person and your call to ministry.

I was born into a Christian family in South Korea. My family and I attended church regularly and continued to attend church on Sundays after my parents moved the family to Northern Virginia. I participated in a Youth Camp the summer after my sixth grade where I received Jesus as my Lord and Savior. My youth group was small, but healthy. I served in various roles as a student leader. My older cousins who were devout believers, along with my bible teachers and youth pastors heavily influenced my spiritual growth. In the summer before I went off to college, I received a calling for ministry at a retreat.

I attended James Madison University. There, I began attending campus ministries. I also committed myself to a local church in the area. I began serving at the local church and also my campus ministries in various leadership roles. Upon graduation, I decided to commit a year as a campus staff where I had the opportunity to preach, teach, and lead several ministry events. After my one year commitment as a campus staff, I delayed my seminary studies to take a job offer as a computer consultant in McLean Virginia. This job gave me the opportunity to pay off my school debt and to also save for the future. This job also gave me the opportunity to move back home and to serve as a lay leader for my home church. After a few months, I decided to enroll at the satellite campus of Reformed Theological Seminary in the Washington, D.C. area to be a part-time student. After a few years, I transitioned to be a full-time student by moving to the Orlando campus. At RTS, I was privileged to learn under some great professors and to also serve at a healthy church in Central Florida.

Upon completion of my seminary studies, I received the opportunity to move back to Northern Virginia to serve as the English Ministry pastor of a PCA church. It was a great decision because I met the woman who would eventually become my wife and I was also ordained in the PCA during my time at this church. My wife and I then moved to Seattle, WA where we served a local church for six years. We then received a calling to move to Bethel Church in Irvine, CA in July of 2015. I served at Bethel until October of 2022. My family and I then accepted a call to serve as a pastor at Doxa Church in Redmond, WA. I have learned so much through the various pastoral ministries that I've held and most importantly, I've learned the importance of building an intimate relationship with Jesus through my personal times of worship. I enjoy preaching, discipling other me, and growing in grace each and every year.

## 2. Self-Appraisal:

- a. Briefly describe your leadership style:

I strive for the upside-down leadership philosophy that is counter cultural. Passages like John 13:1-5 where Jesus washed the feet of his disciples and urging them to do likewise is powerful and influential to me. I often meditate on Mark 10:45. I believe in modeling servant-leadership to others.

- ☐ How you go about making decisions:

Prayer first. Seeking wisdom from the Lord and also seeking direction from Scripture and biblical principles. After that, I may ask trusted mentors and friends. In a session, welcoming and working together with other elders to make a good decision that's best for the church.

- ☐ Your administrative style:

I can do administrative work, but I prefer to delegate much of it so that I can focus on other priorities that goes with being a pastor. I am well organized and I like to plan ahead.

- b. Talk about how you handled a recent conflict. What did you do well? What areas of conflict resolution do you need to be more effective at?

In a recent conflict, I came to realize that there was a misunderstanding due to some miscommunication. What I did well was to initiate a conversation with the person who was in conflict with me. I sought to listen first. I also was able to stay calm and collected and tried to avoid letting the intensity of the emotion to lead me into anger. I do think I need to communicate clearly and I need to follow up more after a conflict has been resolved. Also some clear steps to reconciliation would be helpful for the next time I find myself in a conflict.

- c. What do you enjoy about working as part of a team? What is challenging to you?

I enjoy working as a part of a team because of the collaborative aspects of it. I also don't feel alone. Many people are also gifted differently. With a good team who bring different gifts to the table, you can do so much more to reach the vision and goal at hand.

What is challenging is the different personalities that can cause disunity and a lack of chemistry.

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- d. Briefly describe your worship preferences: (*preaching style, preferred worship style [e.g., liturgical, modern, traditional, blended, etc.]*)

I prefer a worship preference in which the preaching of God's Word is centralized. I like a blended style of worship.

- e. Share your sense of your call to ministry:

I first experienced a call to ministry as a high school senior. I felt an internal desire and conviction for ministry. This inward call was affirmed and confirmed outwardly when those who know me well, my own family members, mentors, pastors, and friends, also encouraged me in my call to ministry. This call to ministry has not waned at all throughout my life. I still sense a conviction and call into pastoral ministry. I am called to preach the gospel and to pastor a local church.

- What type of ministry role are you called to? And what would effectiveness look like in that role?

I am called to preach the gospel and to pastor a local church. In this season of my life, I sense a call to be the senior pastor where I can work alongside the session, cast vision, raise a healthy staff and a health culture and to preach the Word faithfully.

I would be effective if there was clear evidence of good fruit from my ministry. This would include a healthy culture, clear preaching of the gospel, healthy leadership, numerical and spiritual growth and a sense of clear vision and direction for the church.

- What are your personal ideals and long-term goals?

My ideals include a senior pastoral role in which I can develop my own staff, work alongside elders, preach regularly and shepherd a church for the long haul. I would like to, Lord willing, retire at my next pastoral position. I would like a church in which they provide generously to me and my family so that we don't have to worry about finances and provision. I would like a dedicated office space where I can study and prepare sermons. My long-term goals are to establish a healthy, gospel-centered church moving out in Kingdom expansion. I would love to plan more churches and raise up more leaders and pastors in ministry. I would like to also teach at a seminary or a bible college to invest into the next generation of pastors that will come after me.

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- f. What are the ways you are nurturing your relationship with God in everyday life?  
My personal times of worship are a priority for me. I spend time in the morning before my children wake up so that I can have unhurried quiet time with the Lord. I pray and read a passage in the Scripture. I utilize S.O.A.P. (Scripture, Observation, Application, and Prayer) from the passage. I spend time meditating and journaling and then prayer.  
  
I also have an evening routine of Scripture reading, prayer, and journaling before sleeping.
- g. What are your character strengths?  
Relational.  
Collaborative.  
Honest.  
Trustworthy.  
Consistent.
- h. What are five key gifts/skills/abilities you would bring to a ministry position?  
Leadership  
Preaching/Teaching  
Shepherding  
Counseling  
Relational
- i. The New Testament teaches us that no one Christian—not even the pastor—possesses every spiritual gift, but we are meant to work together as members of Christ’s one body (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12). What are the spiritual gifts you will need other team members to bring in order to complement your leadership and make the church effective in its ministry?  
Gifts of Encouragement.  
Gifts of Administration.  
Gifts of Worship and Music.  
Gifts of Counseling.



### 3. Views:

- a. What opportunities do you see for the church to reflect the reality of Christ's Kingdom in our present context?

Opportunities abound today for the church to reflect the reality of Christ's Kingdom in the way it practices radical generosity, radical hospitality, and reaching out to people in love. I also think the Church can faithfully live out the gospel and be excellent employees in their places of work and employment. I think sports ministry and music ministry are relevant ways to attract people to see the reality of Christ's Kingdom.

- b. What are your views on charismatic expression in worship?

I affirm the spiritual gifts and believe that the Holy Spirit continues to bestow gifts upon believers for the edification of the body of Christ. I am very open (but careful and cautious) to the charismatic expressions in worship and I believe that the spiritual gifts must align with biblical principles.

- c. What are your views on women in ordained office?

I lean towards a complementarian view regarding women in leadership roles in the church. I do affirm the charitable nature regarding women in ordained offices. I seek to honor the congregation under the denomination in which they fall.

- d. What are your views on human sexuality and gender?

I believe that God created men and women in His image. I also affirm the traditional view of marriage between a man and woman. I believe this view to be biblical.

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#### Part 4: Denominational Alignment

1. Do you affirm the “Essentials of Our Faith” without exception? ☒ Yes ☐ No

If “No” please briefly explain:

2. Do you agree with and can you submit to the system of government of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If “No” please briefly explain:

3. 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

If “No” please briefly explain:

4. Do you take any exceptions to the *Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms*? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If “Yes,” identify the topic with chapter, paragraph, or question number you take your exception with. State your alternate view with biblical support. Include additional page if necessary.

*(An “exception” means that you disagree with a statement in the Westminster Confession, believe it to be wrong, have Scriptural support to justify your belief, and have Scriptural support of an alternative view.)*

5. Do you willingly offer the sacrament of infant baptism to Christian parents? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If “No” please briefly explain:

## **Justin J. Kim**

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### **EPC – Candidates Statement of Faith**

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

I have a high view of the Bible with an emphasis on the authority, inspiration, and inerrancy of the Bible. I believe that the Bible is the ultimate and supreme authority in matters of faith and practice. This means that the Bible is the final and unerring source of divine revelation. I also view the Bible to be inspired by God. Human authors, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, wrote the Scriptures in such a way that every word is God-breathed.

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

I adhere to the traditional Christian understanding of the Trinity, which asserts that God exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. While the distinct roles of each person are acknowledged, they are of one essence and fully God. And God the Father is the Creator of the universe and the Sustainer of all that exists. God the Father is the architect of the redemptive plan of the gospel. The covenantal framework is often used to explain how God establishes and fulfills His promises throughout History, ultimately culminating in the work of Christ for the salvation of His chosen people. God the Father knows all things and He is omniscient. He is omnipotent (He is all powerful) and He is Omnipresent (He is everywhere) and He is sovereign.

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

Christology is the study of the person and work of Jesus Christ. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Word made flesh and the eternal Son of God, who through His perfect life and sacrificial death atoned for the sins of all who trust in Him alone for salvation. Furthermore, I affirm the dual nature of Christ – that he is one person with two natures, divine and human, without confusion, change, division, or separation. Jesus is also the great High Priest who intercedes for believers before the Father.

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

Pneumatology is the study of the Holy Spirit. It emphasizes the role and work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, the Church, and the world. The Holy Spirit is not merely a force or influence but is a distinct person within the Trinity, along with God the Father and God the Son. The Holy Spirit indwells God's people and gives them all that is needed to trust God and to live for Him. In other words, the Holy Spirit is the agent of regeneration and conversion and sanctification in the life of the believer. The Holy Spirit brings about the work in bringing new birth and enabling believers to turn to Christ in faith and to live for God.

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

Anthropology is the study of what the Bible teaches about man or mankind (humanity), particularly concerning its nature, origin, and moral status. Sometimes Anthropology is called the Doctrine of Man. Humanity is seen as having been created by God in His image and likeness (*imago Dei*). However, as a result of Adam's disobedience (original sin), all human beings are born with a sinful nature. In other words, all of mankind are sinners and totally unable to save themselves from God's displeasure, except by His mercy and grace.

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

Hamartiology is the study of sin, its origin, nature, and its impact on humanity. Sin entered the world due to original sin committed by Adam and therefore, all humanity inherited a sinful nature. Sin has corrupted humanity, leading to a universal condition of sinfulness. As a result, man is rendered spiritually dead and incapable of saving themselves. This total depravity of man teaches that sin has affected every aspect of human nature. Sin is fundamentally an act of rebellion against God's authority and a violation of His moral law. It means to "miss the mark." We miss God's mark of righteousness. Sin is not merely a mistake or a weakness but a willful transgression against God's righteous standards. It is only through Jesus and His atoning sacrifice on the cross, that Christ provides forgiveness of sins and reconciles believers to God, breaking the power of sin in their lives.

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

Soteriology deals with the study of salvation and how God reconciles the separation between man and God due to sin. I believe that God saves sinners, completely and entirely of his own free will and action. I believe that salvation from eternal punishment for sin is to be given to all those who have faith in Christ. Faith is not purely intellectual but involves trust in God's promise to save.

## **8. Satan**

Satan, also known as the devil, is the fallen angel who rebelled against God and now opposes God's purposes. Satan's rebellion against God led to his fall from grace. And like other angels who followed him in rebellion, Satan became a fallen and sinful creature. Satan is also the tempter and the accuser, who seeks to undermine God's work and lead humanity again from God's truth. He is the principal adversary to God and His ways. Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44). But while Satan is powerful and is a cunning adversary, his power is ultimately limited by God's sovereignty. Satan can only operate within the boundaries established by God. He is a defeated foe to God and His people because his ultimate

destiny is condemnation. The final judgment will result in the defeat of Satan and the eternal separation of the devil and his followers from God's presence.

## **9. Angels and Demons**

Angels are created beings by God. They are considered non-material, intelligent, and powerful beings who serve God's purposes. They are portrayed as messengers, worshipers, and agents of God's will. There seems to be a hierarchical structure with various orders and ranks (archangels, cherubim, and seraphim). There seems to be a diverse array of angelic beings with different roles and functions.

Demons are angels who rebelled against God, led by Lucifer, who became Satan. These fallen angels are characterized by their opposition to God and their hostile influence in the world. The fall of Satan and his followers is often associated with pride and rebellion. I believe in the reality of spiritual warfare involving both angels and demons. Believers of Christ are called to be aware of the spiritual battles, put on the armor of God, and to stand firm against the schemes of the devil (Ephesians 6:10-18). And while demons are considered to be powerful spiritual beings, their power is ultimately limited by God's sovereignty. They can only operate within the boundaries established by God, and their ultimate defeat is assured through Christ's work. Satan, along with the demons will face final judgment and condemnation. The ultimate destiny of demons is eternal separation from God's presence.

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

Ecclesiology is the theology that deals with the nature, structure, and purpose of the Church. There is the visible and invisible Church. The visible Church includes all those who profess faith in Christ and participate in the outward appearance and external aspects of the Christian community. This can be attending a worship service and doing outreach activities. The invisible Church consists of the elect. These are those that are chosen by God for salvation.

Traditional marks of the Church include the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments (baptism and communion). These marks are essential to identifying a true and faithful expression of the Church. The Church is the bride of Christ, who looks forward to the return of Jesus and the final fulfillment of God's Kingdom.

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

The Spiritual Life of the Believer encompasses the ongoing process of sanctification, the believer's relationship with God, and the work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian's life. The spiritual life of the believer begins with regeneration, which is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. Through regeneration, believers experience new birth, becoming new creatures

in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). The spiritual life of the believer is marked by ongoing faith in Christ and repentance from sin. Martin Luther, the great Reformer said that all of life is one of repentance.

The spiritual life of believers applies the means of grace – specifically, the Word of God, prayer, community life in the church, and the sacraments, in growing and maturing in faith. Above all, the spiritual life of the believer is centered on the cross of Christ. The atoning work of Christ on the cross is foundational to forgiveness, justification, and ongoing transformation in the believer's life.

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

Eschatology is the study of the last things, including the ultimate destiny of humanity, the end of the world, and the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan. I hold to an Amillennial view (as opposed to Postmillennialism and Dispensationalism), which emphasizes that the millennial reign of Christ mentioned in Revelation 20 is not a literal 1,000-year earthly kingdom but rather symbolizes the present age in which Christ reigns spiritually from heaven. This view says that Christ's victory over sin and death is already accomplished through His first coming and redemptive work. I believe in interpreting eschatology through the framework of covenant theology. The covenants are seen as integral to understanding God's redemptive plan throughout history. The fulfillment of these covenants is a key aspect of understanding a reformed biblical view of eschatology.

In summation, believers look forward to the consummation of God's kingdom, where Christ's victory is fully realized. This involves the renewal of all things, the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, and the establishment of the new heavens and the new earth. Believers also affirm the bodily and visible return of Christ. His return is connected with the final judgment, where all humanity will be judged based on their response to the gospel. Believers will be rewarded with eternal life, and unbelievers will face eternal separation from God. We as Christians believe in the resurrection of the dead. Both believers and unbelievers will experience bodily resurrection, but the destinies of the two groups differ with believers being raised to eternal life with God in glory, and unbelievers to eternal condemnation and separation from the King of glory.

## **13. Evangelism**

Evangelism aligns with the broader Christian mission of proclaiming the gospel and making disciples. While I believe in God's sovereignty in salvation and the doctrine of election, I also recognize the importance of human responsibility in sharing the message of salvation. Believers are called to share the good news with people from every nation, recognizing that God's redemptive plan includes individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Evangelism involves communicating the message of God's redemptive work through Jesus Christ, emphasizing the need for repentance and faith in Him. Prayer is vital in the work of

evangelism. The Holy Spirit works through the proclamation of the gospel to convict hearts, to bring about repentance, and to create faith in Christ. The mode and method for evangelism can vary. I believe what seems to be most effective in our modern day is to practice radical generosity and hospitality, looking to build genuine trust and friendship which leads to opportunities for deeper conversations about faith and testimony. I also believe that good works often pave the way for people to be receptive to the good news. I believe that we as believers should extend an invitation to our churches and our events, as well as into our homes to practice gospel hospitality and also look for ways to articulate with words, the gospel message. Evangelism is absolutely important in the Christian life and to the call of the Christian mission to expand God's Kingdom.

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

I affirm the continuation of spiritual gifts in the church today. I believe and affirm that the Holy Spirit continues to bestow gifts upon believers for the edification of the body of Christ. This means that the gifts are given to equip and empower believers for various forms of service and ministry. Furthermore, spiritual gifts are the manifestations of God's grace and a means by which believers serve one another. The spiritual gifts must align with biblical principles, and I believe that Scripture provides the normative standard for evaluating and understanding spiritual gifts.

There is a diversity of spiritual gifts mentioned in Scripture. Consider 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and Ephesians 4. These gifts include, but are not limited to, teaching, preaching, prophecy, healing, discernment, administration, and acts of mercy. Again, each believer receives different gifts for the building up of the body of Christ.

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

The Scriptures is central to the understanding of faith, doctrine, and church ministry. I hold to a very high view of Scripture and I believe that the Bible is the ultimate and sole authority for matters of faith and practice. I believe in the divine inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures. The Scriptures will have a central role in my ministry. My preaching and teaching of the Word hold a significant place in worship and ministry. The pulpit is considered the focal point of the worship service, and the exposition of Scriptures is the primary means by which God communicates with His people. I also believe that biblical principles from the Scriptures should govern the structure and practices of the church and ministry. I believe in both personal corporate devotion to the Scriptures. I will engage in personal Bible study, meditation, and prayer.

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

All of Reformed Theology appeals to me. But particularly, I find much joy in the Authority of Scripture, how the Bible is inspired and authoritative Word of God. I love the Sovereignty of

God, whereby God rules with absolute control over all creation. I find much comfort that God, in His grace and mercy, has chosen to redeem a people to himself, delivering us from sin and death. I love the doctrines of grace and I find them to be true and aligned with Scripture.

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

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Holy Trinity, along with God the Father and God the Son (Jesus Christ). The Holy Spirit's ministry is crucial and foundational to the life of the Church and the individual believer. The Holy Spirit has a crucial role in the regeneration of believers. The Spirit is the agent who brings about spiritual life in people, enabling them to respond in faith to the gospel and enter into a saving relationship with God. Also, the Holy Spirit indwells every believer and serves as a helper, comforter, encourager, and more. The Holy Spirit is actively involved in the process of sanctification and empowers believers to grow in holiness, producing the fruit of the Spirit in their lives.

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

I hold to a complementarian view regarding women in leadership roles in the church. The complementarian view views that men and women are equal in value and dignity but have different, complementary roles in the family and the church. Leadership roles such as eldership and senior pastoral roles are reserved for men. This is based on certain biblical passages that support male headship in the church like Genesis 2:18, 20-24 (the creation account emphasizes the creation of woman as a helper suitable for man), 1 Corinthians 11:3, 8-9, 1 Timothy 2:11-14, and Ephesians 5:22-24.

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

Pros:

- Shared leadership through a structure/system of elders and deacons. This can foster a sense of accountability and collaboration among elected leaders, preventing the concentration of power in a singular individual or even a small group of individuals.
- Unity of the church. The connectional nature of Presbyterianism allows for collaboration and mutual support among local congregations. This also cultivates unity amongst the congregations as they all share the same beliefs in theology, doctrines, and values. Churches are connected through regional and national governing bodies, facilitating cooperation in mission, education, and outreach.
- Church Discipline. The Presbyterian form of government has a framework for church discipline. Conflicts, disputes or issues within a congregation can be addressed through a system of church courts, promoting accountability and order.



Cons:

- The connectional nature and structure of the Presbyterian form of government can lead to unhealthy bureaucracy. Decision-making may involve multiple layers of approval, potentially slowing down the response to urgent matters. Ministry is just overall slow.
- Balancing the authority of local congregations with higher governing bodies (presbyteries, general assemblies) can be challenging. Conflicts may arise over issues of autonomy and centralized control. Some congregations may feel constrained by the decisions made at higher levels of governance.

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

I am called by God to serve him in pastoral ministry. So, over the past several years, I've spent a lot of time learning about and reflecting on the nature and purpose of ministry within the local church. I believe that the pastor's responsibilities are to feed the flock, to lead the flock, to tend the flock and to guard the flock.

I also believe that my walk with God is vital. There is nothing more important than my intimacy with Jesus. Before God called me to shepherd his people, he called me to himself (Romans 1:6). My philosophy of ministry starts with my union with Christ. My private walk with God is essential to a fruitful ministry and this means practicing the spiritual disciplines, pursuing holiness, and living in obedience to God.

My relationship with my family and kids is vital for ministry health, and after God comes my marriage and my kids. This means I must prioritize my family, shepherd them, and ensure I lead and spend adequate time with them. Serving my family well means loving and pursuing my wife, raising my kids in the Lord, and ensuring I live out the faith at home just like I do at church.

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

Evangelism is challenging for me on a personal level because so much of my time is spent with believers. So, I have to intentionally put myself in a position where I can connect with, be around, and make friends with unbelievers. In personal evangelism, I believe it's important for me to be authentic and demonstrate genuine faith. I strive to build intentional relationships with people in my community. I try to get to know their needs, struggles, and aspirations. Genuine relationships provide a natural context for sharing the gospel. I believe prayer is important. So, I commit myself to praying regularly for the lost as well as for opportunities to share my personal testimony and the gospel. My wife and I have been trying to practice gospel hospitality whereby we are inviting people into our homes and by doing so, inviting them into our lives.

As a pastor in a local church, my approach to evangelism involves teaching and preaching the Word to people. I assume that not everyone in the congregation are believers so I make sure that my sermons are sprinkled with evangelistic tones to reach the unbeliever. I always strive to preach the gospel and Christ crucified. I push for an evangelistic lifestyle in my church members and also for evangelism events. I implement training programs to equip members for personal evangelism. This is done by offering workshops, seminars, or small group studies focused on evangelistic principles and practical skills. Gospel hospitality can be applied in a corporate sense as well. As a pastor, I strive to create a welcoming and hospitable atmosphere in the church. A friendly and inviting environment can make visitors more receptive to the message of the gospel.

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

I first experienced a call to ministry as a high school senior. I felt an internal desire and conviction for ministry. This inward call was affirmed and confirmed outwardly when those who know me well, my own family members, mentors, pastors, and friends, also encouraged me in my call to ministry. This call to ministry has not waned at all throughout my life. I still sense a conviction and call into ministry.

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

Personal accountability is crucial in my Christian life because the Bible teaches the principles of personal accountability. We are all responsible for our actions, decisions, and the use of our God-given gifts and resources. Romans 14:12 and 2 Corinthians 5:10 underscore the reality of each person giving an account before God. Furthermore, personal accountability fosters spiritual maturity. When I take responsibility for my actions and seek to align my life with God's Word, I grow in faith, wisdom, and character. This involves a commitment to ongoing sanctification and the pursuit of holiness (1 Peter 1:15-16). I am also called to be steward of the gifts, time and resources entrusted to me by God. Personal accountability involves managing these aspects of life in a way that honors God.

Personal accountability also means building and maintaining healthy relationships where acknowledging mistakes, seeking forgiveness when necessary, and striving for reconciliation occurs. In the context of Christian community, accountability contributes to the unity and growth of the Body of Christ and I would teach this as a pastor to those under my pastoral ministry.