

**Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky**  
**Stated Meeting**  
**November 16, 2024**  
**LaGrange Presbyterian Church**  
**AGENDA**

**Moderator: Teaching Elder Christine Coy Fohr**

**Vice-moderator: Ruling Elder Alicia Bloos**

**Stated Clerk: Teaching Elder Jerry Van Marter**

**Stated Clerk Pro-tem: Teaching Elder Jenny Edlin**

**Recording Clerk: Teaching Elder Andrew Hartmans**

10:30 a.m. **Session Minutes Peer Review** – Church Administration Committee

11:30 a.m. **Registration**

12:00 p.m. **Lunch**

12:45 p.m. **Gathering All Together** – Moderator Christine Coy Fohr

- Opening prayer
- Welcome to first time Ruling Elders and Guests
- Welcome and seating of any Corresponding Members
- Welcome from LaGrange Presbyterian Church: Al Earley
- Declaration of a quorum and approval of the docket.

1:00 p.m. **Worship:** David Gambrell, Worshipful Work Committee

- Rev. Al Earley, pastor of LaGrange Presbyterian Church, preaching.
- Offering recipient: Highpoint Charitable Services ([info@highpointcs.org](mailto:info@highpointcs.org)): HighPoint Charitable Services is a volunteer driven organization working to bring wholeness to the community, share the gospel and meet physical needs of children, fragile adults, the elderly, and families. HighPoint helps with resources to reduce the suffering of families caught in the cycle of hunger, poverty, and homelessness.

1:45 p.m. **Consent Agenda:** Jerry Van Marter

- **FOR ACTION:** Approve the minutes of the August 22, 2024 called meeting and the September 16, 2024 stated meeting.
- **FOR INFORMATION:** FIRST READING of proposed amendments to the Constitution submitted to the presbyteries by the 226<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2024). Final action will be taken at the February 22 presbytery meeting. An open forum to discuss the amendments will be held as part of Education Day prior to the February 22 presbytery meeting. *(from the Church Administration Committee)*

1:50 p.m. **Interim General Presbyter's report:** Marian McClure Taylor

2:00 p.m. **Commission on Ministry report:** Marissa Galvan-Valle

- Examination of Marissa Carver for ordination.

**FOR ACTION:** Approve Marissa Carver for ordination and receive her by transfer from Transylvania Presbytery. (COM has approved Marissa's call and terms of call to serve as pastor of South Frankfort Presbyterian Church.

- Portland Avenue Presbyterian Church:

**FOR ACTION:** Approve an Administrative Commission with original jurisdiction to walk alongside the session of Portland Avenue Presbyterian Church during its transition. (*from the Commission on Ministry*)

- Summary of activities since last presbytery meeting (see attached)
- Recognition of Orderversaries

2:45 p.m. **Commission on Preparation for Ministry:** Carl Horton

- **FOR ACTION:** Move Richard Recob from Inquirer to Candidate status.

3:00 p.m. **Nominations and Representation Committee:** Linda Reichenbecher

3:05 p.m. **Hispanic- Latino/a Ministries Committee:** Tom Vandergriff

3:10 p.m. **Announcements** (one minute or less, please)

- Brief presentation by Sandra Duverge on the General Assembly's Public Service Loan Forgiveness Coaching program.

3:25 p.m.      **Reports from other Councils:**

- Commissioners and Advisory Delegates to the 226<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (Perry Chang, Marian McClure Taylor, TSAD Meg Buckner)
- Delegates to the Kentucky Council of Churches Annual Assembly (Marae Mallard, Galen Zavala, Marian McClure Taylor, Jonathan Philpot)

3:40 p.m.      **Coordinating Commission report:** Perry Chang

- **Mission Committee/Self-Development of People report:**  
Brad Palmer/Faye Fedlam
- **Finance Committee report:** Steve Makela
  - Approval of the 2025 presbytery budget.

3:55 p.m.      **New Business**

3:56 p.m.      **Report from the Stated Clerk:** Jerry Van Marter

- Attendance and offering reports
- Session records review report
- Acknowledgements and thanks

4:00 p.m.      **Installation of Officers:**

Moderator: Alicia Bloos

Vice-moderator: Joel Weible

Stated Clerk: Jerry Van Marter

Recording Clerk: Andrew Hartmans

4:10 p.m. **Closing Prayer and Adjournment**

*Next stated meetings: Saturday, February 22, 2025 at Louisville Seminary*

*Monday, May 12, 2025 TBA*

*Monday, September 15, 2025, at Cedar Ridge Camp*

# Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky Church Administration Committee

November 16, 2024

## Procedure for voting on Constitutional amendments

Each General Assembly sends out proposed amendments to the Constitution to be ratified (or not) by the presbyteries. It is customary in Mid-Kentucky Presbytery to receive the proposed amendments for a first reading in November and to vote on them at the February meeting of the presbytery.

There will be two opportunities in February to discuss the proposed amendments in depth: one of the sessions at Education Day just prior to the February 22 presbytery meeting will be a discussion of the amendments; and at the presbytery meeting itself presbyters will have the opportunity to discuss the proposed amendments before they are voted on.

The Church Administration Committee will be meeting between now and February to formulate its recommendations to the presbytery for voting on the proposed amendments. **If you have any questions, comments or pro/con arguments on the proposed amendments, PLEASE convey those comments to the Church Administration Committee through its staff person, Jerry Van Marter, stated clerk. Of course, you may also contact any member of the Church Administration Committee to register your concerns directly.**

The Office of the General Assembly has recently published the booklet of the proposed amendments, which includes the full texts of the proposed amendments plus comments from GA agencies that were submitted to the GA in response to the amendments when they were first proposed. The booklet is here: [https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/2024\\_0920\\_ga226\\_proposed\\_boo\\_amendments\\_ecumenical\\_agreement.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/2024_0920_ga226_proposed_boo_amendments_ecumenical_agreement.pdf).

In order of appearance in the Book of Order, here's the 13 items the presbytery will have to vote on:

**24-A:** F-1.0403 -- Adds two categories (sexual orientation and gender identity) to the list of people against whom the church will not discriminate.

**24-B:** G-1.0104 -- A new paragraph added to the section titled "The Congregation" regarding polity issues for new worshipping communities.

**24-C:** G-2.0104b -- Regarding councils' responsibilities for examining candidates for ordination/installation in light of the church's non-discrimination policies (related to the amending of F-1.0403).

**24-D:** G-2.0504b (OUR'S!) -- Allows temporary pastoral relationships to be established for up to three years, renewable —currently they can be for only one year, but renewable.

**24-E:** G-2.0504b -- Bans Non-Disclosure Agreements when Temporary Pastoral relationships end.

**24-F:** G-2.0610 -- If a candidate transfers presbyteries, this requires the transferring presbytery to inform the new presbytery of the waiver(s) it has granted.

**24-G:** G-2.0901 -- Bans Non-Disclosure Agreements when called and installed pastorates end.

**24-H:** G-3.0106 -- Requires all councils to have an abuse policy that covers adults with vulnerabilities.

**24-I:** G-3.0302d -- Eliminates the requirement that General Assembly overtures must have concurrences from another presbytery.

**24-J:** G-3.0501 -- Changes the formula for determining the number of GA commissioners (will result in 66 additional commissioners in 2026)

**24-K:** D-7.0501 -- Clarifies the mandatory reporting of suspected abuse to civil authorities.

**24-L:** D-7.0902b -- Requires that persons placed on Administrative Leave continue to be paid by their employer.

**24-M:** Ratification of the Episcopal Church-PC(USA) Agreement on the recognition and sharing of ordered (ordained) ministries.

The Church Administration Committee asks that you read the amendment booklet carefully, send any questions or comments to the committee, attend the information session on Education Day (Feb. 22, 2025) and be prepared to vote on the proposed amendments at the February 22, 2025 presbytery meeting.

Thank you.

Church Administration Committee:

Mark Barnes (HR)

Perry Chang (Crescent Hill)

Kathy Costanzo (HR)

Brian Cabbage (Beechmont)

Ben Stewart (HR)

Sue Wilder (John Knox)

Jerry Van Marter (staff)

**Commission on Ministry report:** Examination of Marissa Carver

**A LITURGY FOR THE EXAMINATION OF A CANDIDATE FOR  
ORDINATION TO THE MINISTRY OF WORD AND SACRAMENT**

**OPENING LITANY** – Marissa Galvan-Valle, Commission on Ministry (COM)

Leader: Merciful God, through the words of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, you remind us, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into the harvest.”

*People: We respond to your divine command, O Lord, and beseech you to richly bestow the Holy Spirit on this candidate this afternoon, and on all of us who are called to your ministry, that we, with a great multitude, may be your evangelists, true and steadfast.*

Leader: So may your name be hallowed, your kingdom come, and your will be done. Together, let us worship our faithful God, who calls and sends us.

**All: Amen.**

**PRAYER**

Holy and merciful God, we gather in awe of your calling, which reaches into our lives and draws us into your mission. You have called us to a harvest already ripe, and you have prepared Marissa to join in this work.

Pour out your Spirit upon us today. Empower Marissa with boldness, grace, and wisdom, and inspire each one of us here to live faithfully as part of your labor in the world. May our lives be a testament to your love and a witness to your kingdom. We offer this prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, who is Lord of the harvest. Amen.

Hymn: #301 “*Let Us Build a House (verses 1-2, 4)*”

**EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATE MARISSA CARVER FOR ORDINATION:  
THE COMMISSION ON MINISTRY PRESENTS THE CANDIDATE.**

Good afternoon. I am Marissa Galván-Valle, Chair of the Commission on Ministry for Mid Kentucky Presbytery. It is my great joy to introduce Marissa Carver, who is here today to be examined as a candidate for ministry. We invite her to share a word of greeting, read the Scripture she has chosen, and preach the message that God has placed on her heart for the people of God.

*Scripture text: Mark 9:30-37*

*The Sermon: Candidate Marissa Z. Carver*

**CANDIDATE PREACHES AND THE PROCESS CONTINUES**



After careful and prayerful discernment, the Commission on Ministry is honored to present Marissa Carver, who has responded to God’s call to serve as pastor of South Frankfort Presbyterian Church. We have heard about Marissa’s faithfulness, dedication, and readiness for this ministry, and we believe her gifts will richly bless both South Frankfort and this Presbytery. At this time, we invite Marissa to share her journey of faith, her vision for ministry, and her hopes for serving as a Minister of Word and Sacrament among us.

### **MARISSA CARVER IS INVITED TO SPEAK**

At this time, we welcome questions from the Presbytery to engage Marissa in sharing her understanding of essential aspects of her calling. Your questions might explore her theological beliefs, her approach to the sacraments, her understanding of church governance, or her reflections on living out the Christian faith. In asking these questions, we join in discerning her readiness and commitment to the high calling of Minister of Word and Sacrament, as set forth by our PC(USA) polity.

### **THE PRESBYTERY EXAMINES THE CANDIDATE, EXCUSES HER FROM THE MEETING ROOM, AND ACTS ON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE COM TO ORDAIN THE CANDIDATE.**

**FOR ACTION:** The Commission on Ministry recommends that Marissa Carver be approved for ordination and installed as Pastor at South Frankfort Presbyterian Church. (COM has already approved Marissa Carver’s call, terms of call and transfer from her presbytery).

### **PRAYER**

Holy, gracious, and loving God, in baptism you claim us as your own and fill us with the gifts of your Spirit. Through the voice of your church you call women and men to share in Christ’s ministry— proclaiming the good news and celebrating the mystery of faith. Fulfill the good work you have begun in the life of your servant Marissa. Help all of us to discern our calling so that we may serve you faithfully for the sake of the church you have called and the world you love so much. All this we pray in the name of Jesus, the way, the truth, and the life. Amen.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Presbyterian Church. Book of Common Worship (pp. 514-515). Presbyterian Publishing. Kindle Edition.



## Matching Personal Discernment Profile

### ID# 102416

#### Narratives

How do your particular gifts, experiences, and training help you in the ministry setting you believe God is calling you?

**This question applies to the following positions: Associate Pastor (Christian Education), Associate Pastor (Other), Associate Pastor (Youth), Co-Pastor, Campus Ministry, Solo Pastor: Installed, Pastor (church planter, new church development, new worshipping community)**

Response:

I believe that God is calling me to a ministry setting that allows me to use the gifts of care, education, and worship leadership. I feel that God has gifted me with the ability to care for others, build relationships, and connect people. I am called to this important work of pastoral care, and my work and life experiences have strengthened this gift. I also believe in the importance of education in the Christian life and feel called to that work. I have experience in Christian education with children, youth, and adults which has allowed me to grow in this area of ministry. I have also had the opportunity to attend two Christian education conferences to gain additional ideas and resources in this area. Finally, I've had the opportunity to help plan and lead worship, and to preach periodically in a variety of churches, and this worship leadership is something I both love and feel called to.

Explain with theological details what areas of ministry you value most in your calling.

**This question applies to the following positions: Associate Pastor (Christian Education), Associate Pastor (Other), Associate Pastor (Youth), Co-Pastor, Campus Ministry, Solo Pastor: Installed, Pastor (church planter, new church development, new worshipping community)**

Response:

I value preaching/leading worship, pastoral care, and education. I believe that as we gather for worship each week, through the liturgy, Scripture, and the Word proclaimed, we are taught, challenged, and called by Creator God to go into the world, proclaiming the love of Christ. I value this weekly worship and I take seriously my place in it.

The Triune God exists in community, and we also ought to exist in community. As we live and do God's work in a broken and fearful world, the world often feels heavy. We need one another, and we need care and love from one another. I believe that my call must include this care.

We can never know all there is to know about God. Therefore, I believe in the importance of education in the Christian life, and this is the third area of ministry that I value most in my

Explain with theological details what areas of ministry you value most in your calling.

call. I believe that learning is a lifetime endeavor, and that Christian education is not limited to children. There is always more to learn and there is value in studying Scripture and theology together. I believe I am called to help make Christian education accessible for all.

Describe a moment when you have “served using your energy, intelligence, imagination and love”, that led change positively.

**This question applies to the following positions: Associate Pastor (Christian Education), Associate Pastor (Other), Associate Pastor (Youth), Co-Pastor, Campus Ministry, Solo Pastor: Installed, Pastor (church planter, new church development, new worshipping community)**

Response:

Last Advent, I had the opportunity to plan and lead a Blue Christmas worship service. This is a service that holds space for those who are grieving during the holiday season – those experiencing loss of any kind, or those for whom the holidays and all related celebrations are difficult. The church where I serve partnered with another Presbyterian church in Lexington and we held the service for both congregations on a Wednesday evening. Along with the pastor of our partner church, I planned a service that included prayer, music, a brief homily, and silence. Plans are already underway to hold the service again this Advent season, with the hopes of inviting an additional church in the area to take part. I believe and hope that this important service will continue to be a space for people to grieve, mourn, and reflect during a season that is often solely focused on joy and celebration.

Please describe how have you dealt with failure or disappointment before.

**This question applies to the following positions: Associate Pastor (Christian Education), Associate Pastor (Other), Associate Pastor (Youth), Co-Pastor, Campus Ministry, Solo Pastor: Installed, Pastor (church planter, new church development, new worshipping community)**

Response:

In dealing with failure or disappointment, I have found it helpful to first take a step back and evaluate the situation. I ask myself what went wrong, what could have been done differently, and what were the factors I did not consider. It is helpful for me to name whatever comes up from the above questions first before moving forward so that I don't get stuck in a place of feeling shame or embarrassment. Failure and disappointment will happen from time to time but I believe that I can learn from these situations. In instances where a failure has been directly tied to an event of some sort, asking these questions is helpful when considering whether to try a similar event again, or to move on to something new. Working in ministry requires imagination, creativity, and resilience, and sometimes our best ideas will not pan out. Even so, I believe it is essential that we continue to approach this work creatively, using these failures to better equip us and to propel us forward.

Describe a moment in your recent ministry that you recognize as one of effectiveness and fulfillment.

**This question applies to the following positions: Associate Pastor (Christian Education), Associate Pastor (Other), Associate Pastor (Youth), Co-Pastor, Campus Ministry, Solo Pastor: Installed, Pastor (church planter, new church development, new worshipping community)**

Response:

In my current role I had the opportunity to plan and lead our week-long Vacation Bible School. Throughout this process, I worked with our newly-formed VBS planning team to choose a curriculum, plan and prepare each evening's activities, and decorate the space for the week. This event brought together all generations, with our youngest participants coming in at 2.5 years old and many of our dedicated volunteers being over 80. Some of our youth served as our puppet, as our gathering time lead "actor," as music helpers, or as group leaders. The week went off without a hitch, with a great turnout of excited kids and volunteers who were ready and prepared to effectively lead and fulfill their various roles. As I watched relationships form and strengthen among kids and volunteers, I recognized the importance of this inter-generational event; and as I saw kids learn essential lessons about God, I felt confident that they would leave knowing that God loves them and is always with them.

### Personal Information

Name	Email	Pronouns
Marissa Zatezalo Carver	m.zatezalo11@gmail.comshe/her	
Address	Phone Number	Secondary Phone
422 Quail Run Rd Versailles, KY 40383	4125929625	
Ecclesiastical Status	Presbytery of	Ordination Date
Candidate for Ministry	Membership Transylvania	null

### Preferences

Employment Type	Minimum Effective Salary
Full-time	50000

### Formal Education

**Training/Certification**

Clinical Pastoral Education Training: Columbia Theological Seminary - 2021

**Formal Education**

Master of Divinity - Columbia Theological Seminary, (2018-09-03 - 2021-12-17)

Bachelor of Arts - Biology - Asbury University, (2011-08-15 - 2015-05-09)

**Continuing Education**

**Work Experience**

10/15/2022 - Present

Church Associate Director of Children and Youth Ministries  
Second Presbyterian Church  
Lexington, KY  
(Urban, 401-650 members)

9/19/2021 - 8/27/2022

Church Director of Children and Youth Ministries  
Ormewood Church  
Atlanta, GA  
(Urban, Under 100 members)

**Service to the Greater Church**

11/10/2018 - 8/27/2022

Worship Music Leadership

**Statement of Faith**

I believe in the triune God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

I believe in God, the Creator of the universe. I believe that God is a loving and just God, all-knowing and all-powerful. I believe that God created humankind in God's image, and that all humans have dignity and are worthy of love due to this fact alone. I believe that God delights in humanity and

desires to be in relationship with us. I believe that God created us to be stewards over creation, calling us to care for the earth and to use her resources wisely.

I believe in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, the only begotten Son of God, who was both fully God and fully human, who was born of the virgin Mary and was without sin. I believe that Jesus, while on earth, performed miraculous signs and wonders, and defended the oppressed and marginalized. Through His actions on earth, I believe Jesus showed us how we ought to treat one another. I believe that Jesus was crucified, died, and was buried, and on the third day, He rose again. After, He appeared to the women at the tomb, the disciples, and many of His followers, and later ascended into heaven, where He sits at the right hand of God.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Advocate and Helper for those who believe, revealed to us at Pentecost. I believe that the Spirit transforms hearts and minds and works to constantly renew us. I believe that the Spirit enables us to study the Scriptures and to do God's work here on earth.

I believe that the Bible is the Word of God, a collection of books of various genres written by diverse authors in diverse places. I believe that the Scriptures bear witness to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, that they serve to teach, instruct, and rebuke us, and that, through reading and studying, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, we may discern what God is revealing to us at any given time.

I believe that the Sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper, are, as Augustine stated, "visible signs of an invisible grace." In baptism, we recognize that we are chosen by God and loved by God through no merit of our own. In the Lord's Supper we come to the Table, God's Table, an open Table where all are welcome; and we partake in the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation, remembering the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and His promise to come again.

I believe in the body of Christ, the church universal, and in the communion of the people of God. God, as a triune God, exists in community, and I believe that we as the church need also to live in fellowship and in community with one another. Furthermore, I believe that the church is called to action, to pursue justice for the oppressed and the marginalized in our world.

I believe in the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ our Lord and in the life everlasting that comes by grace alone through faith in Him.

## Optional Links

My Personal Website - -

<http://www.marissacarver.com/>

## References

Reference #1

Rev. Dr. John Leggett  
Supervisor

(540) 383 - 1458  
JohnL@2preslex.org  
Reference #2

Rev. Jenelle Holmes  
Former Supervisor  
(719) 685 - 6573  
jenelle@ormewoodchurch.org

Reference #3

Rev. Brittney Lane  
Seminary Colleague  
(610) 573 - 9636  
brittneydaniel102@gmail.com

### Sexual Misconduct Self Certification

I certify below that no civil, criminal, or ecclesiastical complaint has ever been sustained\* or is pending\* against me for sexual misconduct; and I have never resigned or been terminated from a position for reasons related to sexual misconduct.

I have read this certification and release form and fully understand that the information obtained may be used to deny my employment or any other type of position from the employing entity. I also agree that I will hold harmless the employing or judicial authority or any other entity from any and all claims, liabilities, and causes of action for the legitimate release of any information related to sexual misconduct.

### Committee Notes

Add Committee Notes Here.

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## Faith Statement

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I believe in God, the Creator of the universe. I believe that God is a loving and just God, all-knowing and all-powerful. I believe that God created humankind in God's image, and that all humans have dignity and are worthy of love due to this fact alone. I believe that God delights in humanity and desires to be in relationship with us. I believe that God created us to be stewards over creation, calling us to care for the earth and to use her resources wisely.

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I believe that the Sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper, are, as Augustine stated, "visible signs of an invisible grace." In baptism, we recognize that we are chosen by God and loved by God through no merit of our own. In the Lord's Supper we come to the Table, God's Table, an open Table where all are welcome; and we partake in the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation, remembering the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and His promise to come again.

I believe in the body of Christ, the church universal, and in the communion of the people of God. God, as a triune God, exists in community, and I believe that we as the church need also to live in fellowship and in community with one another. Furthermore, I believe that the church is called to action, to pursue justice for the oppressed and the marginalized in our world.

I believe in the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ our Lord and in the life everlasting that comes by grace alone through faith in Him.



# MARISSA Z. CARVER

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m.zatezalo11@gmail.com

422 Quail Run Road  
Versailles, KY 40383

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## EXPERIENCE

### **Associate Director of Children and Youth Ministries - Second Presbyterian Church, Lexington, KY — October, 2022–Present**

Worked alongside director to plan and implement children and youth events including youth fellowship, Christmas pageant, and Vacation Bible School. Planned and led youth mission and retreat trips. Taught Sunday School. Assisted in worship planning, including preaching. Led Godly Play style children's worship.

### **Director of Children and Youth Ministries - Ormewood Church, Atlanta, GA — September, 2021 - August, 2022**

Planned and led children's worship on Sunday mornings. Organized and facilitated Creative Camp (a week-long VBS-style day camp). Created and led engaging youth group lessons. Assisted in leading worship, including preaching. Recruited volunteers for children's worship and Creative Camp. Managed nursery employees.

## EDUCATION

**Master of Divinity, 2021 - Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, GA**  
**Bachelor of Arts - Biology, 2015 - Asbury University, Wilmore, KY**

## SKILLS

Creating Event Graphics, Managing Social Media Pages, Utilizing Church Databases, Utilizing Google Docs, Utilizing Microsoft Office

## CERTIFICATIONS

Clinical Pastoral Education Training - Grady Memorial Hospital, Atlanta, GA

## The Five Questions - Marissa Carver - September 27, 2024

1. In my ministry thus far, I have been fortunate to serve alongside pastors who have also functioned as mentors. During seminary and immediately following graduation, I had the opportunity to serve a church in Atlanta, GA where Rev. Jenelle Holmes served as the organizing pastor. Jenelle sought to empower those who served on staff, and this empowerment allowed me to grow in my confidence in my first role in ministry after seminary. Jenelle also modeled how to preach with conviction and love, and how to build relationships with church and neighboring community members alike. I took these lessons into my current call, where I serve alongside a wonderful staff under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. John Leggett. John has shown me the importance of leading with an attitude that is always bent towards grace. Grace to those with whom you agree, grace to those with whom you *disagree*, and grace to everyone in between.

Lastly, during my time in seminary, I served as a hospital chaplain intern completing my Clinical Pastoral Education requirement. I worked as a chaplain intern at a trauma 1 hospital in downtown Atlanta, and this experience significantly shaped and affected my ministry. I learned how to be flexible and how to think on my toes as I encountered unimaginable grief nearly every day. I learned the importance of active and empathetic listening, and I learned the pitfalls of attempting a quick fix to the hurt I was witnessing. I continue to draw on these lessons in nearly every area of my ministry today.
2. Throughout my ministry, the theological belief that has become most critical is that of the Imago Dei. I cling to the belief that all are created in the image of God, and because of this, all are worthy of love and dignity. This belief shapes how I approach each person I encounter in my ministry and in my life. Additionally, my theological understanding of community has become critical to my ministry. God, as a triune God, exists in community, and I believe that we as the church need also to live in fellowship and in community with one another. We are not meant to live this faith alone, and the focus on community reminds us of that. In creation, God created Eve because it was not good for man to be alone, and that remains true today. In addition, this shared belief in the importance of community affects how we ought to exist in the world. A call to life in community is a call to ensure that all in our community have dignity and all that they need. This is the church's call to action to pursue justice for the oppressed and marginalized in our world.
3. Prior to seminary, I served as a missionary in Kyiv, Ukraine for a year working primarily with university students. Through this experience, both in my work with Ukrainians and in my role on the team with which I served, my faith was deeply challenged. I was confronted with difficult questions about faith and Christianity, which led me to begin asking my own questions of my faith. While this season of my life and of my ministry was fraught with difficulty, it allowed me to approach my faith differently. It allowed me to ask questions of what I believed and of the suffering that I witnessed in the world. It allowed me to be content with not knowing all the answers, and to be content with sitting in the discomfort of wrestling and wondering. It was also through this experience in Ukraine that I felt the strong and undeniable call to go to seminary, and because of this, when faced with more questions and wonderings and wrestlings while in seminary, I was able to reside a bit more

comfortably in that discomfort. It was in seminary that I first learned that we Presbyterians are “once reformed, always reforming” and this has served to affirm my faith. I will continue to grow and learn and shift in my understanding of faith and theology, but I can take comfort in the knowledge that we Christians are always reforming.

4. The Sacraments show us, among other things, that we are all a part of the community of the people of faith, the church. In baptism, we recognize that we are chosen by God and loved by God through no merit of our own. In baptism, we also join the community of the church. When infants are baptized, the church community promises to raise those children in the faith. In the church where I currently serve, newly baptized infants and children are gifted with a welcome banner made by the children of the church, a beautiful gift showing that they are a part of this community.

In the Lord’s Supper we come to the Table, God’s Table, an open Table where all are welcome; and we partake in the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation, remembering the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and His promise to come again. We come to the Table as a community, celebrate the sacrament as a community both in our local church and in the church universal, and we leave nourished as a community. The sacraments remind us that we exist in community with one another, and of our call to that community.

5. In my practice of ministry, I have clearly seen that the form of government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seeks to recognize and utilize the gifts of those in our community. This can be witnessed at the level of the local church, at the presbytery level, and in the denomination as a whole. In the local church, the Session, committees, and staff all work together for the good of the whole, drawing on the gifts and strengths that each individual brings to the table. In the presbytery, pastors and elders serve in various capacities, again leaning on individual strengths brought together for the good of all. This working together reminds us that no man is an island in this work, and that we all benefit from the support of our fellow pastors and leaders as we seek to be the Body of Christ. In my own experience being under care of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry in the presbytery of Transylvania, I witnessed both the support that can come when those in leadership in the PC-USA work together, and the strength and importance of bringing together those with many different gifts. We enter into this work together, and this community is strengthened when we lean on our interconnectedness.

Receiving a Candidate under Care  
Book of Common Worship (WJKP, 2018) 490–491

Sentences of Scripture (Isa. 43:1–3)

Addressing the presbytery; Hear the promise of the Lord. Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

Questions

Addressing the candidate;

Do you believe yourself to be called by God to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament? I do.

Do you promise in reliance upon the grace of God to maintain a Christian character and conduct, and to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for this ministry? I do.

Do you accept the proper supervision of the presbytery in matters that concern your preparation for this ministry? I do.

Do you desire now to be received by this presbytery as a candidate for the ministry of the Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)? I do.

Charge (2 Tim. 1:13–14)

Addressing the candidate; Hold fast to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from us, with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us. Amen.

Prayer

God of prophets and apostles, you have chosen leaders to train your people in the way of Jesus Christ. We thank you that in our day you are still claiming leaders for ministry in your church. As Richard has dedicated himself to you, let us pledge ourselves to him, so that, surrounded by affection and hope, he may grow in wisdom, mature in love, and become a faithful worker, approved by Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **Responding to God's Word**

### Worship Liturgy for the Reception of an Inquirer as a Candidate

Let the peoples praise you, O God;  
*Let all the peoples praise you.*

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling,  
***One Lord one faith, one baptism, one God and Parent of all, who is above all and through all and in all.***

Presentation of the Inquirer, Richard Recob

Report of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry  
Statement by the Inquirer of Christian faith, service and motives for entering the ministry  
Examination by the Presbytery in the above matters  
Action regarding the CPM's recommendation

The Constitutional Questions

*Do you believe yourself to be called by God to ordered ministry of Teaching Elder?*  
*Do you promise, in reliance upon the grace of God, to maintain a Christian character and conduct, to be diligent and faithful in making full preparation for this ministry?*  
*Do you accept the proper supervision of the presbytery in matters that concern your preparation for this ministry?*  
*Do you now desire to be received by this presbytery as a Candidate for ordered ministry of Teaching Elder in the Presbyterian Church (USA)?*

Questions to the Presbytery

*Do you, the ministers and ruling elders of Mid-Kentucky Presbytery promise to support Richard Recob through your prayers?*  
*Do you promise to be his mentors, friends, and colleagues when called upon to do so?*  
*Do you promise to speak truth to him, to show love to him, and to be the body of Christ with him in this process?*

Declaration of Enrollment as Candidate

Presentation to the Candidate

Charge to the Candidate

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Blessing

\*Response     *"Go Walk With God"* \*

TALLIS' CANON

*O may the grace of Christ our Lord,  
The wondrous love that comes from God,  
The Spirit's fellowship now be  
God's gifts to you eternally.*

\*Hymn text copyright 2000 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. Used by permission.

## **Richard Recob's Faith Journey**

**09/30/2024**

I wrote my Faith Journey, and then decided to reform it a little bit from what I wrote when I was under the care of Lake Michigan Presbytery. God calls each one of us differently. The Holy Spirit works on us through different ways. The Spirit might work on us through a friend, co-worker, spouse or pastor. We might end up in a situation where we become homeless, living in a shelter, living in a car, or living on the streets. To me though, God always seems to send someone when we need it the most, or when we are at the lowest point in our lives.

We look at scripture and God calls people in a variety of ways. Could you imagine Moses's life? Having someone want to kill you from the very beginning of your life? That would be tough, thank goodness for the caring mother, sister, and midwives that protected Moses. Moses is then taken in by the family of Pharaoh and treated just like Moses was one of their family.

Moses had it made as an Egyptian. He kept working his way up the ladder of life, and then something happened. Moses accidentally kills someone. Moses runs from the situation as most people would. As Moses runs, Moses sees one of the weirdest things that could be seen. A Burning Bush in the middle of nowhere.

Now we all know that this is where God calls Moses to be God's Spokesman. This was how God began the journey of Moses, but this is not the journey of Richard Recob.

Richard Recob began his life being tossed about from one family member to another as his dad was killed in a tree accident at the age of four. I went through abuse from my stepfather, left home at 16, and moved in with my real dad's best friends who were foster parents until my graduation from high school.

God's call in my life started in 10th grade at East Delevan Baptist Academy, where the Holy Spirit worked on me, and I gave my life to Jesus Christ. Through time, God laid it on my heart to try preaching, and so I entered into a preaching competition to compete at Maranatha Baptist Bible College. I got a red ribbon which was second place.

In 1994, I met the love of my life. I prayed that God would lead me too the right person. This last year was our 30<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. God has led Tami and I through many ups and downs.

I have been in manufacturing for twenty years. In the early 2000's, I started my adult degree in business. I didn't know what was about to happen. You remember earlier I said God uses people when you least expect it. God used the Dean of Adult Degree to get me to switch to the Religious Studies program. God continued to move me along in this calling as God made it possible for me to move from the Adult Degree into the Religious Studies program at OCU. God performed miracles at Oakland City University as I didn't have the money to go to college. I also had a transmission go out on my car right before school was to begin. God provided the miracle as someone heard about my predicament and paid for a transmission to be put in our vehicle. I was able to begin school on time.

I learned that God provides for those that wait. God provided for Moses throughout Moses's life. Moses gave God excuses, and yet God provided and gave Aaron. When God calls God makes a way for things to happen.

I stopped after my associate degree, and then my wife began her call. Ten years later I began again online at OCU as they had put up a bachelor's degree in Christian studies.

I am now a part of Louisville Seminary here in Louisville, KY where I am in my mid second year learning about Exegesis of Scripture, Preaching, Theology, Presbyterian Heritage and Polity, Greek and Hebrew, History, Gender, Ministries of Care and Counseling, and how I can best fit in here at the Mid-Kentucky Presbytery, and Crescent Hills Presbyterian Church.

I come before you today, to ask you, to consider my call for Candidacy. My internship with Jonesville has showed me that I can lead a small church with God's help. I have learned to keep my doors open at all times as listening and communication is important, I have learned about grace, and giving grace, I have learned about confidentiality, I have learned what it's like to lose someone from the church and lose a family member at the same time. I have learned that in all things you must keep your emotions in check. Lastly, I have learned what it is like to have a great secretary and session as they can make your life a lot easier.

Now, I ask you to think back on your journey as you were about to begin your call. What advice can you impart that you wished someone had told you?

Thank you for your consideration



## Recob Statement of Faith

I believe in the Trinity: God the Sovereign Creator, Jesus Christ our Redeemer and Mediator, and the Holy Spirit who is the Convictor of sin and Transformer of life. I believe that we are transformed through Baptism and the renewing of our minds which can come not only from the Holy Spirit, but also by staying in scripture, going to church, and through prayer. I believe that without the Holy Spirit we would not know of sin or wrongdoing.

I believe that the Church is called to share its faith, bring hope and love to a lost community, stand up for those who are marginally broken, hungry, and oppressed. I believe in a mission of reform where we are open to change, especially when it means that we might be ridiculed by other people, even our own families.

I believe in the unity of the Church. I believe in the confession of sin to one another as we need to remember that we are human and a broken people. I believe in being baptized as infants or adults and sharing the Bread and Cup in remembrance of the body and blood of Christ with one another as we have an open table that is shared in community with and for all people. I believe that we need to show grace and forgiveness towards one another as this is what Christ has done for us. I believe in an inclusive Church accepting all people, races, and genders as Christ accepts us without any stipulations.

I believe that we need to learn about faith from the Old Testament examples, and then ask ourselves do we really have faith in our lives? It is one thing to say you do, and another to be living it.

I believe that we need to learn to listen without judgment as we have not lived in the shoes of many people.

I believe in boundaries, taking care of yourself, and being able to say no as I believe you need these things as pastors.

I also believe that you need to be able to say when you need help as pastors as they carry heavy burdens at times.

Installation of Council Leaders and Staff  
Book.of.Common.Worship.(WJKP, 2018) 498–501

Sentences of Scripture (Gal. 3:27–28; Eph. 4:1–6)

As many of you as were baptized into Christ  
have clothed yourselves with Christ.

There is no longer Jew or Greek,  
there is no longer slave or free,  
there is no longer male and female;  
for all are one in Christ Jesus.

Lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called,  
making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

There is one body and one Spirit,  
just as we were called to the one hope of our calling,  
one Lord, one faith, one baptism,  
one God and Maker of all,  
who is above all and through all and in all.

Call to Discipleship (Book.of.Order, F-1.0304)

We are called by God to be the church of Jesus Christ,  
a sign in the world today of what God intends for all humankind.

The great ends of the church are  
the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind;  
the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God;  
the maintenance of divine worship;  
the preservation of the truth;  
the promotion of social righteousness;  
and the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world.

The.leader.shall.relate.the.forms.of.service.to.which.persons.are.being.installed;

The call of Christ is to willing, dedicated discipleship. Our discipleship is a manifestation of the new life we enter through baptism. Discipleship is both a gift and a commitment, an offering and a responsibility.

Addressing.those.being.installed;

Alicia, Joel, Jerry, and Andrew, the grace bestowed on you in baptism is sufficient for your calling because it is God's grace. By God's grace we are saved, and enabled to grow in the faith and to commit our lives in ways that serve Christ. God has called you to this service. Show your purpose by answering these questions.

Who is your Lord and Savior?

Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior.

Will you be Christ's faithful disciple,  
obeying his word and showing his love?  
I will, with God's help.

Do you welcome the responsibility of this service  
because you are determined to follow the Lord Jesus,  
to love neighbors, and to work for the reconciling of the world? I do.

Will you pray for and serve the people  
with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love,  
relying on God's mercy  
and rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit?  
I will, with God's help.

Addressing all present;  
Do you, members of the Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky,  
confirm the call of God to Alicia, Joel, Jerry, and Andrew  
in the service of Jesus Christ? We do.

Will you support and encourage them in this ministry?  
We will.

#### Installation Prayer

Faithful God, in Jesus Christ you called disciples and, by the Holy Spirit, made them one church to serve you. In baptism you claimed us; and by your Holy Spirit you are working in our lives, empowering us to live a life worthy of our calling. We thank you for leading Alicia, Joel, Jerry, and Andrew to this time and place. Establish them in your truth, and guide them by your Holy Spirit, that in your service they may grow in faith, hope, and love, and be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. Let your Spirit rule over your church, so that we may be joined in love and service to Jesus Christ, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

#### Blessing and Charge (1 Thess. 5:23; Col. 3:17)

Alicia and Joel, you are installed as Moderator and Vice-moderator of the Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky. Jerry and Andrew, you are installed as Stated Clerk and Recording Clerk of Mid-Kentucky Presbytery.

May the God of peace make you holy in every way, and keep your whole being, spirit, soul, and body, free from every fault at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Alleluia!

Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through him. Amen.

## **2024 Report on the Annual Assembly of the Kentucky Council of Churches**

The Justice and Advocacy Commission of the Council has been very active. Our three “legislative agents” organize activities and conversations in the state’s capital and mobilize letter-writing and calling campaigns.

To speak for all the member churches, they need a body of policy statements to guide their work. Some of those statements got much-needed updates this year, by vote of the assembly commissioners. The updated ones dealt with pornography, affordable housing, HIV/AIDS, colonialism, smoking tobacco, and religious diversity.

In addition, we approved some new or largely-new policy statements. These are included below for your edification.

-- Marian Taylor

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### **Amendment 1 (2024)**

Whereas the Kentucky Council of Churches seeks for the restoration of voting rights to people who served their sentence after a felony conviction

Whereas the Kentucky Council of Churches has affirmed the humanity of our immigrant siblings

Whereas all people are created in the Image of God regardless of their nation of origin

Whereas Kentucky Law already precludes non-citizens from voting in elections

Whereas Amendment 1 is an attempt to preempt any local legislation that would allow non-citizens to take part in the electoral process

Whereas Amendment 1 is likely to stoke racist fears of immigrants and scare naturalized citizens away from their right to the ballot box

Be it therefore resolved that the Kentucky Council of Churches, the judicatories and members thereof, oppose Amendment 1.

Be it further resolved that in the calling of the Christian to anti-racism, the Kentucky Council of Churches calls upon all people of faith to reject Amendment 1 and its racist implications towards immigrants.

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## **On Caring for Those Experiencing Being Unhoused in the Wake of the Criminalization of Being Unhoused**

Whereas House Bill 5 (2024) criminalized the existence of unhoused people

Whereas the Supreme Court of the United States upheld these actions as legal

Whereas criminalizing being unhoused is an unjust attack on the poor

Whereas housing is a human right as defined by the United Nations

Whereas the Church of our Lord Jesus is called to seek justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God (*Micah 6:8*)

Whereas our Lord had no place to lay his head (*Matthew 8:20*)

Therefore, be it resolved that the Kentucky Council of Churches via the Justice and Advocacy Commission shall

1. Collaborate with lawyers and advocacy organizations to develop a process to help local churches to advocate for and protect their neighbors who are experiencing homelessness from violence and incarceration
2. Disseminate that information to judicatories with the understanding that the judicatories will educate their pastors and congregations
3. Offer trainings to judicatories and local churches on the process.
4. Advocate for a reversal of the criminalization of being unhoused
5. Seek the establishment of a “housing first” model to eradicate homelessness across the Commonwealth.

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## Against Christian Nationalism

This statement is adapted from one developed by the [United Methodist Church General Board of Church and Society](#).

Christian Nationalism is defined as a political ideology that seeks to merge Christianity and a particular type of American identity, distorting both the Christian faith and the United States constitution. According to Christians Against Christian Nationalism, “it often overlaps and provides cover for white supremacy and racial subjugation”. Christian Nationalism is not new. For years, many U.S. faith leaders have warned about the dangers of blending faith and nationalism as a threat to religious freedom and to the separation of church and state as outlined by the U.S. Constitution.

The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution established the free exercise of religion while also prohibiting any establishment of religion by the state.

The United States’ historic commitment to religious pluralism enables diverse faith communities to live in civic harmony with one another without sacrificing theological convictions.

Likewise, the Kentucky Council of Churches has, through our statement on religious diversity, for decades upheld the right of all people to their own expression of faith or no faith at all. The Council affirms that not only should no state religion be established, but also no faith tradition should be privileged by the laws of any secular state or nation, the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the United States of America, particularly.

The glory of Creation affirms God’s love for the beauty of diversity. In the Acts of the Apostles, St. Peter, in response to God drawing wide the circle of love, states “God shows no partiality.” (*Acts 10:34*) As such; we must affirm that the identity of the Christian cannot be confined by national borders, nor can the identity of the American be confined to one religious tradition. Christian Nationalism as a philosophy attempts to do both of these by fallaciously drawing a narrow circle that defines Christian as a certain type of American and American as a certain type of Christian. This fallacy attempts to bend the Truth of our God of every nation to the systems of white supremacy and colonialism.

The Kentucky Council of Churches calls upon judicatories and their members to:

- Read and consider signing the Christians Against Christian Nationalism statement on their [website](#).
- Call for legislative policies that strengthen the protection of [religious diversity](#).
- Encourage [lawmakers](#) to speak out against religious intolerance and discrimination.
- Oppose a social climate of fear, mistrust and stereotyping

For further reference, explore [the National Council of Churches' statement on the dangers of Christian nationalism](#).

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## Human Trafficking

This statement is adopted from one developed by the [General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church](#).

Nearly 21 million people are victims of labor trafficking—trapped in jobs through force, fraud or coercion. Human trafficking is a \$150 billion industry worldwide with two-thirds of those profits coming from commercial sexual exploitation.

People become vulnerable to traffickers as a result of many factors that are common in people of all ages in every town, village and community.

As faith communities, we seek to provide sanctuary and pastoral care for individuals, while also working to end the supply and demand of trafficking. The Church must be committed to challenging the systems (cultural, economic, political) that both create vulnerability and the opportunities for exploitation.

The prophet Jeremiah warns “Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness, and his upper rooms by injustice; who makes his neighbors work for nothing, and does not give them their wages.” (*Jeremiah 22:13*) Our shared faith calls upon us to acknowledge the Imago Dei in all of God’s children. Any system of coercion and violence that seeks to diminish the inherent sacred worth of a child of God is therefore antithetical to our shared belief as Christians.

While the trans-Atlantic slave trade officially ended in 1807 and slavery was outlawed in the United States by the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, forms of forced labor still persist—whether illegal forms enforced by violence or the threat thereof or legal ones imposed by the criminal justice system.

The Kentucky Council of Churches, therefore, calls for Christians in the Commonwealth to seek an end to state sponsored human trafficking that takes the form of unpaid or underpaid labor in jails or prisons. Furthermore, we encourage our members to become familiar with the [Interfaith Toolkit on Human Trafficking](#).

This section was adapted from a statement by the [Presbyterian Church \(USA\)](#).

As Christians, we have a biblical mandate to establish justice, to care for the powerless, and to break the yokes of oppression (Micah 6:8, Isaiah 58:6). The Council recognizes and affirms that mandate.

The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 prohibited slavery and involuntary servitude in the territory northwest of the Ohio River, except as punishment for a crime. The Northwest Ordinance, which was adopted at a time when slavery and the slave trade were legal, also provided that runaway slaves found in the Northwest Territory could be returned to their masters. In 1865, just after the Civil War, the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified. The 13th Amendment abolished slavery and involuntary servitude but contains the same exception found in the Northwest Ordinance. The 13th Amendment, Sec-on 1, reads as follows:

Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for a crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

The highlighted language, which has been referred to as the “Punishment Clause,” permits any person in the United States who has been convicted of any crime to be enslaved. The Punishment Clause, and the 18th Century and 19th Century philosophies that it embodies, are contrary to the teachings of scripture and are contrary to the values and philosophies of liberty and human rights set forth in the tenets of the Christian faith.

Joint Resolutions have been introduced in the United States Senate (SJR 33) and the United States House of Representatives (HJR 72) which, if passed and ratified, would amend the United States Constitution to abolish the Punishment Clause.

As followers of Jesus Christ with the desire and intent to ensure that the scourge of modern slavery in all its forms is eradicated from the United States, The Kentucky Council of Churches encourages the members of the United States Senate to pass Senate Joint Resolution 33 and the members of the United States House of Representatives to pass House Joint Resolution 72.

Furthermore, the Kentucky Council of Churches calls the judicatories and members thereof to:

- 1. Encourage the ministries and agencies of member judicatories to raise awareness of the presence of modern slavery and human trafficking throughout the world and in the United States and create educational resources for congregations and mid councils.**
- 2. Encourage the ratification of an Amendment to the United States Constitution to abolish the exception clause in the 13th Amendment that allows any person convicted of any crime to be enslaved.**
- 3. Encourage the United States House of Representatives to pass House Joint Resolution 72 and the United States Senate to pass Senate Joint Resolution 33, steps that are required before the proposed Amendment can be submitted to the States for ratification.**
- 4. Encourage judicatories and members thereof to provide copies of this statement and convey the General Assembly’s concerns regarding the exception clause in the 13th Amendment to those members of the United States Senate and the United States House of Representatives, and their staff, as deemed appropriate.**

This section is adapted from the United Methodist Church 2016 Book of Resolutions, #6032

In order to eradicate modern-day slavery, we call on members and judicatories to:

1. affirm human rights and dignity of all peoples who are on the move, asserting the right to freedom of movement, and resisting violations and curtailments of such rights through forced migration, including trafficking in persons;



2. advocate for economic and trade policies that facilitate job development that is accessible to all sectors of societies, with wages that allow all persons to thrive according to God's will;
  3. actively champion anti-slavery efforts by petitioning the United Nations and the legislative bodies of Kentucky and the United States of America to demand the freeing of all persons subjected to modern-day forms of enslavement and bonded labor;
  4. petition the United Nations, the United States government and Kentucky government to abolish slavery through the use of nonmilitary options such as negotiations leading to agreements with binding obligations and corollary sanctions;
  5. encourage swift resolution to civil strifes and armed conflicts and engage in coordinated responses to mitigate disasters to prevent traffickers from preying on children;
  6. officially support stock/mutual fund divestment campaigns that urge people to remove funds from organizations and corporations whose actions profit from and contribute to slavery's existence;
  7. create environments that model safe, healthy, and violence-free communities in order to raise children who do not accept violence as normative;
  8. implement children's ministries that bolster self-esteem and provide educational and economic opportunities for women and children who are especially vulnerable to traffickers;
  9. build a new generation of leaders across the Church who model nonviolent, emotionally healthy masculinity, serving as positive change-makers in society.
  10. educate pastors, lay leaders, children and families, teachers, health-care providers, and outreach workers about fraudulent promises of traffickers and the resulting exploitation and abuse;
  11. advocate for local, regional, national, and international laws and funds that ensure trafficking victims have access to services that enable them to heal from the trauma, including counseling, reproductive health care, education/job training, legal services and shelter;
  12. commit to interrupting the demand for slaves by purchasing fair trade products, including coffee, tea, chocolate, T-shirts, athletic equipment, and other goods for personal and ministry-related activities; and,
  13. demand that corporations eliminate exploitative labor in their business practices and use their influence to eradicate all slavery from their supply chains.
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## **Closing the Punishment Loophole in the Kentucky Constitution**

**Whereas:** All people are made in the image and likeness of God, deserving of respect, dignity, and opportunities to flourish, and also connected inextricably to one another as children of God; and

**Whereas:** It is the intent of the Kentucky Council of Churches to provide an instrument for unified witness to God's will for justice, peace, righteousness, and compassion for all people, but especially in the Commonwealth of Kentucky; and

**Whereas:** Section 25 of the Kentucky Constitution still allows for slavery and involuntary servitude as punishment for a crime; and

**Whereas:** Slavery and involuntary servitude are crimes against humanity; and

**Whereas:** Crimes against humanity are neither necessary nor useful as punishment for a crime;

**Therefore be it resolved that** members of the Kentucky Council of Churches call on the Kentucky Legislature to amend Section 25 by removing the exception clause so that slavery and involuntary servitude are forever forbidden.

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## Climate Change and Care of Creation

The Jewish and Christian scriptures give special sanctity to the land. They convey an understanding of land as a gift of God, a blessing bringing forth food for all creatures. There is no ethical way to use land and Creation except as stewards seeking a responsible relationship with the ultimate owner and giver of life.

Psalm 24 (*NRSVUE*)

<sup>1</sup> The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it,  
the world, and those who live in it,  
<sup>2</sup> for he has founded it on the seas  
and established it on the rivers.

When we do not act as responsible stewards of God's creation, we risk what Isaiah proclaimed:

Isaiah 24:4-5 *NRSVUE*

<sup>4</sup> The earth dries up and withers;  
the world languishes and withers;  
the heavens languish together with the earth.  
<sup>5</sup> The earth lies polluted  
under its inhabitants,  
for they have transgressed laws,  
violated the statutes,  
broken the everlasting covenant.

Paul in Romans 8:22-23 (*NRSVUE*) pictures creation suffering with us. "We know that the whole creation has been groaning together as it suffers together the pains of labor, and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies." We must wake up to the reality of Climate Change and Global Warming.

The United Methodist Social Principles, paragraph 160 states it this way: "All creation is the Lord's, and we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it. Water, air, soil, minerals, energy resources, plants, animal life, and space are to be valued and conserved because they are God's creation and not solely because they are useful to human beings. All humanity is called to value and care for earth. To ignore this puts the survival of our home, Earth, at risk.

"Kentucky's climate is changing. Although the average temperature did not change much during the 20th century, most of the commonwealth has warmed in the last 20 years. Average annual rainfall is increasing, and a rising percentage of that rain is falling on the four wettest days of the year. In the coming decades, the changing climate is likely to reduce crop yields and threaten some aquatic ecosystems. Floods may be more frequent, and droughts may be longer, which

would increase the difficulty of meeting the competing demands for water in the Ohio, Tennessee, and Cumberland rivers.”

(<https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-09/documents/climate-change-ky.pdf>)

Coal helped to build this country and remains an important part of Kentucky’s heritage and economy but it is also the dirtiest fossil fuel. It’s estimated to be the single largest source of global temperature increase since pre-industrial times, according to the International Energy Agency. Yet, State officials have no official targets to reduce emissions or to incentivize the use of renewable energy. Kentucky is one of just four states that didn’t apply for up to \$3 million to create a climate action plan through the Inflation Reduction Act, according to the Kentucky Lantern. State lawmakers passed a new law in 2023 making it more difficult to retire coal-fired power plants. Today, Kentucky remains the seventh largest coal producer in the country. Around 71% of the Commonwealth’s electricity still comes from coal, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. <https://www.lpm.org/news/2023-06-21/taking-stock-how-climate-change-is-affecting-kentucky>

### **Call to Action:**

We call on all congregations of the KY Council of Churches, their members and community partners to Advocate for a just transition from fossil fuels to more sustainable energy: Wind, Water and Solar. We who have much must work for those in poorer countries that are suffering a crisis not primarily of Their making.

In KY that means finding ways to help those working in the coal industry to develop a plan and move to the future with the support of our state government.

We call on our legislature to take the threat of Climate Change seriously and to utilize federal funds when offered to develop a climate action plan before we begin to experience even more flooding, drought and severe storms.



# Student Loan Forgiveness Common Misconceptions

1

## **I have not worked for ten years so there is nothing I need to do yet.**

Getting started now will allow you to track your progress and ease forgiveness approval when 120 qualifying payments are made and ten years non-profit work are met.

2

## **I was rejected before when I applied for loan forgiveness. I don't qualify.**

There are many circumstances where you could have been denied but are eligible. Complete the [PCUSA.org/loanassist](https://www.pcusa.org/loanassist) registration work with People Joy to get more information.

3

## **The Organization I worked for does not exist any longer.**

Closed agencies can still be certified.

4

## **I am not ordained. I do not qualify for Student Loan Debt Coaching.**

Teaching elders, Employees of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) worshiping communities, Employees of a Presbyterian-related school, college, university or seminary, Presbyterian-related camp and conference center employees, UKirk registered ministry chaplains and campus ministers, Employees of mid councils and church corporations.

*Membership in a PC(USA) congregation is not required for participation.*

5

## **I make too much money to have my loans forgiven.**

Depending on your loan balance and how many qualifying payments remain, you may still be eligible to receive forgiveness even if you think you make too much money!

6

## **My loans are or have been in default. They cannot be forgiven.**

Different programs allow you to bring your loans out of default status. Once out of default your loans are again eligible for loan forgiveness.

7

## **I work part-time so I don't qualify for loan forgiveness.**

If you work 30 hours a week or more at 1, 2 or more non-profit organizations, you qualify.

8

## **I have Parent Loans.**

PeopleJoy can help you consolidate parent loans into eligible loan type.