

Augustine Presbytery
Confederation of Reformed Evangelical Churches
Minutes of the Stated Meeting, October 21-22, 2009

Wednesday, October 21, 2009

4:00-6:00 pm: Ordination Examination - Peter Jones of Christ Church of Morgantown, WV, a mission congregation of Christ Reformed Evangelical Church, Annapolis, MD was examined by a committee consisting of Virgil Hurt (chair), Glen Knecht, Laurence Windham, Tom Clark, and Ty Fischer.

Thursday, October 22, 2009

9:00 am: Presiding Minister Gregg Strawbridge introduced Pastor Gene Liechty of Christ Church of North Carolina, the host church for the Presbytery meeting. Pastor Liechty welcomed the Presbyters on behalf of Christ Church and introduced his Administrative Assistant, Margaret Finnegan.

Rev. Laurence Windham led the assembly in an Invocation.

Rev. Brian Penney led the assembly in the singing of Psalms and Hymns.

Presiding Minister Gregg Strawbridge delivered an exhortation from Proverbs regarding the use of our words, closing the exhortation in prayer.

Roll was called and quorum was established based upon the representation of the following particular churches:

- All Saints Presbyterian Church, Lancaster, PA, represented by Ty Fischer and Mike Price
- Christ Church, Cary, NC, represented by Gene Liechty and John Guyer
- Christ Covenant Church, Copiague, NY represented by Brian Penney and Kris Smith
- Christ Reformed Church, Albion, ME represented by Rick Young
- Christ Reformed Evangelical Church, Annapolis, MD represented by Jeff Antkowiak and Glen Knecht
- Covenant Heritage Reformed Fellowship, Yorktown, VA represented by Conrad Doskey and Steve Hemmeke
- Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church, Knoxville, TN represented by Jeff White
- Providence Church, Lynchburg, VA represented by David Cooper and Virgil Hurt
- St. Peter Presbyterian, Bristol VA represented by Wayne Hays and Laurence Windham

It was noted that delegates Tom Clark and John Correia of Tri-City Covenant Church, Sommersworth, NH, were providentially hindered in attending roll call, but arrived within the hour.

Church reports were presented by Member and Mission churches:

All Saints Presbyterian report was delivered by Ty Fischer. Prayer for the congregation was led by Blake Purcell (visiting representative of the Slavic Reformation Society).

Christ Church, Cary NC report was delivered by Gene Leichty. Prayer for the congregation was led by Wayne Hays.

Christ Covenant Church, Copiague NY, report was delivered by Brian Penney. Prayer for the congregation was led by Gene Liechty

Kings Chapel, Brooklyn NY (mission of Christ Covenant) report was delivered by Ron Weinbaum. Prayer for the congregation was led by Tom Clark.

Christ Reformed Church report was delivered by Rick Young. Prayer for the congregation was led by Virgil Hurt.

Christ Reformed Evangelical Church report was delivered by Jeff Antkowiak. Prayer for the congregation was led by Laurence Windham.

Christ Church of Morgantown (mission of Christ Reformed Evangelical) was delivered by Peter Jones. Prayer for the congregation was led by Tony Aguilar (of King's Chapel mission congregation).

Covenant Heritage Reformed Fellowship report was delivered by Stephen Hemmeke and Conrad Doskey. Prayer for the congregation was led by Jeff Antkowiak and Rick Young.

In the Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church report, elder Jeff White, noted that since David Queener (pastor) resigned (as of 10/1/2009), Lawrence Windham became moderator of their Pro Tempore Session. Pastor Windham was introduced and delivered the remain part of the church report. Prayer for the congregation was led by Glen Knecht.

Providence Church report was delivered by Virgil Hurt. Prayer for the congregation was led by Ron Wienbaum (of King's Chapel mission congregation).

St. Peter Presbyterian report was delivered by Laurence Windham. Among prayer requests it was noted that St. Peter elder RC Sproul, Jr's wife, Denise, is receiving radiation for a tumor on her back. Prayer was offered for the congregation and the Sproul's by Jeff White.

Tri-City Covenant Church report was delivered by Tom Clark. Prayer for the congregation was led by Laurence Windham.

Holy Trinity Reformed Church, Concord NC (a mission congregation of Christ Church, Cary NC) report was delivered and prayer for the congregation was offered by Gene Liechty, noting that Brian Phillips was providentially hindered from attending the assembly.

Moderator Strawbridge adjourned the meeting for lunch.

The assembly reconvened at 1:30 pm.

Recognition of Guests and Visiting Delegations

Virgil Hurt introduced Roger Gibson and others guests from Christ Church, Front Royal, VA.

Mission Reports

Slavic Reformation Society (SRS) addressed the assembly with a report and appeal including representatives Blake Purcell, Gene Liechty, and Steve Murphy. The report addressed the work of Biblical Theological Seminary in St. Petersburg, current needs and plans for church planting.

Gene Leichty explained that SRS needs \$4,000 more additionally per month to continue to train pastors and plant churches.

Blake Purcell invited CREC Elders and pastors to come to the Spring 2010 intensive course in the first week of March and to meet Eurasian members with the goal of “adopting” churches for support.

Steve Murphy proposed a CREC Eurasia mission which would be responsible for facilitating church planting, working with SRS, with the goal of planting 10 CREC churches in Eurasia, sustained and planted by 2015.

Two Russian pastor's, Rev. Oleg Volkov and Rev. Igor Krutogolov addressed the assembly and presented a video relating to the Russian prison ministry of Rev. Krutogolov, known as “Chaplain.”

Rev. Oleg Volkov and Rev. Igor Krutogolov presented tokens of appreciation to officially thank Blake Purcell and Gene Leichty for their partnership in Eurasian ministry.

Candidate Churches

2009/10/22:1 Motion - Virgil Hurt offered, and Rick Young seconded, a motion that candidate status be conveyed to Christ Church of Fort Worth VA. The motion carried without opposition.

Examination Committee Report

Virgil Hurt (chair) announced that the committee unanimously recommended Peter Jones for ordination to Christ Church of Morgantown, WV.

Reports from Council Committee, Presiding Minister and Special Committees

Gregg Strawbridge, as a member of Council's CREC Name Change Committee, noted that there is nothing to report from the committee.

Presiding Minister Strawbridge gave his annual report to the Presbytery, noting various pastoral labors for the assembly. Two exceptional tasks were noted: the appointing of a commission to help shepherd Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church, Knoxville TN, as well as a committee to make recommendations to Augustine Presbytery relating to the request of Christ Covenant (Copiague, NY) relating to the actions of Messiah's Covenant Community Church against Rev. Ron Weinbaum (King's Chapel, mission congregation). Rev. Strawbridge requested the assembly receive and approve the report, adding it to the minutes (EXHIBIT 1).

2009/10/22:2 Motion - Rick Young offered, and Mike Price seconded, a motion to receive the Presiding Minister's report. The motion carried without opposition.

**Overture Committee Report (Revd's Clark, Hurt, Windham)
RE: Christ Covenant Church (Copiague, NY)**

Virgil Hurt addressed the assembly regarding the request of Christ Covenant Church, Copiague, NY (CREC). Through questions and discussion it was explained that in 2004 two (non CREC, unaffiliated) congregations in Brooklyn, NY (Messiah's and King's Highway) merged together. In 2006 King's Highway left the merger. In 2007 Christ Covenant Church (CREC), received King's Highway, now renamed The King's Chapel (Brooklyn, NY) with Rev. Ron Weinbaum (pastor), under their care as a mission congregation. Christ Covenant did this after having studied this case thoroughly and after noting the conclusions of CORO I (standing for "Covenant of Reformed Officers"), an ad hoc classis/presbytery called by Messiah's. CORO I did not vindicate Messiah's in "suspending" Rev. Weinbaum (from ministry) and refused to address the property issues surrounding the case. However, Messiah's continued to claim jurisdiction over Rev. Weinbaum's ministerial credentials and the property of King's Highway/King's Chapel. Messiah's called a second ad hoc classis/CORO (CORO II, meeting in Feb. 2009) and from them received support both in their discipline Rev. Weinbaum and for their claims of ownership of the King's Highway church property. As a result of CORO II's actions, supporting Messiah's claims, Rev Weinbaum and other members of the King's Chapel have been served with notice of a civil lawsuit against them in which Messiah's Congregation claims the property of the church building, the parsonage, and over ten million dollars in damages.

The consistory of Messiah's congregation has made a ruling deposing Rev. Weinbaum (8/2009) from the sacred office of Minister of the Word and Sacrament. However, the session of Christ Covenant Church (CREC) does not recognize their authority or jurisdiction over Rev. Weinbaum/King's Chapel and declares this ruling to be null and void; not receiving it as binding on earth or in heaven.

Christ Covenant Church has appealed to Augustine Presbytery regarding this. After due consideration, the Augustine committee (Clark, Hurt, Windham) recommended supporting the elders of Christ Covenant and their decision regarding this matter. Their report noted that (1) the Augustine Presiding Minister's original counsel in directing complainants to first approach the localized session, per the CREC Constitution, went unheeded, (2) the offer of CORO II representatives to meet with our presbytery for further resolution has not been accepted, and (3) the conditions consistent with the CREC Constitution should Messiah's/CORO II wish to redress the matter, imply that, "This civil lawsuit must be dropped before a CREC Church or Presbytery would consider hearing the complaint" (Report, EX. 2). Having approved the committee's work

and suggested friendly amendments to the report, Augustine Presbytery adopted the report as our view in the matter.

2009/10/22:3 Motion - Ty Fischer offered, and Gene Liechty seconded, a motion to adopt the Overture Committee Report (EXHIBIT 2). The motion carried without opposition.

Election of a Presiding Minister

It was noted the Minister Strawbridge consented to do a one year transitional term (2008-2009) at the end of his three year term (2005-2008) in the newly reorganized Augustine Presbytery in 2008. Having completed this term, nominations for the office were called for from the floor of the assembly.

2009/10/22:4 Election - Mike Price offered, and Tom Clark seconded, a nomination of Virgil Hurt to the office of Presiding Minister of Augustine Presbytery. Rev. Hurt affirmed his willingness to serve and the nominee was questioned from the floor of Presbytery. Without objection, the election was held with a vote by voice. Rev. Hurt was elected unanimously to the office of Presiding Minister.

Election of Presiding Minister Pro Tempore

It was noted the Pro Tempore Minister for 2008, RC Sproul, Jr. requested the election of a replacement given his pending relocation to Orlando, FL and other considerations. Nominations for the office were called for from the floor of the assembly.

2009/10/22:5 Election - Rick Young offered, and Kris Smith seconded, a nomination of Laurence Windham for the office of Presiding Minister Pro Tempore. Rev. Windham affirmed his willingness to serve and the nominee was questioned from the floor of Presbytery. David Cooper offered, and Laurence Windham seconded, a nomination of Ty Fischer for Presiding Minister Pro Tempore, but Ty Fischer denied he was willing to serve. Without objection, the election was held with a vote by voice. Rev. Windham was elected unanimously to the office of Presiding Minister Pro Tempore.

Consideration of Delegates for Council

2009/10/22:6 Motion - Rick Young offered, and Tom Clark seconded, a motion that the Presiding Minister and Presiding Minister Pro Tempore be the Council Delegates. The motion carried.

Presbytery Planning

2009/10/22:7 Motion - After Virgil Hurt offered, Ty Fischer moved and Gene Liechty seconded, that Providence Church of Lynchburg host Presbytery with a similar structure as 2009 (Wednesday afternoon for Exams and Thursday for meeting) on October 20-21, 2010. The motion carried without opposition.

2009/10/22:8 Motion - After Laurence Windham offered, Ty Fischer moved and Rick Young seconded, that the spring Presbytery event be hosted St. Peter's Presbyterian

Church in Bristol, VA at a date to be determined. Gene Liechty, Laurence Windham, and Virgil Hurt were charged to plan for the event. The motion carried without opposition.

Ty Fischer led the assembly in thanking Christ Church of Cary, NC, Pastor Gene Liechty and Administrative Assistant, Margaret Finnegan, for their labor in hosting Presbytery.

Gene Liechty led the assembly in thanking outgoing Presiding Minister, Gregg Strawbridge for his labors on behalf of the Presbytery.

Presiding Minister, Gregg Strawbridge led the assembly in thanking Jared McNabb (All Saints member and seminarian) for assisting in taking minutes for the meeting.

2009/10/22:9 Motion Rick Young offered, and Tom Clark seconded, a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried without opposition.

EXHIBIT 1: AUGUSTINE PRESBYTERY PRESIDING MINISTER'S REPORT

Presented by Rev. Gregg Strawbridge, Presiding Minister (2008-2009)

Fathers and Brothers,

The work of this office in the past year involved both routine and exceptional tasks. In the routine work, I have been in contact with several churches and ministers inquiring into affiliation with the CREC. It is a joy to see the growth of our churches and the convocation of other brethren looking into our confederation.

I discussed the prospects of a Presbytery examination for purposes of ordination with several men. Specifically, I was requested to aid Christ Reformed Evangelical Church in MD with their mission church, Christ Church of Morgantown, WV, as they have proceeded toward the ordination of Peter Jones. I appointed the ordination committee and provided resources for the written examination.

Concerning Pastoral Care in our churches, as we know from our church reports, we have a number of challenging situations. As challenges have arisen in our churches, I have had some contact, for purposes of advice or pastoral counsel with a number of elders and/or members of at least seven of our churches and mission churches.

The exceptional work for this year involved two situations: Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church, Knoxville, TN and Christ Covenant/Christ/Kings Chapel in NY.

As reported, I received a formal request from the Consistory of elders and deacons of Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church, Knoxville, TN, to arrange Presbytery level oversight to their church in light of the resignation of Pastor David Queener (effective 10/1/2009). As a result, I appointed a commission led by Rev. Laurence Windham and together with CRPC's session they have determined to have an ongoing relationship with St. Peter's session.

The difficulties relating to the aggression of Messiah's Covenant Community Church (Steve Schlissel, pastor) toward the church King's Chapel (Ron Weinbaum, pastor) have become public knowledge among the CREC presbyters. I have engaged in correspondence and informal advice on this matter for some time. My early correspondence would be in the category of providing procedural advice. For example, I wrote to the attorney for Messiah's, Mr. Dale Peacock (9/11/2008 via email), "I refer you to the previous letter to Mr. Setyon on CREC church order relating to the status of Ron Weinbaum and the church (i.e., they are duly considered a mission church of Christ Covenant Church currently). Note: It is the presbytery, not the moderator, that will admit mission churches into regular membership of the CREC."

In January 2009, I sought to provide advice to the CORO II panel, which panel was called by Messiah's to sustain their discipline of suspending him from office and consider matters relating

to church property under dispute. I wrote via the clerk Rev. Donald Van Dyken (a minister in the CREC)(1/30/2009):

I do not want to be misunderstood in terms of partiality, however. I said to Rev. Weinbaum in my very first conversation with him about his coming into the CREC (perhaps in 2006?) and what is still true. I have consistently counseled Rev. Weinbaum and his supporters not to avert any biblical justice, rather to seek the proper context and process for a trial if that needs to happen or comes. I would also say the same to Rev. Schlissel. However, it is my sense that in the cases that I know of and have been involved in such as this one, the actual problems are not matters for trials or proceedings of an ad hoc presbytery, but need pastoral oversight to bring about the reconciliation of relationships. Without that, often church court actions do not bring healing, resolution, or unity to the Church. I called you, as I indicated, out of a pastoral desire to help this matter be resolved for the peace and purity of the Church. Therefore, I encourage you (and CORO II) in the Lord with the following:

- 1) Be as fully informed as possible - Contact and discuss CORO II's plans with CORO I, e.g., such representatives as Rev. Trowboust (clerk) or Rev. Booth (CREC) or Rev. Crocker (CREC).
- 2) Take steps to avoid letting this matter be drawn into civil litigation over the property of King's Chapel.
- 3) In your work, bear in mind that that Rev. Weinbaum/King's Chapel is duly under the authority of Christ Covenant Church (Copiague, NY), a member congregation of the Augustine Presbytery CREC. King's Chapel came under that authority formally after the rulings of CORO I. ... Our CREC constitution demands that first this matter must be addressed at the local church level and thus in this case between the Sessions/Consistories of Messiah's & Christ Covenant Church. The CREC Constitution (2005 version currently posted) IV.M.: "All matters not itemized here must be adjudicated and resolved at the level of the local church. Before any appeal is made, a matter must be first addressed at the local church level." Therefore, let MC3 work together with Christ Covenant Church to address these matters together, then if need be by the Augustine Presbytery, then if need be by the CREC Council. . . .

My advice to CORO II was not heeded. The conclusions of this panel were used by Messiah's to claim the deposition of Rev. Weinbaum, as well as file a \$10 million dollar civil lawsuit.

Related to this, following the announcement of a deposition of Ron Weinbaum, I received a formal request from Christ Covenant Church, Copiague, NY, for our Presbytery to uphold their actions, relating to the status of Rev. Wienbaum. I also appointed a committee to make recommendations to our Presbytery relating to the Schlissel/Weinbaum matter, specifically to process a request/overture to Presbytery from Christ Covenant Church. The committee is composed of Pastors: Hurt, Clark and Windham who will be reporting their recommendations.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Gregg Strawbridge

EXHIBIT 2: OVERTURE COMMITTEE REPORT TO PRESBYTERY VIA PM

October 22, 2009

To the Presiding Minister of the Augustine Presbytery
To the Honorable and Reverend Gregg Strawbridge

Dear Sir,

Christ Covenant Church of Copiague, NY has asked for support from Augustine Presbytery to address accusations against her mission church, The King's Chapel, Brooklyn, NY and Reverend Ron Weinbaum from Messiah's Congregation, Brooklyn, NY and the Reverend Steve Schlissel.

It is the consensus of our committee that our role as a Presbytery is to trust that our sister congregation, Christ Covenant Church, has performed due diligence in the accepting of the leadership and congregation of their mission church, The King's Chapel.

Based on the documents and correspondence that we have received, we understand: (1) that your original counsel in directing complainants to first approach the localized session went unheeded and (2) it is also evident your offer to the CORO II representatives to meet with our presbytery has not been accepted.

Therefore, it is our humble conclusion that our support for the elders of Christ Covenant and their decisions regarding Rev. Weinbaum should stand with no further investigation or suspicion from their brethren in the Augustine Presbytery.

As per CREC polity, any further complaints from Messiah's Congregation and Rev. Steve Schlissel relating to this matter must first be taken up with Christ Covenant, Copiague, NY before these issues will be heard at the Presbytery level.

In order for this matter to be pursued further within the CREC, the complainant must abide by the following guidelines within the CREC Constitution. He must possess a letter of commitment from his church expressing their willingness to give due weight, respect and consideration to the decision of the CREC, and agreeing not to pursue the matter beyond the CREC decision. Messiah's Congregation and the Rev. Steve Schlissel are currently pursuing The King's Chapel and Rev. Ron Weinbaum in a civil lawsuit. This civil lawsuit must be dropped before a CREC Church or Presbytery would consider hearing the complaint.

Consequently, Augustine Presbytery considers Christ Covenant and her elders and The King's Chapel and her elders, respectively, as members and ministers, respectively, in good standing.

Laurence Windham; Chair
Virgil Hurt
Tom Clark