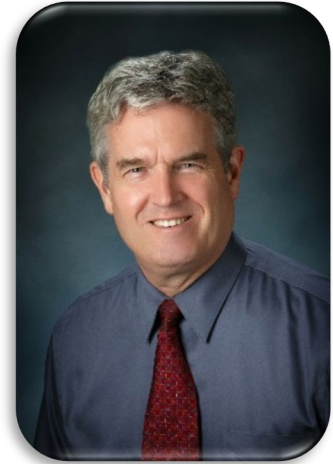


Stated Clerk
Report to the 40th General Assembly



Jeff Jeremiah
Stated Clerk

There's a real sense that coming out of our annual General Assembly we have our "marching orders" for the coming year. In the time following our 39th General Assembly at Cherry Creek last June, we were committed to moving forward as a mission- and vision-driven denomination of churches under our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In our statement of mission, we've declared that our Lord Jesus as called us to be Presbyterian, Reformed, evangelical, and missional churches. Led by National Leadership Team chairman Tom Werner, the NLT did a "deep dive" into the state of evangelism last summer and concluded this was a key area that defines *who we are* that needs attention and strengthening. In conjunction with the work of the Revelation 7:9 Task Force, the plan going forward was to broaden and augment our efforts to declare the glory of the gospel to all the people in our communities.

At the same time, at the national level we were continuing a time of transition in executive leadership. Chief Operating Officer Phil Van Valkenburg had retired in June 2019. Instead of replacing him, a re-allocation of responsibilities took place in which existing staff stepped up and shouldered additional duties. This reduction in headcount enabled us to devote more funding to our strategic priorities of church planting, church revitalization, effective biblical leadership, and global movement. In anticipation of the June 2021 departure of World Outreach Director Phil Linton and me, the World Outreach Evaluation Team and Stated Clerk Search Committee held their initial meetings in August.

In my December “Jeremiah Journal” video, I spoke to the health and well-being of our pastors. In my list of “stressors” pastors face was “uncertainty about your church’s future.”

In God’s providence, all this was happening as preparation for the transition none of us were prepared for or planned for: COVID-19 and the almost immediate shutdown of our country, communities, and churches. Any change imposed on us inevitably sparks our resistance. The scale and suddenness of the COVID-19 shutdown was historic. As a leader in the EPC, you demonstrated resilience, creativity, and even enthusiasm as you persevered, endured, and even prospered as you’ve adjusted “on the fly.” One example: a church with a worshipping congregation of 45 moved to virtual worship. It now has 140-150 attendees a week!

With our Lord’s leadership and provision, we will get through this. We will be different on the other side, but also stronger and more vibrant in our testimony and ministry for Christ and His gospel!

A. Responding to COVID-19

Like all of you, the staff in the Office of the General Assembly had to respond quickly to the shutdown and be available to respond effectively as opportunities and needs arose. The office was responsible for the following activities in response to COVID-19:

1. Good Friday Day of Fasting and Prayer (April 10). The EPC joined the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) and the Anglican Church of North America (ACNA) in promoting this ecumenical prayer event in response to COVID-19. Churches that joined us on April 10 included the Evangelical Covenant Order of Presbyterians (ECO), the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARP), the Christian Reformed Church (CRC), and the Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA). The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) promoted this event to all of its member churches.
2. May 1 Called General Assembly meeting. This was the third called meeting of the GA in our 40-year history, as commissioners to the 39th General Assembly (2019) gathered virtually to postpone the 40th GA from June 23-26 to September 17-18, 2020.
3. Day of Fasting, Lament and Prayer (June 8). In response to the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd and the ensuing civil unrest and violence, the EPC set aside Monday, June 8, as a day of fasting, lament, and prayer.
4. Presbytery meetings. Led by Director of Communications Brian Smith, the office gave guidance and technical support to our presbyteries as they were forced to convene virtual meetings this spring. Presbyteries are urged to revise their bylaws to provide for virtual meetings.
5. Local churches. My office provided guidance to churches about virtual worship, including a provisional opinion for administering the Lord’s Supper. A provisional opinion also was provided on the ordination and installation of Ruling Elders and Deacons. Led by Chief Financial Officer Pat Coelho, the finance department of the office provided online giving services for 31 churches to help them through the shutdown.

B. Special funds

The EPC has special funds that serve churches and individuals in a “diaconal capacity.” Generous giving to these funds across the years have ensured that urgent needs are being met as they arise. This is a concrete application of the spiritual connection we enjoy in the EPC.

1. Gratitude Gift. This special fund was established by the General Assembly in 1985. The Gratitude Gift is an offering EPC churches may participate in during the Christmas season. Its purpose is to help retired ministers and missionaries in need of financial help to cover out-of-pocket medical and extraordinary costs. In 2019-2020, ten retired colleagues in ministry received support from this fund.
2. Medical Benevolence. This fund was approved by the General Assembly in 1990. Its purpose is to help pay the monthly medical premiums of ministers who are between calls. The minister’s presbytery contributes half of the premium; the EPC fund pays half. The use of this fund was expanded in 2020 to help ministers who incur costs of care related to health conditions *not* covered by the pastor’s medical plan. Two ministers with special needs children received support from this fund in 2020.
3. Emergency Relief. When a natural disaster strikes, EPC church and member giving to the Emergency Relief fund is disbursed to help our churches and their communities in the affected area. In 2019-2020 funds were disbursed to our three churches in the Bahamas—Kirk of the Pines (Marsh Harbor); Lucaya Presbyterian Church (Freeport); and St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Kirk (Nassau)—in response to Hurricane Dorian. All Souls Church (Nashville, TN) and Westminster Presbyterian Church (Laurel, MS) received emergency help this spring in the aftermath of the tornadoes that swept through the Southeast U.S. Due to the past generosity of the EPC there is currently no need to solicit gifts to this fund. There is a healthy balance to address needs as they arise in the near future.

C. Per Member Asking appreciation

More than 200 EPC churches distinguished themselves in 2019 for their outstanding support for Per Member Asking. The following churches contributed 100% (or more) of their PMA to support the mission and vision of the EPC. PMA is the active membership multiplied by \$23 per member.

Presbytery of the Alleghenies

Bergen EPC (Bergen, NY). Bethany Presbyterian Church (Mercer, PA). Bethel EPC (Enon Valley, PA). Bethel Presbyterian Church (Prosperity, PA). Beverly Heights Presbyterian Church (Pittsburgh, PA). Colonial Village Presbyterian Church (Niagara Falls, NY). Connellsville Presbyterian Church (Connellsville, PA). Covenant Presbyterian Church (Sharon, PA). Cup EPC (Beaver Falls, PA). Evangelical Presbyterian Stone Church (Caledonia, NY). Hanover Presbyterian Church (Clinton, PA). Harmony EPC (Harrisville, PA). Hickory United EPC (Hickory, PA). Leicester EPC (Leicester, NY). Mansfield First Presbyterian Church (Mansfield, OH). Mt. Olivet Presbyterian Church (Aliquippa, PA). Mt. Pleasant Church (Aliquippa, PA). Pierpont Presbyterian Church (Pierpont, OH). Pine Run

Presbyterian Church (Apollo, PA). Redeemer Presbyterian Church (Erie, PA). St. Paul's Presbyterian Church (Somerset, PA). Unionville Presbyterian Church (Butler, PA). Venice Presbyterian Church (McDonald, PA). Windy Gap Presbyterian Church (West Finley, PA).

Presbytery of the Central South

Atoka Presbyterian Church (Atoka, TN). Downtown Church (Memphis, TN). First EPC (Anna, IL). First Presbyterian Church, EPC (West Point, MS). First Presbyterian Church (Tallasse, AL). First Presbyterian Church (Trenton, TN). First Presbyterian Church (West Memphis, AR). Highland Heights Presbyterian Church (Cordova, TN). Hope Church Carbondale (Carbondale, IL). Restoration Church (Munford, TN). Second Presbyterian Church (Memphis, TN). Sylvania Presbyterian Church (Ward, AR). Tunica Presbyterian Church (Tunica, MS).

Presbytery of the East

Ashland EPC (Voorhees, NJ). Bethlehem Steltz Reformed Church (Glen Rock, PA). Circleville Presbyterian Church (Circleville, NY). Faith EPC (Kingstown, VA). Forks of the Brandywine Presbyterian Church (Glenmore, PA). Grace Covenant (Exton, PA). Guinston Presbyterian Church (Airville, PA). Little Britain Presbyterian Church (Peach Bottom, PA). Living Hope EPC (Haymarket, VA). Manoa Community Church (Havertown, PA). Oreland EPC (Oreland, PA). Princetown EPC (Duanesburg, NY). Twin Tiers EPC (Big Flats, NY). Upper Octorara Presbyterian Church (Parkesburg, PA).

Presbytery of Florida and the Caribbean

Covenant Presbyterian Church (Tallahassee, FL). River City Church (DeBary, FL)

Presbytery of the Great Plains

Avery Presbyterian Church (Bellevue, NE). Colonial Presbyterian Church (Kansas City, MO). Eastminster Presbyterian Church (Wichita, KS). First Presbyterian Church (Clay Center, KS). New Hope EPC (Blue Rapids, KS). St. Luke Joy Church (Kansas City, MO). Turner County EPC (Davis, SD).

Presbytery of the Gulf South

City of Refuge Church (Houston, TX). Cornerstone EPC (Katy, TX). Covenant EPC (Lake Jackson, TX). Covenant Presbyterian Church (Monroe, LA). Covenant Presbyterian Church (Mobile, AL). Edna Presbyterian Church (Edna, TX). EPC of Marshall (Marshall, TX). First Presbyterian Church (Vicksburg, MS). First Presbyterian Church (Mexia, TX). First Presbyterian Church (Ocean Springs, MS). First Presbyterian Church of Port Gibson (Port Gibson, MS). Grace Presbyterian Church (Alexandria, LA). Hope Church (San Antonio, TX). Memorial Presbyterian Church (San Augustine, TX). Pineywoods Presbyterian Church (Nacogdoches, TX). Westminster Presbyterian Church (Laurel, MS). Woodland Presbyterian Church (New Orleans, LA). Yokena Presbyterian Church (Vicksburg, MS).

Presbytery of Mid-America

Big Creek Presbyterian Church (Hannibal, MO). Faith Presbyterian Church (Perryville, MO). Gashland EPC (Kansas City, MO). Greentree Community Church (Kirkwood, MO). Sutter Presbyterian Church (Brighton, MO).

Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic

Asbury EPC (Westfield, NC). Bethlehem Presbyterian Church (Monroe, NC). Bouldin Memorial Presbyterian Church (Stuart, VA). Buffalo Presbyterian Church (Greensboro, NC). Christ Community Church (Montreat, NC). Christ Fellowship Church (Southern Pines, NC). Cornerstone Church of Goldsboro (Goldsboro, NC). Crossroads Community Church (Burgaw, NC). Darlington Presbyterian Church (Darlington, SC). Elon Presbyterian Church (Madison Heights, VA). Englewood Presbyterian Church (Rocky Mount, NC). EPC of Elkton (Elkton, VA). Forest Hills Presbyterian Church EPC (Wilson, NC). Galatia EPC (Eagle Rock, NC). Galatia Presbyterian Church (Fayetteville, NC). Garden Memorial Presbyterian Church (Charlotte, NC). Kershaw EPC (Kershaw, SC). Lighthouse EPC (Mooresville, NC). McBee Presbyterian Church (McBee, SC). Mebane Presbyterian Church (Mebane, NC). Memorial Presbyterian Church (Greensboro, NC). Midway EPC (New Zion, SC). New Cut Presbyterian Church (Lancaster, NC). Perrow Presbyterian Church (Cross Lanes, WV). Princeton Presbyterian Church (Princeton, WV). Riceville Valley Community Church (Asheville, NC). Ridgecrest Presbyterian Church (Locust, NC). Roseann EPC (Hurley, VA). Rourk Presbyterian Church (Rockingham, NC). Siler Presbyterian Church (Wesley Chapel, NC). St. Giles EPC (Charlotte, NC). Thompson Valley Presbyterian Church (Tazewell, VA). Trinity EPC (Florence, SC). Valley Hope Church (Black Mountain, NC). Walker's Creek Presbyterian Church (Marion, VA). Warrenton Presbyterian Church (Abbeville, SC).

Presbytery of the Midwest

Calvary Presbyterian Church (Flint, MI). Cedarville United Presbyterian Church (Cedarville, OH). College Corner Presbyterian Church (College Corner, OH). Community EPC (Owosso, MI). Cornerstone EPC (Brighton, MI). Covenant Church (West Lafayette, IN). Covenant EPC (Tecumseh, MI). Faith EPC (Rochester Hills, MI). Faith Presbyterian Church (West Lafayette, IN). Fellowship EPC (South Lyon, MI). First EPC (Battle Creek, MI). First EPC (Kokomo, IN). First EPC (Frankfort, IN). First Presbyterian Church (Paulding, OH). First Presbyterian Church (Bucyrus, OH). First Presbyterian Church (Hillsdale, MI). Grace Point EPC (Nappanee, IN). Kirkmont Presbyterian Church (Beavercreek, OH). Knox Presbyterian Church (Ann Arbor, MI). Lake City EPC (Lake City, MI). Living Hope Evangelical Church (Grosse Pointe, MI). North Oaks Community Church (Clarkston, MI). Oakhill Presbyterian Church ((Grand Rapids, MI). Peace Church (Flint, MI). Russellville Presbyterian Church (Russellville, OH). St. Andrew EPC (Auburn, IN). Stonebridge Church (Perrysburg, OH). Trinity Presbyterian Church (Columbia City, IN). Ward EPC (Northville, MI). Westminster Church (Port Huron, MI). Wheat Ridge EPC (West Union, OH).

Presbytery of the Pacific Northwest

Alder Presbyterian Church (Eatonville, WA). Bickleton Evangelical Community Church (Bickleton, WA). Christ Community Church (Caldwell, ID). Calvin Presbyterian Church (Corvallis, OR). Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church (Gig Harbor, WA). Christ Presbyterian Church (Boise, ID). Community Church of Ephrata (Ephrata, WA). Evangelical Valley Presbyterian Church (Hazelton, ID). First EPC (Oregon City, OR). First Presbyterian Church (Fairbanks, AK). Grace EPC (Gig Harbor, WA). Hope Presbyterian Church (Rogue River, OR). Living Waters EPC (Wendell, ID). Merrill Presbyterian Church (Merrill, OR). New Hope EPC (Burney, CA). New Hope Presbyterian Church (Kent, WA). Okanogan EPC (Okanogan, WA). Parkdale Community Church (Parkdale, WA). Parkway Presbyterian Church (Tacoma, WA).

Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church (Klamath Falls, OR). Saddlerock EPC (Wenatchee, WA). Sequim Community Church (Sequim, WA). Sterry Memorial Presbyterian Church (Parma, ID). Wabash Church (Auburn, WA).

Presbytery of the Pacific Southwest

Centerville Presbyterian Church (Fremont, CA). Clayton Community Church (Clayton, CA). Community Presbyterian Church (Danville, CA). Covenant Community Church (Vacaville, CA). Covenant Presbyterian Church (Orange, CA). First Armenian Presbyterian Church (Fresno, CA). First Presbyterian Church (Fresno, CA). First Presbyterian Church (Hanford, CA). First Presbyterian Church (Bakersfield, CA). Sierra Presbyterian Church (Nevada City, CA). Woodlake Presbyterian Church (Woodlake, CA).

Presbytery of the Rivers and Lakes

Aplington EPC (Aplington, IA). Bethel Presbyterian Church (Reading, MN). Christ Alone Church (Green Bay, WI). Faith EPC (Crivitz, WI). Faith Presbyterian Church (Quincy, IL). First EPC (Cedar Grove, WI). First Presbyterian Church (Waukegan, IL). First Presbyterian Church (Mora, MN). First Presbyterian Evangelical Church (Montezuma, IA). First United Presbyterian Church (Moline, IL). Highview EPC (Dousman WI). Hogarty Community Church (Aniwa, WI). Immanuel Presbyterian Church (Warrenville, IL). Kishwaukee Community EPC (Stillman Valley, IL). Riverside Evangelical Church (Sartell, MN). Trinity Presbyterian Church (Sparta, IL). United Presbyterian Church (Amberg, WI). Wabash Presbyterian Church at Orio (Allendale, IL).

Presbytery of the Southeast

Central Presbyterian Church (Hyden, KY). Christ Church Presbyterian (Dalton, GA). Covenant Presbyterian Church (Rome, GA). First Presbyterian Church (Rome, GA). Hope Fellowship EPC (Chickamauga, GA). Murphy Presbyterian Church (Murphy, NC). New Beginning Church (Spring City, TN). New Hope EPC (Kingsport, TN). Trinity Grace EPC (Loganville, GA). Trion EPC (Trion, GA).

Presbytery of the West

Christ Reformed Presbyterian Church (Torrington, WY). Community Protestant Church (West Yellowstone, MT). Cornerstone Church (Stapleton, NE). Cornerstone Community Church (Aurora, CO). Cornerstone Community Church (Greeley, CO). Evangelical Presbyterian Church (Hazelton, ND). Faith Evangelical Church (Loveland, CO). First EPC (Artesia, NM). Good Shepherd EPC (Ajo, AZ). Grace Reformed Church (Casper, WY). Greenwood Community Church (Greenwood Village, CO). Mountain Road Church (Fruit Heights, UT).

Recommendations

40-01 The Stated Clerk recommends that the 40th General Assembly **SUSPEND** “Rules for Assembly” for the duration of the 40th General Assembly.

40-37 The Stated Clerk recommends that the 40th General Assembly **RATIFY** an amendment to *Book of Government* 11-2C. **Overture 19-A**. Eleven presbyteries voted to approve; three presbyteries voted not to approve.

40-38 The Stated Clerk recommends that the 40th General Assembly **RATIFY** an amendment to *Book of Government* 9-5A.1. **Overture 19-B**. Twelve presbyteries voted to approve; two presbyteries voted not to approve.

Respectfully submitted,



Jeff Jeremiah
Stated Clerk

September 2020

[Click here for the 2019 Annual Church Report](#)
[Click here for the 2019-2020 Churches Received, Dissolved, and Dismissed](#)



EPC

A Global Movement of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches

**DESCENDING OVERTURE 19-A
FROM THE 39TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

To amend *Book of Government* 11-2C which addresses the examination of candidates for ordination.

Current <i>Book of Government</i> 11-2C	Proposed <i>Book of Government</i> 11-2C amendment. Additions in <i>bold italics</i>
The Presbytery shall make public examination of the Candidate as to Christian experience and growth, the motive for seeking ordination, and a statement regarding the person’s call to the Ministry.	The Presbytery shall make public examination of the Candidate as to Christian experience and growth, the motive for seeking ordination <i>by a Presbytery of the EPC</i> , and a statement regarding the person’s call to the Ministry.

Whereas a Candidate for ordination is expected to experience both an “inward call” to the ministry per se as well as an external call to a specific church or agency [BoG 10-1], and

Whereas there are many Christian churches and agencies with a wide range of theology and polity who offer such calls, and

Whereas some who come seeking ordination in the EPC have been previously ordained in non-reformed bodies or unaffiliated churches, and

Whereas even within the bodies of churches and agencies that call themselves Presbyterian and reformed there are significant differences of belief and practice;

Therefore, it is necessary that the presbytery, when considering a candidate to come under its care to prepare for ministry in a church or agency of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, carefully consider the candidate’s motivation to not only be an ordained Teaching Elder, but also to be a part of the EPC.



EPC

A Global Movement of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches

VOTE OF THE PRESBYTERIES

Presbytery	Yes	No
Alleghenies	61	2
Central South	51	0
East	67	0
Florida and the Caribbean	51	1
Great Plains	44	0
Gulf South	4	6
Mid-America	0	27
Mid-Atlantic	134	2
Midwest	63	0
Pacific Northwest	64	0
Pacific Southwest	58	0
Rivers and Lakes	12	33
Southeast	75	0
West	83	0
TOTAL	767	71



EPC

A Global Movement of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches

**DESCENDING OVERTURE 19-B
FROM THE 39TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

To amend *Book of Government* 9-5 that would make explicit that the office of “co-pastor” is not constitutional.

Current <i>Book of Government</i> 9-5A.1	Proposed <i>Book of Government</i> 9-5A.1 amendment. Additions in <i>bold italics</i>
<p>Within the office of Teaching Elder there are a variety of callings that require ordination. God distributes to each gifts according to the common needs of the Church. These include:</p> <p>A. Pastor</p> <p> 1. Titles</p> <p> A Teaching Elder may be called by a congregation to be a Pastor or Associate Pastor. Sessions may call a Teaching Elder as Assistant Pastor, Transitional Pastor, or invite a Teaching Elder as Stated Supply Pastor, or Occasional Supply Pastor. Presbytery must approve all such positions. These are the only recognized callings for Teaching Elders in a congregational setting.</p>	<p>Within the office of Teaching Elder there are a variety of callings that require ordination. God distributes to each gifts according to the common needs of the Church. These include:</p> <p>A. Pastor</p> <p> 1. Titles</p> <p> A Teaching Elder may be called by a congregation to be a Pastor or Associate Pastor. Sessions may call a Teaching Elder as Assistant Pastor, Transitional Pastor, or invite a Teaching Elder as Stated Supply Pastor, or Occasional Supply Pastor. Presbytery must approve all such positions. These are the only recognized callings for Teaching Elders in a congregational setting. <i>The office of the ‘co-pastor’ is not a constitutionally recognized calling in a local church. Except as otherwise provided in the Book of Government, the Pastor of the church shall be the Moderator of Session.</i></p>



EPC

A Global Movement of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches

Rationale:

The Fifth General Assembly (1985) “sustained the Permanent Judicial Commission’s opinion regarding the office of the office of co-pastor as being non-existent. Relationships between Teaching Elders and EPC congregations sanctioned by the *Book of Government* are those of Pastor, Associate Pastor and Assistant Pastor” (**Minutes, 5-40**). The position of the EPC since this 1985 action has remained unchanged.

The reason for the proposed amendment to the *Book of Government* is that churches that have come to the EPC recently have questioned the constitutionality of the prohibition. It has been argued that its “not explicit in the *Book of Government* that co-pastor is prohibited.” This amendment would explicitly declare in the *Book of Government* the position of the EPC since 1985.

VOTE OF THE PRESBYTERIES

Presbytery	Yes	No
Alleghenies	62	2
Central South	46	6
East	67	4
Florida and the Caribbean	51	1
Great Plains	44	0
Gulf South	6	4
Mid-America	16	6
Mid-Atlantic	32	90
Midwest	61	5
Pacific Northwest	70	0
Pacific Southwest	57	4
Rivers and Lakes	19	21
Southeast	75	10
West	83	0
TOTAL	689	144