

**JOHN CALVIN PRESBYTERY  
REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**

**FOR ACTION:**

**1. That Presbytery enter into a working relationship with Elder Greg Emery quarter-time (10 hours per week) helping our churches in transition and recommend his terms of call be approved (with start date of February 1, 2021):**

Annual Salary	\$12,500
Reimbursable expenses:	
Pension, medical, social security offset	\$5,000
Continuing education	\$1,500
Professional expenses and mileage @ IRS rate	\$1,000
4 weeks vacation	
2 weeks study leave	
<b>Total cost to JCP</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>

Annual cost to *participating* churches:  
\$1,000 for churches under 75 members  
\$2,000 for churches 76-150 members  
\$4,000 for churches over 150 members  
Plus mileage reimbursement if the consultant visits their site  
And \$20/person for study materials

**Supplemental Materials**

**Greg Emery – Resume**

**Educational Experience:**

Master of Arts, Theology; Fuller Theological Seminary (2011)

Master of Business Administration; Arizona State University (1980)

Bachelor of Science, Marketing; Arizona State University (1979) Continuing Education:

Numerous PCUSA pastor and elder conferences

### Work Experience:

#### **Presbyterian Church (USA)**

- Pastoral Staff, Wyoming Valley Presbyterian Church, Wilkes-Barre, PA (city of 40,000), Jan/2011 to Oct/2013, 330-member church (the result of merging three congregations)
- Pulpit Supply, preached in the states of PA, TN, MO, CA (PCUSA churches, as well as Methodist, African-American Baptist and city-wide interdenominational services), 2007- present
- Chaplain, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Memphis, TN, 2007 (fulfilling field requirement for Fuller Theological Seminary)

#### **Business and Civic**

- Vice President and or division manager for Sony, Ampex, DataMag, and Cybernet Systems Corporations. Began career in sales for IBM. Worked in Los Angeles, Palo Alto, Paris, Phoenix and Ann Arbor; traveled to 40 countries.
- State director, board member and volunteer for Big Brothers Big Sisters. Chairman of Main Street Brownsville and active with Boys & Girls Club.

### Service to the Church:

- Ruling elder at Wyoming Valley Presbyterian Church (PA) and First Presbyterian, Brownsville (TN)
- Board of Governors, NaCoMe PCUSA camp and retreat center (present)<sup>[L][SEP]</sup>
- Developer and manager of the *Center of the Village* afterschool program (PA)<sup>[L][SEP]</sup>
- Pulpit supply at over 20 churches
- Vision/strategy committee for Mid-South Presbytery<sup>[L][SEP]</sup> Vision/planning leader for Wyoming Valley (PA) and First Presbyterian Churches (TN)<sup>[L][SEP]</sup>
- Created Sunday School courses, such as "Bonhoeffer for the 21st<sup>st</sup> Century"<sup>[L][SEP]</sup>
- Pastor's spouse (did not bake cakes or play the organ, but involved in all aspects of ministry, from wedding coordinator to speaking at funerals to running the sound and slide systems . . . humor aside, this is a very important role and one that provides invaluable insight into the life of the church and the pastor).

### **Greg Emery—Statement of Faith**

I believe that we are saved by grace through faith, as we read in Ephesians 2: 8-9. Salvation does not come from anything we do; it is a gift from God through our Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks for my salvation and for the calling to serve, to join what God is doing to redeem this world. I am called to be Christ's representative, as I reach out to those in need. It is the power of the Holy Spirit that makes it possible for me to follow Jesus.

I believe that God called everything into being for His purposes, and that the purpose of our existence lies in loving Him and living into His will. I also believe that this is not our human nature; we are born into sin. We need the presence of the living Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit to become Christ-like. We need guidance from the inspired and authoritative word of God, Scripture, to know that

God is fully transcendent, but also personal in His love for us. Jesus lived among us to exemplify the nature of the kingdom and to give us the assurance of everlasting life. I believe in his miracles, his teachings, his sacrifice on the cross, his resurrection, his appearances beginning three days later, and his promises to never forsake us, even to the end.

In the Reformed tradition, I believe the sacraments are gifts, outer signs of an inward grace. Baptism ushers us into the sheepfold, marking us as God's own forever by the power of the Holy Spirit. We die to sin and rise again with Jesus Christ. I believe communion is the sign and seal of our communion with the crucified and risen Lord. At the table we reaffirm that we are united with God and Christians everywhere. Communion is God's gift of grace and also our call to respond to that grace. We are nourished to go into the world and be Christ's faithful disciples. When we partake of the bread and cup, we acknowledge our Lord's saving grace until he comes again.

As much knowledge we may receive from the Word and the Word incarnate, I also appreciate that, as Bonhoeffer said, "If it is truly of God, we cannot wrap our heads around it." This appreciation fuels a lifetime of learning, praying and growing with others to live in a Jesus-like manner, exhibiting compassion and forgiveness, as Christ did for us.

My personal journey started in the Catholic Church, was informed by Christian traditions of other flavors, then called as a Protestant ruling elder early in my adulthood, and matured through the Reformed faith in the Presbyterian Church. I experienced the very real grace, providence and presence of God as I struggled with my own faith questions and sense of purpose. I attended seminary to address these questions, and rediscovered the singular beauty and importance of the church in the process. I believe that we are called to express our gifts in different ways at different times, working together as the body, the church, to respond to what God has placed before us. It is daunting that God calls us into places of discomfort, sacrifice and risk. However, the Bible is replete with examples of those before us who gave their all, even their lives, for the sake of the Gospel. I pray for such courage and determination, especially in answering the call to ordained pastoral leadership.

## **Multiple Church "Visioning" Process**

Presented to John Calvin Presbytery by Greg Emery

The objective of the process is for each church to discover and envision *their own future*, aided by the Presbytery and in support of one another. Our churches deserve the benefit of all available information, research, writings, success stories, and denominational support, as well an unbiased confidant/advisor to provide this support and gently guide them through the process.

We cannot expect each individual small church, and their volunteer leaders, to have visibility to the above resources. At the same time, the future of each church is in their hands ... the denomination cannot step in to "save the day."

If the Presbytery has a number of open pulpits, the simplest reason for a church to participate is to prepare properly to search for a pastor. Unfortunately, too many churches have considered the pastorate to be one of generic skills and hire without a clear understanding by either party of the true challenges and expectations. Those relationships rarely last.

At the other end of the spectrum, some churches will need to consider radical change in order to become invigorated and sustainable congregations. These decisions must be made independently of any particular pastor. Radical change will always be accompanied by controversy and risk, requiring a methodical process in order to generate enthusiasm and confidence, rather than trepidation and fear.

My recommendation, based on success with other congregations, is to encourage anyone and everyone in a congregation to participate, not just Session members. However, each congregation will require a small number of designated leaders and a point-person.

At the conclusion of each stage, the leaders will create a presentation to summarize their findings and recommendations. These can be shared with other congregations, as well as within the originating congregation, in order to generate discussion, refinement and buy-in.

The advisor should maintain an open door for the congregations and Presbytery representatives to comment on the process, its components and pace. Ideally, the participating churches will move through the process at roughly the same pace.

In-person meetings will be subject to abatement of pandemic risks and travel availability.

## PROCESS STAGES

1. *General* trends, demographics, attitudes and changes that have or will affect every church in America to a degree = environmental analysis (in business terms)

- *Scriptural guidance: teaching, parable, command*
- Denominational church as a mature brand
- "Church" less synonymous with "spirituality"
- Attitudes among younger generations toward Christianity

2. *Local* trends, etc.

- *Scriptural guidance: teaching, parable, command*
- What is the Presbyterian Church known for = positioning?
- Where is the church in the organizational life cycle?
- What is the current sense of mission?
- Describe the local church scene
- Sacred cows, traditions, dominant personalities in the congregation?

3. Long terms goals, dreams, vision

- *Scriptural guidance: teaching, parable, command*
- How and why do churches successfully progress?
- Read, watch, study, research
- Put into context of the local congregation
- Generate specific, all-encompassing, sustainable alternative paths

4. Decision-making

- *Scriptural guidance: teaching, parable, command*
- Where to invest, risk, sacrifice?
- Articulate the new “mission”
- Describe the life of the church, including worship
- Gain congregational agreement

5. Planning and execution

- *Scriptural guidance: teaching, parable, command*
- Organization
- Staffing
- Budgets
- Milestones

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