

PRESBYTERY OF THE NORTHERN PLAINS
ONE HUNDRED and THIRTY-FOURTH STATED MEETING
March 21, 2026

The Presbytery of the Northern Plains of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) held its stated meeting at the Unruh-Sheldon Building (Room #132) on the University of Jamestown campus, in Jamestown, ND.

Moderator Ruling Elder (RE) Rusty Bender called the meeting to order at 10:08 AM and opened with prayer.

CLP Candidates Carrie Lauber, Corday Goddard, Scott Halstead, and Donna Preston led the Presbytery in a worship service. Holy Communion was celebrated as part of the service, under the care of Rev. Dr. Spencer Homan. An offering was received for the benefit of the Youth Connection Team.

The roll was taken by means of registration forms by the attendees.

P – Present in person; Z – Present via Zoom; E – Excused; A – Absent; HR – Ministers Honorably Retired, excused if absent; LOB Ministers laboring outside the bounds of the Presbytery, excused if absent. (*Numbers preceding Ministers' names are ecclesiastical occupational designations.*)

Other abbreviations:

TE = Teaching Elder (Minister of the Word and Sacrament)

RE = Ruling Elder

CRE = Commissioned Ruling Elder (also known as Commissioned Lay Pastor, CLP)

Pastoral Leaders			
Designation	Minister	Ministry	Attendance
299	Billings, Dan	HR	P
101	Bigwood, Sarah	Fargo	P
299	Bishop, Catherine	HR	HR
101	Boyar, Robert	Jamestown	P
797	Burger-Peery, Deborah	Member at Large	E
107	Chapman, Casey	CLP, Grandin-Hunter	A
299	Cory, Darrel	HR	HR
299	Danielson, Cheri	HR	HR
299	Danielson, Marli	HR	HR
101	Dill, Robin	Grafton, Minto	P
101	Dumont, Trudy	Devils Lake	Z
797	Emerson, Nancy	Member at Large	E
107	Goddard, Corday	Pulpit Supply, Colgate	P
299	Graf, Gretchen	HR	HR
299	Graham, Ron	HR	HR
101	Holtey, Mary	Fargo	P
101	Homan, Spencer	Grand Forks	P
151	Kana-Mackey, Sue	Langdon	E
299	Kargard, Rick	HR	HR

107	Legerski, Nancy	CLP, Bismarck	A
299	Mansell, Henry	HR	HR
299	McCullough, Cheryl	HR	HR
299	McDowell, Martha	HR	HR
797	Meier, Mindy	Member at Large	A
299	Monteith, Donna	HR	P
107	Norstog, Jamie	Pulpit Supply, Moorhead	P
797	Ozaki, Michael	Member at Large	A
101	Reikow, Deanna	Mandan	P
797	Rhoad, Johnny	Member at Large	E
501	Sanders, Ruth	Crookston (UMC)	P
107	Schnackenberg, Dave	CLP, Rolla-St John	Z
101	Simmons, Leanne	Bismarck	E
107	Sorenson, Raenelle	CLP, Arvilla	Z
299	Suk, David	HR	HR
501	Sveet, Elaine	Minot (Zion Lutheran)	P
299	Swanson, Joan	HR	HR
299	Watts, Gary	HR	HR
299	Woodford, Don	HR	HR

Congregation	Ruling Elder Commissioners	In Person or Zoom
Angus, Angus-Tabor Presbyterian		
Arvilla, Arvilla Presbyterian	Brenda Beck	Z
Baker, Westminster Presbyterian		
Bismarck, First Presbyterian	Jim Skaret	P
Bismarck, Glencoe Sloan Memorial	Karen MacDonald Alice Nix	P Z
Bottineau, United Parish		
Buffalo, First Presbyterian		
Calvin, Glenila Presbyterian		
Casselton, Westminster Presb.	Lana Schultz	P
Cavalier, Cavalier Presbyterian	Zelda Hartje	P
Colgate, Colgate Presbyterian	Alfred Johnson Sharon Johnson	P P
Cooperstown, First Presbyterian	Vicki Goplen	P
Crookston, First Presbyterian		
Devils Lake, Westminster Presb.	Katie Nettell	P
Dilworth, Dilworth Presbyterian		
East Grand Forks, Mendenhall	Janet Sjol	P
Edgeley, First Presbyterian	Bill Weispenning	P
Ellendale, Presbyterian		
Fairview, Community Presbyterian		
Fargo, First Presbyterian	Richard Laraway Kit O'Neill	P P
Fordville, Community Presbyterian		

Forest River, Midway Parish		
Gilby, Gilby Presbyterian		
Grafton, Federated Church		
Grand Forks, First Presbyterian	Evan Andrist Ben Shannon	P P
Grandin, Grandin Presbyterian	Donna Preston	P
Hallock, First Presbyterian	Betty Jo Younggren	Z
Hamilton, First Presbyterian		
Hannah, Hannah Presbyterian		
Hunter, First Presbyterian		
Inkster, Inkster Presbyterian		
Jamestown, United Presbyterian	Tiffany Dauer	P
LaMoure, First Presbyterian	Bill Weispfenning	P
Langdon, Presbyterian Church		
Lisbon, First Presbyterian	Dean Kirsch Ross Cole	P P
Mandan, First Presbyterian	Suzy Pfliiger	P
Minto, Knox Presbyterian	Ellen Misialek	Z
Moorhead, First Presbyterian	George O'Neill	P
Oakes, First Presbyterian		
Park River, Federated Church	Carmen Bell	Z
Pillsbury, Baldwin Presbyterian		
Portal, First Presbyterian		
Red Lake Falls, First Presbyterian	JoAnn Zutz	Z
Rhame, Lyle Presbyterian		
Rolla-St John, Presbyterian Church		
Rugby, Emmanuel United Church		
Tower City, Tower City Presbyterian	Mary Cockerill	P
Towner, Towner Presbyterian		
Walhalla, Park Center-Walhalla		
Watford City, First Presbyterian		
Webster, Webster Chapel	Wayne Lindenberg	Z
West Fargo, Community Presb.	Carrie Lauber Andrew Thostenson	P Z
Westhope, First Presbyterian		

Others in Attendance	Position	In Person or Zoom
Rusty Bender	Moderator	P
Jamie Norstog	Vice Moderator	P
Adam Montgomery	Stated Clerk	P
Sherri Stern	Financial Task Force	Z
Jennifer Kolodka	Visitor, Communications Coord.	P
Erin Anderson	Clearwater Forest Director	P
Kirstie Dobson	University of Jamestown, Campus Ministry Leader	P
Thomas Pittinger	Visitor, UofJ Campus Ministry	P

Justin Rosenboom	Visitor, UofJ Campus Ministry	P
Becky Mace	Visitor, West Fargo Comm Presb	P
Mary Reed	Visitor, Jamestown United Presb	P
Nancy Laschkewitsch	Visitor, Glencoe Sloan	P
Scott Halstead	Visitor, Grand Forks First Presb	P

In accordance with the bylaws (Article IV, B-4.0500), Stated Clerk Adam Montgomery advised the Moderator that a quorum was established.

M/S/C = moved, seconded, and carried (of a motion)

Approval of the Agenda – **Monteith/Younggren/Approved.**

Seating of Correspondence – Erin Anderson, Clearwater Forest; Kirsti Dobson, Chaplain, Campus Ministries, University of Jamestown.

Approval of the Minutes of the 133rd Stated Meeting of the Presbytery -

- Brenda Beck was incorrectly identified as a Devils Lake delegate.

Preston/Bigwood/Approved, as amended.

University of Jamestown (Campus Ministries) Report - Kirsti Dobson. Thomas Pittinger (Colorado) spoke about his experience with Campus Ministries. Justin Rosenboom (Minnesota) spoke about his Faith Works Team and his faith journey that brought him here. The three speakers thanked the Presbytery for the continued support of their mission.

Treasurer’s Report (RE Ellen Misialek) - Report submitted. **Dill/Billings/Accepted.**

Financial Task Force/Investment Committee (RE Sherri Stern) - Report submitted. The investment portfolio balance at the end of the 2025 calendar year was \$1,643,114.18. In accordance with the pledge approved at the previous Presbytery meeting, \$100,000.00 was donated to Clearwater Forest’s Capital Campaign. In addition, \$50,000.00 was paid to offset the Presbytery’s General Fund deficit, at the year-end.

Connectional Care Pastor Report (TE Deanna Reikow) - Report submitted. March 31 is Rev. Reikow’s last day as the Connectional Care Pastor. The year saw an increase in youth involvement. For the first time, it is the churches guiding the Presbytery; it is not a leader/top-down approach. Reikow spoke to the advantages of hiring an Executive Presbyter. Moderator Bender thanked Rev. Reikow for her work, on behalf of the Presbytery, and presented her with flowers and a token of our collective appreciation.

Consent Agenda - **Norstog/Preston/Approved.**

Moderator Bender asked for a motion to recess for lunch. 11:51 Dill/O’Neill/Approved. Return at 12:45 PM.

Moderator Bender called the regular meeting of the Presbytery back to order at 12:46 PM.

Congregational Vitality Report (TE Sarah Bigwood) - Report submitted. Rev. Bigwood presented the State of the Presbytery/Minister's Report. There were a number of retirements and Bigwood acknowledged and thanked those who continue to volunteer and serve.

Proposal for an Executive Presbyter (EP) - Bigwood recapped the online forums and survey results that were considered when proposing the idea of hiring an EP (included in the submitted report). The submitted report highlights a number of the issues being factored into this proposal.

TE Boyar inquired as to the church process for identifying EP candidates. Moderator Bender shared that a committee, designated by the Nominating Task Force, made up of equal numbers of TE and RE, will evaluate candidates. This search committee will be chaired by RE Brian McClure.

Bigwood highlighted aspects of the proposed EP job description (JD). These include, but are not limited to, travel, vitality, preaching, coordinating Presbytery meetings and worship services, and administration.

TE Boyar inquired if a prospective candidate had to be Presbyterian to be considered. Bigwood stated candidates would be considered like any other pastor seeking a Call.

TE Boyar inquired as to office space for an EP. Although there are no specific plans for an identified or required location, Bigwood shared her thoughts and asked the body if they would agree in housing an EP in a local church of the candidate's choosing. There were no audible objections.

Proposed financials for hiring an EP were presented.

TE Homan spoke in favor of the proposal.

Moderator Bender called the question; the motion comes from committee. **One abstention was noted; Approved.**

Presbytery Grant Program Report - Bigwood highlighted the survey results for the program, when churches should apply for consideration, and the notion of how "first come, first served" would be used including ranking of additional requests from the same church(es). The idea to "invest in the congregation" is the important goal of this program and to continue the ministry of the Church.

TE Boyar inquired as to the Congregational Vitality Pod's role in evaluating the requests. Bigwood shared that the Congregational Vitality Pod would review the request, but the Leadership Pod would be the ultimate decider of requests.

TE Boyar further inquired as to the time frame for requests. Bigwood reiterated the semester idea of reviewing, approximately two sets of six-month periods of grant spending.

Moderator Bender called the question; the motion comes from committee. **Approved.**

Continuing Preparation for Ministry Report (TE Spencer Homan) - Report submitted. Rev. Dr. Homan corrected a date stated in the report. The committee met with three candidates in their final stages of preparation: Carrie Lauber, Scott Halstead, and Corday Goddard.

Chogoria Ministry Team Report (CRE Jamie Norstog, RE Carrie Lauber) - Report submitted. Norstog shared his experiences since the last Presbytery meeting.

Clearwater Forest Report (Erin Anderson) - oral presentation. Anderson shared that the camp had developed promotional videos that can be found on the Clearwater webpage. The theme of "Fan the F.L.A.M.E." continues. The videos were presented for viewing. The capital campaign continues with additional matching pledges from other area presbyteries, based on PNP's pledge last fall! Anderson highlighted programming and important dates in the next year.

Good News - Moderator Bender shared the day's offerings, taken for Youth Connection, collected \$669.00. Lisbon applied for a grant and is now able to purchase a new Hymnal Plus. Edgeley is finishing up a major structural renovation. Jamestown has been working with church consultants to grow the congregation. Presbyterian Women is hosting an event at Mendenhall on April 25.

There was no Unfinished Business.

Moderator Bender asked for a motion to adjourn. **Bigwood/Dill**. Bender closed the meeting with prayer. The 134th Regular Meeting of the Presbytery was adjourned at 2:24 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Adam R. Montgomery
Stated Clerk