

PRESBYTERY OF THE NORTHERN PLAINS
ONE HUNDRED and THIRTY-FIFTH STATED MEETING

October 10, 2026

The Presbytery of the Northern Plains of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) held its stated meeting at First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead, Minnesota.

Moderator Ruling Elder (RE) Rusty Bender called the meeting to order at 10:04 AM and opened with prayer.

Moorhead Pastor CRE Jamie Norstog and Rev. Ruth Sanders led the Presbytery in a worship service. Holy Communion was celebrated as part of the service. An offering was received for the benefit of the Unified Mission Fund. Worship music was provided by Dr. Albina Khaliapova, Dr. Eduard Teregulov, Joni Lordeman, *The Heather and Thistle Pipes and Drums*, and Rusty Bender.

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)

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

PASTORAL LEADERS			
Designation	Minister	Ministry	Attendance
299	Billings, Dan	HR	P
101	Bigwood, Sarah	Fargo	P
299	Bishop, Catherine	HR	E
101	Boyar, Robert	Jamestown	P
797	Burger-Peery, Deborah	Member at Large	A
107	Chapman, Casey	CLP, Grandin, Hunter	A
299	Cory, Darrel	HR	E
299	Danielson, Cheri	HR	E
299	Danielson, Marli	HR	E
101	Dill, Robin	Grafton, Minot	P
101	Dumont, Trudy	Devils Lake	Z
797	Emerson, Nancy	Member at Large	P
107	Goddard, Corday	Pulpit Supply, Colgate	A
299	Graf, Gretchen	HR	E
299	Graham, Ron	HR	E
299	Holtey, Mary	HR	P
101	Homan, Spencer	Grand Forks	P
299	Kargard, Rick	HR	E
107	Legerski, Nancy	CLP, Bismarck	A
299	Mansell, Henry	HR	E
299	McCullough, Cheryl	HR	E
299	McDowell, Martha	HR	E
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	A
501	Sanders, Ruth	Crookston (Wesley 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	E
501	Sweet, Elaine	Minot (Zion Lutheran)	A
299	Swanson, Joan	HR	E
299	Watts, Gary	HR	E
299	Woodford, Don	HR	E

CONGREGATION	RE COMMISSIONERS	ATTENDANCE
Angus, Angus Tabor Presbyterian		
Arvilla, Arvilla Presbyterian	Brenda Beck	Z
Bismarck, First Presbyterian	Juanita Hocking Shari Orser	Z Z
Bismarck, Glencoe Sloan		
Bottineau, United Parish		
Buffalo, First Presbyterian		
Calvin, Glenila Presbyterian		
Casselton, Westminster	Carrie Lauber	P
Cavalier, Cavalier Presbyterian		
Colgate, Colgate Presbyterian		
Cooperstown, First Presbyterian	Vickie Goplen	P
Crookston, First Presbyterian	Sandy Perkins	P
Devils Lake, Westminster	Katie Nettell	P
Dilworth, Dilworth Presbyterian		
East Grand Forks, Mendenhall		
Edgeley, First Presbyterian		
Ellendale, Ellendale Presbyterian		
Fairview, Community Presbyterian		
Fargo, First Presbyterian	Sherri Stern Brian McClure	P Z
Fargo, Baker Downer	Carolyn Peloubet	P
Fordville, Community Presbyterian		
Forest River, Midway Parish		
Gilby, Gilby Presbyterian		
Grafton, Federated Church		
Grand Forks, First Presbyterian	Chris Solem	P
Grandin, Grandin Presbyterian		
Hallock, First Presbyterian		
Hannah, Hannah Presbyterian		
Hunter, First Presbyterian		
Jamestown, United Presbyterian	Tiffany Dauer	P
Lamoure, First Presbyterian		
Langdon, Langdon Presbyterian		
Lisbon, First Presbyterian	Dean Kirsch	P
Mandan, First Presbyterian	Suzy Pflieger	P
Minto, Knox Presbyterian	Ellen Misialek	P
Moorhead, First Presbyterian	George O'Neill	P
Oakes, First Presbyterian		
Park River, Federated Church		
Pillsbury, Baldwin Presbyterian		
Portal, First Presbyterian		
Red Lake Falls, First Presbyterian		
Rhame, Lyle Presbyterian		
Rolla-St John, Presbyterian		
Rugby, Emmanuel United		
Tower City, Presbyterian	Mary Cockerill	P
Towner, Towner Presbyterian		
Walhalla, Park Center-Walhalla		
Watford City, First Presbyterian		
Webster, Webster Chapel	Wayne Lindenberg	
West Fargo, Community Presby.	Andrew Thostenson	Z

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE	POSITION	ATTENDANCE
Westop, Rev. Ken Green		
Rusty Bender	Moderator	P
Jamie Norstog	Vice Moderator	P
Adam Montgomery	Stated Clerk	P
Ellen Misialek	Treasurer	P
Sherri Stern	Financial Task Force	P
Brian McClure	Personnel Task Force	Z
Elizabeth Swee	Synod Representative	P
Suzy Pflieger	GA Representative	P
Jennifer Kolodka (non voting)	Communications Coordinator	P
Erin Anderson (non voting)	Clearwater Forest Director	P
Ken Green (non voting)	Board of Pensions	P
Scott Halstead (non voting)	CLP program	P
Thomas Soadwa (non voting)	Minister Other Denomination, Guest	P
Erik Swee (non voting)	Moorhead, Guest	P
Ross Cole (non voting)	Lisbon, Guest	P
Ray Wertz (non voting)	Mandan, Guest	P
Alice Nix (non voting)	Bismarck, Guest	Z

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

Seating of Corresponding Members – Erin Anderson, Executive Director, Clearwater Forest; Rev. Ken Green Presbytery of Chicago and the Board of Pensions. **Without objection, the members were seated without voting rights.**

Approval of the Agenda – TE Sarah Bigwood added an introduction to a 1,001 New Worshiping Community actively engaged at First Presbyterian Church of Fargo into Congregational Vitality Pod Report. **Bigwood/Monteith. Approved.**

Approval of the Consent Agenda - **Bigwood/Reikow. Approved.**

Stated Clerk's Report (Adam Montgomery) - No formal report.

Treasurer's Report (RE Ellen Misialek) - Report submitted.

Treasurer Misialek presented the annual budget for 2027. Misialek highlighted that *per capita* was raised at General Assembly (GA) by \$1.78/member. Synod remained at \$5.50/member. Leadership Pod recommended to keep *per capita* at \$50.00/member, with PNP taking on the financial deficit for ease and comfort of the presbytery's individual churches to ask and collect from its members. Moderator Bender called the question of **establishing the 2027 *per capita* at \$50.00/member. Motion came from committee. Approved.**

Accept the Treasurer's Report - Monteith/Emerson. Approved.

Financial Task Force/Investment Committee (RE Sherri Stern) - Report submitted.

RE Stern noted the current investments balance is \$1,763,483.26. Account performance YTD is \$120,369.55. The financial records were reviewed and deemed satisfactory.

Moderator Bender called Treasurer Misialek to return and formally present the proposed 2027 Budget. Treasurer Misialek provided a budget narrative in support for the presbytery's consideration. Moderator Bender called the question of **approving the 2027 Budget. Bigwood/Emerson. Approved.**

Congregational Vitality Pod Update (TE Sarah Bigwood) - Report submitted. Bigwood presented the presbytery with a list of action items for the body's consideration (see Report). Moderator called the question of **the Action Items presented from committee. Approved.**

NOTE: Among the approved items was a motion to amend the Minutes of the presbytery's October 11, 2025 meeting to describe the action concerning Inkster and Hamilton churches, replacing incorrect language of "dismiss" with "close." Inkster and Hamilton were closed; they were not transferred to another domination. This action corrects the wording of the previously recorded decision.

Bigwood introduced Thomas Soadwa, formerly of Ghana. Pastor Thomas has organized a *1001 New Worshiping Community*, which recently was granted access and use to First Presbyterian Church - Fargo for their continued work.

Bigwood introduced Rev. Dr. Ken Green, Church Consultant, with the Board of Pensions for PC(USA). Green spoke to recent board activity and noted he will be available at lunch, for further discussion.

Moderator Bender asked for a motion to recess for lunch. **Dill/Holtey. Approved.** The meeting will be called back at 1:15 PM.

Moderator Bender called the regular meeting of the Presbytery back to order at 1:18 PM.

Preparation for Ministry Pod Update (TE Rev. Dr. Spencer Homan) - Report submitted.

Homan presented Carrie Lauber, to be examined on the floor, to be commissioned as a lay pastor. Moderator Bender called for a **motion to arrest the examination. Billings/Norstog. Approved.** Moderator Bender called for a **motion to sustain the examination. Norstog/Emerson. Approved.** Moderator Bender noted that with the approval, the CVP's previous **motion to approve Lauber's commission to serve Westminster Presbyterian Church is effective.** On behalf of CVP, Bigwood formally commissioned Lauber before the presbytery.

Mission Pod (RE Donna Preston) - Reports submitted.

Preston was absent from the meeting.

Moderator Bender recognized CLP Norstog for a Chogoria Ministry update.

Moderator Bender recognized Erin Anderson for a Clearwater Forest Camp update.

Moderator Bender recognized George O'Neill "Self-Develop Of People" (SDOP) update.

Moderator Bender read correspondence from the University of Jamestown (*see* Report).

Nominations Task Force (RE Rusty Bender) - Report submitted. Bender presented a slate of nominations, noting great success in recruiting this year. Bender also noted the only open (un-nominated) position is the Youth Connection Task Leader. Moderator Bender called for nominations from the floor. **Slated nominations came from committee. Approved.**

227th General Assembly (GA) Report (RE Suzy Pfliiger & TE Ray Wertz) - Report submitted. Pfliiger presented on her experiences at GA. Wertz shared a short sermon reflecting on his experience at GA. Homan directed the presbytery to a "short-sheet" which highlights the work of GA.

Good News - Green reminded TE's they have approximately one-month to use the Board of Pension's self-services. Reikow thanked the presbytery for their assistance and prayers. Boyer spoke to inter-church partnership and growth. Lauber shared upcoming mission trips are planned and to contact her with questions or to hear about her experiences.

There was no Unfinished Business.

Moderator Bender asked for a motion to adjourn. **Swhee/Stern.** Bender closed the meeting with prayer. The 135th Regular Meeting of the Presbytery was adjourned at 3:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Adam R. Montgomery
Stated Clerk