

**MEETING 006**

**NEW RIVER PRESBYTERY  
OF THE  
Evangelical Presbyterian Church**

**SUPPLEMENTARY  
PACKET**

**3-4 May 2024**

**Rivermont Presbyterian Church  
Lynchburg, Virginia**

29 April 2024

Pious and Dear Colleagues,

This *Supplementary Packet* contains Two Letters:

- 1) From PCC to MAP
- 2) From MAP to NRP

These letters are provided for your information. In February the Presbytery of Central Carolinas sent a letter to the Presbytery of Mid-America to which the Stated Clerks of the several presbyteries were copied. In April the Presbytery of Mid-America sent a letter to the presbyteries of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church outlining their process going forward. No action is required, but these communications will set much of the context for debate on our overture before the 44<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.

Cordially in Christ,

R. T. Burton, Clerk

The Presbytery of Mid-America  
TE Joel Keen, Moderator  
RE Dexter Kuhlman, Stated Clerk  
51 Village View Drive Apt. 3209  
Chesterfield, MO 63017



Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! Grace and peace from our Lord! It is our hope and prayer that this letter finds the Presbytery of Mid-America and our sister churches continually abiding and flourishing in the presence of our Lord.

The Presbytery of Central Carolinas has become aware of the application to the Presbytery of Mid-America from Pastor Greg Johnson and Memorial Church. We are aware they are seeking to be examined and received into the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. We also appreciate the weight you all must feel in this decision regarding the history this Pastor and congregation have had with the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). Indeed, emotions are already strong beyond your presbytery and perspectives vary. God, in His wisdom, has sent this to you all for prayerful deliberation. We are sure He has chosen well.

We humbly suggest that this is an opportunity for the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) to become united in a clear representation of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and His redemptive message to our U.S. culture and the world. This is a potentially defining moment in the EPC's witness. Discernment of the best course of action on this application has great magnitude in faithfully representing the apostolic teaching on concupiscence, the new nature verses the old nature, identity in Christ, gender, sexuality, the church's relationship to culture and the standards of ordination. Given that our ordination is national in scope (though expressed locally within a particular presbytery), we respectfully suggest that you defer on this matter, requesting that the General Assembly appoint a commission to take up this issue.

The EPC has a long history of working through complex and potentially divisive issues in ways which build trust, unity, and consensus (*i.e., the resolution of the relationship between "The Essentials" and The Westminster Standards as well as concerns regarding ordination of women*). The General Assembly, with ample input from presbyteries through the representative process, found solutions that honored Scripture (and the Westminster standards) as well as forged a path of unity and peace. We believe this is another opportunity to do so again and avoid the potential confusion we are seeing in other denominations. The topic of how one who is sexually broken embraces the redemption of our Lord has a potential of being divisively confusing. This seems especially true among Evangelicals in our day. We suggest an approach where careful, representative, Scriptural, and prayerful discernment might occur with a General Assembly

appointed study that would encourage a united expression and foster a trust we have known in the EPC.

Please be assured that, as fellow presbyters, we hold you up before the Lord as you carry your responsibilities in this moment. Let us endeavor to jointly be united in our partnership in the Gospel by humbly praying and seeking the mind of Christ on this matter. We are in prayer with you over this matter.

Warmly in Christ,

The Central Carolinas Presbytery Executive Committee

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TE James Braswell, Moderator

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TE Robert M. Howard, Stated Clerk

CC: Dean Weaver, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly  
Dana Opp, Stated Clerk Alleghenies  
Marlene Becker, Asst. Stated Clerk Alleghenies  
Ken Van Kampen, Stated Clerk Central South  
Duke Lineberry, Stated Clerk Coastal Mid-Atlantic  
John Dorr, Stated Clerk East  
Don Nichol, Ast. Stated Clerk East  
Bryan Knedgen, Stated Clerk Florida & Carriibbean  
Kermit Opprieht, Stated Clerk Great Plains  
Jeff Sparks Asst. Stated Clerk Great Plains  
Michael Herrin, Stated Clerk Gulf South  
Dexter Kuhlman, Stated Clerk Mid-America  
Pete Scribner, Stated Clerk Midwest  
Andy Warner, Asst. Stated Clerk Midwest  
Rufus Burton, Stated Clerk New River  
Ed Cummings, Stated Clerk Pacific NW  
Larena Mills, Asst. Stated Clerk Pacific NW  
Mark Eshoff, Stated Clerk Pacific SW  
Cathy Cole, Asst. Stated Clerk Pacific SW  
Annie Rose, Stated Clerk Rivers & Lakes  
William Dudley, Stated Clerk Southeast  
Diane Mizell, Asst. Stated Clerk Southeast  
Greg Daniels, Stated Clerk West



## Presbytery of Mid America

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April 24, 2024

Rev. Rufus Burton, Stated Clerk  
Presbytery of New River  
220 South Queen Street  
Martinsburg, West Virginia 25401

Greetings in the Lord from the Presbytery of Mid-America,

We hope all is well the Presbytery of New River. Thank you for your recent letter expressing your thoughts and concerns about Memorial Presbyterian Church's petition to join the EPC via the Presbytery of Mid-America. You are not alone in your communication as we have received a number of thoughts, opinions, and suggested guidance in the midst of our work and deliberation.

Pastorally, we discern that there is a level of anxiety surrounding this issue and that not being a part of Mid-America's process and day-to-day discussions have perhaps created uneasiness and angst for those on the outside. We are sympathetic to these dynamics. Therefore, in the hopes of caring well for our fellow presbyters, we have decided to share a brief update about our process thus far.

In addition to the standard work of evaluating the merits of the petition, which includes examining Memorial's teaching and ruling elders, the Presbytery of Mid-America recently voted to present the following overtures at the 44<sup>th</sup> General Assembly:

### *OVERTURE #1*

*The Presbytery of Mid-America overtures the 44th General Assembly to direct the Permanent Committee on Theology to examine the concept of sexuality as it pertains to identity/self-conception, progressive sanctification, and concupiscence, and to make recommendations to the 45th General Assembly on how these concepts apply to the examination of officers.*

### *OVERTURE #2*

*Whereas, as ordained teaching and ruling elders we take vows promising subjection to our fellow Presbyters in the Lord and promise to be zealous and faithful in promoting the peace and purity of the church (BOG 13-5A); and*

*Whereas, we are called by Scripture to be eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3);*

*Therefore, be it resolved that the Presbytery of Mid-America overtures the 44<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the EPC to direct the Permanent Committee on Ministerial Vocation to make recommendations to the 45<sup>th</sup> General Assembly on how churches and Presbyteries are to promote and preserve the peace of the church as it relates to the following questions:*

- 1. To what degree (if any) should a local church's philosophy of ministry be subordinated to the will of the Presbytery if that philosophy causes or might cause division and disunity among member churches?*
- 2. On what basis shall a Presbytery determine whether any instance of evangelistic effort or outreach unique to a local church threatens the peace, purity, and unity of the Presbytery or the EPC?*
- 3. In the interest of outreach/hospitality to the unchurched community, shall we allow sessions in our denomination to permit use of church resources by secular groups which promote lifestyles and behaviors that overtly contradict God's design for human flourishing? If so, under what circumstances?*

It is our intention to be exceedingly thorough and to solicit wisdom and guidance from the denomination to inform our deliberations and decision-making. We do not believe that moving quickly is healthy for anyone, particularly as it relates to the integrity of the process outlined in our Book of Order and also the desire to not unintentionally establish precedents that would complicate future considerations about similar matters. As a result, it is our intention to move forward slowly and methodically. We are not in any hurry.

We are committed to upholding the purity of the church without compromising the peace and unity of the church. Likewise, we are also committed to upholding the peace and unity of the church without compromising Her purity. Over the years, the EPC has established itself as a unique denomination that has found a way to be both doctrinally rigorous (biblical) and pastorally generous (gracious). We have been blessed by God to navigate important and challenging issues in the past while remaining united in the Gospel. We see the matter before us as simply another opportunity to continue being both biblical and gracious.

In the meantime, our hope denominationally is that each Presbytery will allow, and in good faith trust, the other Presbyteries to do the work set before them by our constitution, giving one another the benefit of the doubt that it will be done with Christian integrity and in alignment with God's Word.

In light of that, please continue to pray for us. We need the Lord's wisdom and guidance to carry out our Presbytery's work just as you all need the same to carry out your work. We invite you to participate with us in this way. While prayer is welcomed, we also want to share a potential wound we have felt from several correspondences we have received from various corners of our denomination. Given that we are instructed in Scripture to deal directly with fellow Christians where there is an offense (even though we are certain, in

this instance, it is unintentional), in that spirit we encourage you all to consider the following:

- We ask that you allow our connectionalism and Presbyterianism to function according to its design. As you all in New Rivers enjoy the authority to oversee the churches and territory entrusted to you, we likewise desire to faithfully represent Christ in our attempts to oversee the churches and territory entrusted to us.
- We believe there can be a danger for the EPC if we all seek influence or control over outcomes in other Presbyteries through pressure and parliamentary workarounds rather than through prayer and patience.

We understand it may be challenging to detect the tone of any letter, and so let us be clear that the above comments are offered with a Christian kindness that comes from a position of deep respect for you all. There is no angst or anger here, only a request that you would allow us to be faithful to the call on our lives as EPC Teaching and Ruling Elders in the Presbytery of Mid-America just as we desire to honor you as you seek to be faithful to God's call on your work in your Presbytery.

Again, thank you again for your original correspondence. We recognize that it comes from a love for Christ and His Church and so we wanted to respond to you in an equal expression of love for our Savior and His bride by continuing the tone you set in being kind and gracious. May God bless the churches and members of all of you in New Rivers.

On behalf of the Presbytery of Mid-America Presbytery,

Dexter A. Kuhlman, Stated Clerk

*Both these Overtures were adopted unanimously April 24, 2024.*

The Coordinating Council of the Presbytery of Mid-America

TE Joel Keen (Moderator)  
RE Dexter Kuhlman (Stated Clerk)  
TE Ritchey Cable  
TE Nathan Markley  
RE Stan Davis  
RE Jim Humphreys  
TE Michael Morefield  
TE Mike Werkheiser  
RE Don Gladhart