

## **Special Meeting of Yellowstone Presbytery**

**December 15, 2025 at 11:00 a.m. via Zoom**

**25-048. Special Meeting Purpose:** Yellowstone Presbytery met at a Special Presbytery Meeting via Zoom on December 15, 2025 at 11:00 a.m. to act on the following matters:

1. To act on the recommendation from the Representation & Nomination Team to set aside the Standing Rules of Yellowstone Presbytery to allow RE Nancy Pehl of Terry to serve a third 3-year term on the Camping and Youth Ministry Team.
2. To act on the recommendation from the Representation & Nomination Team to set aside the Standing Rules of Yellowstone Presbytery to allow MWS Neva Rathbun to serve a third 3-year term on the Pastoral Ministry team due to the lack of minister representation from the eastern part of the presbytery.
3. To act on the recommendation from the Representation & Nomination Team to elect the people they propose to fill various vacancies on presbytery teams and positions. A slate will be sent via email to the Presbytery mail list on Friday December 12.
4. To authorize PMT to act on behalf of Yellowstone Presbytery to elect an Administrative Commission to install MWS Nicole Melara as the pastor at First Presbyterian Church (FPC) of Bozeman, MT.
5. To authorize PMT to coordinate with MWS Nicole Melara and FPC Bozeman to determine the date of the special presbytery meeting for the installation of MWS Nicole Melara as pastor at FPC Bozeman. PMT will provide information to presbytery about the installation service and see that invitations are sent out for this installation.

### **25-049. Attendance:**

**Ruling Elders and Commissioned Ruling Elders in Attendance:** RE Cal Boyle, St. Timothy's Chapel, RE Cheryl Banks, PMT member, RE Stephanie Bergstrom, Manhattan commissioner, RE Julie Boksich, Church of the Big Hole Commissioner, RE Debbie Ernst, Bozeman 1<sup>st</sup> commissioner, RE Melissa Bell, Presbytery Moderator, RE Caroline Fleming, Stated Clerk, RE Nancy Pehl, Terry commissioner, RE Sandy Schoenberger, Billings 1<sup>st</sup> Commissioner, CRE Margee Smith, Lewistown, Sandra Welch, Rep/Nom moderator.

**Minister Members in Attendance:** JP Carlson, Warren (Rusty) Craig, Dick Davis, Mary Davis, Kathy Goodrich, Nicole Melara, Neva Rathbun, Jamie Schmeling, and Dave Thompson.

**25-050. Opening:** Moderator Melissa Bell called the meeting to order, opened with prayer, and declared a quorum present.

**25-051. Docket Review:** Stated Clerk Caroline Fleming reviewed the docket for today's special meeting. She had not checked on the e-minister program to see if MWS Nicole Melara's former presbytery had submitted a transfer yet and didn't have time to do so at the start of this meeting. Thus, to be sure all was handled in good order,

**\*Action:** A motion was made and seconded to seat Nicole Melara as a corresponding member with voice and vote. The motion passed. (NOTE: Nicole's paperwork is all in good order in the e-minister program, so this motion was not necessary)

Melissa asked Dave Thompson to moderate the next session of the meeting.

## **25-052. Action Items:**

**A. \*Action:** the Representation & Nomination Team (Rep/Nom) recommends the presbytery set aside the Standing Rules of Yellowstone Presbytery to allow RE Nancy Pehl of Terry to serve a third 3-year term on the Camping and Youth Ministry Team. With no discussion, the recommendation passed.

**B. \*Action:** Rep/Nom recommends the presbytery set aside the Standing Rules of Yellowstone Presbytery to allow MWS Neva Rathbun to serve a third 3-year term on the Pastoral Ministry team due to the lack of minister representation from the eastern part of the presbytery.

Attendees discussed the pros and cons of setting aside the Standing Rules to allow for a 3<sup>rd</sup> 3-year term rather than doing so to allow a person to serve one additional year on any particular team. Some felt 3-years was too long and we should allow for only a 1-year set aside. Others noted the lack of installed or retired pastors in the eastern side of presbytery and how placing a person on the PMT for one year only would cause a lack of balance on the team since there is no 1-year term open. Following discussion, Acting Moderator Dave called for a vote.

The motion passed with 18 yes votes and one no vote.

Melissa Bell returned to moderate the remainder of the meeting.

**C. Nominated Slate:** Rep/Nom Moderator Sandra Welch reviewed the team's proposed slate of officers and team members as nominated:

**MWS Dave Thompson as Moderator** of Presbytery for a 1-year term for Calendar year 2026.

**Rep/Nom nominates the following to the Leadership Cabinet:**

**RE Julie Boksich as Moderator** for 2026

**RE Danny Pratt (Forsyth)** as Elder representative for the Class of 2027.

**RE Russ Kline (Billings 1st)** as Elder representative for the Class of 2028.

**Rep/Nom nominates the following to the Pastoral Ministry Team:**

**MWS Neva Rathbun** as minister representative to the Class of 2028.

**MWS Laura Wood** as minister representative to the Class of 2028.

**Rep/Nom nominates the following to the Camping & Youth Ministry Team:**

**RE Nancy Pehl as Moderator** for 2026.

**RE Nancy Pehl** as Elder representative for the Class of 2028.

**Rep/Nom nominates the following as Commissioners to the 227<sup>th</sup> General Assembly:**

**RE Patti Johnson (St Andrew Presbyterian Church)** as Ruling Elder  
Commissioner

**Piper Evans (First Presbyterian Church of Miles City)** as the Young  
Adult Advisory Delegate (YAAD)

The moderator called for nominations from the floor. Hearing none, she called for a vote.

**\*Action:** The nominated slate was unanimously elected.

**D. Administrative Team for Installation:**

**\*Action:** A motion was made and seconded to authorize PMT to act on behalf of Yellowstone Presbytery to elect an Administrative Commission to install MWS Nicole Melara as the pastor at First Presbyterian Church (FPC) of Bozeman, MT. The motion passed unanimously.

**E. Date of Nicole Melara's Installation:**

**\*Action:** A motion was made and seconded to authorize PMT to coordinate with MWS Nicole Melara and FPC Bozeman to determine the date of the special presbytery meeting for the installation of MWS Nicole Melara as pastor at FPC Bozeman. PMT will provide information to presbytery about the installation service and see that invitations are sent out for this installation. The motion passed unanimously.

**25-053. Announcements:**

- Nicole shared that February 7<sup>th</sup> is the planned date for her installation as pastor at 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church of Bozeman. She is waiting to hear from Eric Heinekamp, General Presbyter and Stated Clerk of Blackhawk Presbytery, about his availability to preach at her installation that day.
- The next stated meeting of Yellowstone Presbytery is **March 13-14 at Forsyth Federated Presbyterian Church.**
- It is likely that a special meeting of the presbytery will be called in late January or early February to address the Bozeman church's application for a PILP loan.
- MWS Kimmy Briggs' last Sunday in Lewistown will be January 4<sup>th</sup>. A celebration is planned following worship.
- Caroline reminded everyone to please email her that you attended this meeting.

**25-054. Closing:**

**\*Action:** A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting closed with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Caroline Fleming, Stated Clerk