

**Presbytery of Yellowstone – Special Meeting
July 27, 2022**

22.0107. Opening of the Meeting

The Presbytery of Yellowstone met on Tuesday, July 27, 2022, for a special meeting via Zoom beginning at 1:00 p.m.

2022 Presbytery Moderator Dave Thompson called the special meeting at the request of the Pastoral Ministry Team for the following matters:

1. To examine Chuck Wright of Butte and approve his call as a Commissioned Ruling Elder;
2. To approve the terms for Chuck Wright to serve as Commissioned Ruling Elder for Supply Preaching and Pastoral Coverage in Yellowstone Presbytery.

The meeting opened with prayer and reading of Isaiah 6: 4-8 by Dave Thompson. Though Isaiah understood he was not worthy to serve God, still God validated and empowered him to serve. We, too, might feel we are not good enough, faithful enough, worthy enough, but God will empower even us to do the work for which He calls us.

22-0108. Present at the meeting:

Ruling Elders with vote attending:

1. RE Melissa Bell, LC, Vice Moderator, Lewistown
2. RE Stephanie Bergstrom, Manhattan
3. RE Julie Boksich, LC, Church of the Big Hole
4. RE Suzanne Bratsky, LC, Bozeman
5. RE Sandy Cleary, Church of the Big Hole
6. RE Debbie Ernst, Bozeman
7. RE Karolee Larson, Butte
8. RE Nancy Pehl, Terry
9. RE Sandi Schoenberger, Billings 1st
10. RE Ric Tieman, LC

Ministers of Word and Sacrament Members Present: (Note absences and excused absences are not, reported for Special Meetings of this Presbytery)

Ashley Birk, Kimmy Briggs, JP Carlson, Rusty Craig, Dick Davis, Mary Davis, Teresa Kendall, Neva Rathbun, Dave Thompson (Moderator)

Others Present: RE Chuck Wright, Butte, RE Caroline Fleming, Stated Clerk, Re Andy Pehl, Terry, member of PMT, RE Debbie Blackburn, Manhattan, member of PMT

22.0109. A Quorum was declared present by the Moderator, Dave Thompson based on attendance visible on ZOOM.

22.0110. Purpose of the special meeting: Rev. Kimmy Briggs, Moderator of the Pastoral Ministry Team, explained the purpose and format of the meeting. Presbyters will first examine Chuck Wright about his faith journey, his theology, his Statement of Faith (*Attachment A*), and his sense of call as a Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE), then will review Chuck's proposed commission and terms of call. (*Attachment B*)

22.0111. Kimmy introduced Chuck who shared his faith journey and sense of call to CRE ministry. Questions for Chuck from presbyters included his understanding of PC (U.S.A.) polity, his seminary experience, how the history of the church, particularly through our confessions, speaks to him, how he cares for himself to avoid burnout, his personal prayer practice, and the ways he can provide pastoral care to people while offering only temporary supply to any given church.

***Action: A motion was made to arrest the examination. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

22.0112 Terms of Call: (*Attachment B*) Presbyters reviewed the proposed terms of call for Chuck to serve as Commissioned Ruling Elder for Supply Preaching and Pastoral Coverage in Yellowstone Presbytery. Minimum compensation is set by presbytery for pulpit supply, moderating a session, officiating at weddings and funerals, etc. These compensations will be covered by the local church engaging Chuck's services.

Concerns raised were:

- Health insurance: Chuck stated he has coverage through the Veteran's Administration.
- Since this is a new position, presbytery should plan for a 6-month review of the position and how it is working
- Is Chuck limited to only performing weddings and funerals in Yellowstone Presbytery: Answer is "no" as long as he is authorized to perform these ceremonies by the state in which they are taking place.
- Looking to the future: If another person takes on this position and does not have health insurance, are there options? We will check with the Board of Pensions for programs that could help cover this.

With no further questions, Chuck was dismissed to a waiting room to allow discussion of Chuck's qualifications and the proposed terms of call. Kimmy clarified that in the case of Baptisms and Holy Communion, individual sessions would be responsible to invite Chuck to perform the sacraments. She noted that PMT is impressed with Chuck's wisdom, his openness to continued learning and his deep faith. He loves the local church. The position itself may be experimental, but presbyters stated how valuable it can be to churches in transition or whose pastor will be gone for a Sunday or more. Presbyters further stated the need to protect Chuck from being over-taxed. A 6-month review of the position is proposed. It was noted that Chuck is currently a member of PMT. That team will be checking in with him regularly.

***Action: A motion came from the Pastoral Ministry Team to approve Chuck Wright as CRE and approve the terms for Chuck to serve as Commissioned Ruling Elder for Supply**

Preaching and Pastoral Coverage in Yellowstone Presbytery. The motion passed unanimously.

Chuck was invited back to the meeting and Kimmy led presbyters in a liturgy of celebration, asked Chuck and attendees the constitutional questions for ordination/installation, and welcomed Chuck to his call as a CRE. She charged him to serve faithfully by “finding his people and hanging on to them, growing in faith, and learning what it means to love.”

Presbytery Moderator Dave Thompson welcomed Chuck as Yellowstone Presbytery’s newest CRE. Vice Moderator Melissa Bell suggested an installation at the November Presbytery meeting. It will be included on the docket.

22.0113. Closing

***Action:** A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded, and it passed unanimously.

Moderator Dave closed the meeting with prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Caroline Fleming, Stated Clerk
Yellowstone Presbytery

Attachments A & B

ATTACHMENT A**Chuck Wright Statement of Faith**

I belong body and soul, in life and in death, to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who at the cost of His own precious blood has fully paid for all of my sins. I believe that He has saved me from certain death, in this world and in the world to come. I, a sinner deserving not of God's grace but His condemnation, yet saved by His love through His grace and my faith.

I believe in one sovereign and holy God who is revealed in three distinct yet unified persons: God the Creator of all things in heaven and on earth, Jesus the only begotten Son of God and our Savior, and the Holy Spirit our Helper.

I believe that God so loved the world that Jesus Christ came to us as the Word of God in the flesh, incarnate of Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. Christ is our Savior who came to earth so that through Him, we might be saved. Jesus Christ was fully divine and fully human, able to fully identify with the suffering and pain of humanity, yet able to completely conquer sin, death, and darkness. He is the revelation of God's love for humanity. In his ministry, Jesus Christ showed God's compassion for the sick, poor, oppressed, and heavily burdened. We are shown God's undying love for us and gracious use of power through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and resurrection from the grave on the third day.

I believe that the Holy Spirit is God's presence in our world today. The Holy Spirit has spoken through the prophets and assures us that we are redeemed through God's grace. The Holy Spirit also equips the church to carry out the work of Christ in the world at large by providing varieties of gifts to people and producing the growth of the fruit of the Spirit in lives and communities. The Holy Spirit enables believers to follow and serve Jesus Christ through the church, bearing faithful witness to our faithful Savior.

I believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the inspired Word of God. Scripture – the written Word - bears witness to Jesus Christ, the Word incarnate. The Bible reveals God's will, tells us the story of salvation, and promises life everlasting. In response, we are called to lives of prayer, study, and service acting as witnesses and ambassadors of the Good News of God's grace.

I believe that Christ instituted two Sacraments – Baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are signs and seals of God's grace. Baptism is the sign of one's entrance into the family of God. It is a visible sign of God's covenant with humanity. In celebrating the Lord's Supper, the church remembers the death of Christ, celebrates new life through his resurrection and the confession and repentance of our sins, and anticipates his return and everlasting reign.

As the body of Christ – the church – we are called to minister to the world around us and make God's love for humanity manifest by proclaiming the good news of Christ's resurrection and by working for peace, justice, and reconciliation.

We are to love one another as Jesus has loved us.

ATTACHMENT B

Pending the approval of the Yellowstone Presbytery, Chuck Wright will begin a Commissioned Ruling Elder (CRE) relationship with First Presbyterian Church of Butte, MT, and the Pastoral Ministry Team (PMT) of Yellowstone Presbytery, on August 1, 2022. The commission will be for supply preaching and pastoral coverage, as needed, in various churches of the presbytery. Chuck recently completed his CRE coursework through Dubuque Seminary. Here are the contract terms:

**Terms for Commissioned Ruling Elder
Supply Preaching and Pastoral Coverage
Chuck Wright
Yellowstone Presbytery**

Commission Description

Given the challenges facing many churches in Yellowstone Presbytery, PMT believes it is important to make quality preaching and pastoral leadership available in all churches, regardless of size or ability to pay a full-time pastor. Doing so requires a creative and non-traditional approach. As such, PMT recommends that Chuck Wright be allowed to function as an itinerant CRE, providing pulpit supply and pastoral coverage to churches in Yellowstone Presbytery, with the authority to serve communion and perform baptisms (with the prior approval of the church session) and moderate session meetings (as affirmed by PMT). In addition, Chuck will be permitted to officiate weddings and funerals when asked.

Compensation

Compensation for pulpit supply, pastoral coverage, moderating session, and funerals will be paid by the respective churches or individuals making the request in line with suggested minimums provided by PMT, including mileage (at the rate determined by the IRS for employees), lodging and meal expenses.

Terms of Service

This commission is for one year from August 1, 2022, through August 1, 2023, and can be renewed annually under the authority of PMT. If the need arises in a particular church, PMT has authority to change the details of this commission.

Supervision/Oversight

Chuck will serve under PMT with support from the session of First Presbyterian Church in Butte, MT, with Reverend Kimmy Briggs (Lewistown) and Reverend Daniel Triller (Dillon) serving as his mentors. Chuck will comply with the polity of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Yellowstone Presbytery, including completing the required boundaries training and abiding by the sexual misconduct policy.