

DOCKET FOR THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PRESBYTERY OF MIAMI VALLEY

Tuesday, October 11, 2011,
Memorial Presbyterian Church, Dayton, Ohio

4:00 pm Registration

4:30 Convening Prayer – Ruling Elder John Mauntler, Moderator

Preliminary Business - Teaching Elder Doris Arnett Whitaker, Stated Clerk

- Statement of Quorum & Formation of the Roll
- Attestation to call of the meeting
- Clarification of process for special meeting of Presbytery

Reading of Preamble

MOTION – To approve the formation of an Administrative Commission to work with the Congregation, Session and Pastors of the Lebanon Presbyterian Church (for action) – see handout

Closing Prayer

Adjournment

PRESBYTERY OF THE MIAMI VALLEY
Election of an Administrative Commission to Work with the Pastors,
Session and Congregation of Lebanon Presbyterian Church
October 11, 2011

PREAMBLE

This is a difficult time for the church of Jesus Christ as well as for the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. and the Presbytery of the Miami Valley. It is with sadness that we acknowledge that our brokenness and divisiveness has brought sisters and brothers in Christ at Lebanon Presbyterian Church to a point of decision to separate from this denomination and out of relationship with this Presbytery.

In 2006 a joint work group of the Presbytery consisting of members from the Council, Committee on Ministry and Trustees met for several months “engaging in conversation about the processes and range of issues that should arise should any pastor, session or congregation contemplate severing the relationship with the Presbyterian Church U.S.A.” In June of that year they reported to the Presbytery:

We have prayed about this and examined this issue from a number of different perspectives – theological, historical, legal, financial, constitutional (Book of Order), and pastoral. We have gathered information, we have begun to work out a framework of response, and we have committed ourselves to the following:

- *We will remember we are Christians and, as a church, modeled on the body of Christ.*
- *We will remain true to who[m] we are as Presbyterians and to the vows we took when we were ordained as deacons, elders and as clergy:*
 - *“Will you be governed by our church’s polity, and will you abide by its discipline?”*
 - *“Will you in your own life...work for the reconciliation of the world?”*
 - *“Do you promise to further the peace, unity and purity of the church?”*
- *We will act in accordance with the Book of Order.*
- *We will act with appreciation for our denominational traditions, including that church property is dedicated for ministry and mission and that church property represents historical Presbyterian witness.*

- *In the spirit of reconciling love and faithful stewardship we will act in ways that seek to avoid the expense of legal proceedings.*
- *We will act with concern for the well-being of individuals and congregations, respecting all as God's people.¹*

Now, as the Presbytery of the Miami Valley elects an Administrative Commission to deal, no longer in an academic way, with issues of separation and withdrawal, it is important to do so embracing that commitment made five years ago. We must seek to work together to find ways to exhibit faithful witnesses to our Lord Jesus Christ and his church. This must supersede the wants and even the needs of any denomination, any presbytery, or any congregation. Whatever we are to do we must do so in a manner that brings honor to God.

MOTION – To approve the formation of an Administrative Commission to work with the Congregation, Session and Pastors of the Lebanon Presbyterian Church with the following composition and charge:

1. The purpose of this Administrative Commission shall be to act on behalf of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley on all matters regarding the desire for withdrawal from the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. by the congregation of Lebanon Presbyterian Church.
2. The following are members of this Administrative Commission:
 - a. Arbuth B. Conn, teaching elder
 - b. B. Laurel Elder, ruling elder (Sugar Creek Presbyterian Church)
 - c. Les Ferguson, ruling elder (Westminster Presbyterian Church, Dayton)
 - d. Kevin Horrigan, teaching elder
 - e. Brian Maguire, teaching elder, who shall serve as Moderator
3. As the session of Lebanon Presbyterian Church has called a congregational meeting to “disaffiliate” from the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. for October 30, 2011, it is apparent that reconciliation is not likely. Therefore as it is within the mission of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley to make sure that ministry for the mission of Jesus Christ as found in the body of Christ in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) will continue, it delegates to the Administration Commission the following powers, acting with the authority of the Presbytery:
 - a. Authority to consult, counsel and guide the session of Lebanon Presbyterian Church in determining the precise process under the authority of the *Book of Order* by which the congregation may withdraw from the denomination.

¹ Appendix F, *Miami Presbytery Minutes*, June 2006

- b. Authority to consult with legal counsel retained by the Presbytery.
 - c. Authority to counsel members of Lebanon Presbyterian Church who wish to remain members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
 - d. Authority to counsel the pastors of Lebanon Presbyterian Church with respect to process and polity regarding their withdrawal from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
 - e. Authority to negotiate an appropriate distribution of all property and assets of the congregation, with any final resolution to be recommended to the Presbytery for approval. All original church records shall be retained by the Presbytery of the Miami Valley and held in trust for the Presbyterian Church U.S.A.
 - f. Access to all church records, including but not limited to: membership rolls, minutes of Session and all boards and committees, financial records, membership directories, newsletters, and materials distributed for congregational information.
4. This Administrative Commission shall not have the authority to assume original jurisdiction without a subsequent action of the Presbytery, *except should either one of the following occur*, in which case the such authority shall be understood to be granted under this charge:
- a. The transfer of assets or property
 - b. The pre-emptive filing of litigation
5. Should this Administrative Commission assume original jurisdiction, it shall be empowered to act with the full authority of the session to:
- a. Provide for worship and for the continuing pastoral care of all members of the congregation, in the manner of Christ.
 - b. Receive and act on request from members to be transferred or deleted from the rolls.
 - c. Determine and negotiate appropriate distribution of all property and assets of the congregation, with any final resolution to be recommended to the Presbytery for approval.
6. This Commission shall provide update reports at each subsequent stated meeting of the Presbytery.