

**Called (Special) Meeting
Presbytery of East Iowa**

February 20, 2010
9:30 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church
Iowa City, IA

Upon the request of the Reverend John Hougen, the Reverend Collette Soultz, Elders Deb Sedlacek of Cedar Rapids, Echo Hill, and Elder Clint Rila, Mt. Pleasant, First, a called (special) meeting of the Presbytery of East Iowa was called on February 20, 2010 at 9:30 a.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, Iowa City. The meeting was called to order at 9:39 a.m. by Moderator Elder Cindy Monroe. Moderator Monroe explained that she would not offer the constituting prayer for the meeting until such time as the governing body was ready to begin its deliberations.

Moderator Monroe explained that the first section of the meeting was to be a question and answer period about the process of working through resolutions received as overtures to the General Assembly. To accomplish this, the Presbytery Overture Task Force met and reviewed the three overture resolutions included in this meeting's business. She notes that they will lead the question and answer discussion to provide further information about these overtures and the legislative process of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Moderator Monroe mentioned that two of the resolutions presented in the packet originated in the Presbytery of Des Moines. She noted that Elder Ted Coppock of that presbytery was present to answer questions about the resolutions and, that at the appropriate time, a motion from the floor to grant Elder Coppock voice would be appropriate. Moderator Monroe called upon the Reverend Robert Wollenberg to present the educational piece prepared by the Overture Task Force.

The Reverend Mr. Wollenberg introduced the other members of the Task Force, Elder Dr. Nancy Erickson and the Reverend Dr. Pam Saturnia. He explained the process by which sessions of individual churches bring matters to the attention of the national church, working first through as a session to craft an overture addressing a specific issue of concern, then sending that overture to a meeting of the presbytery for approval, and finally, if the overture is approved by the presbytery through the process of consideration by the appropriate committee of the General Assembly and consideration on the floor of General Assembly as a part of that committee's report. Overtures are sometimes combined in committee with similar overtures from other presbyteries to expedite the work of the Church. A variety of recommendations may become attached to overtures brought forward as the overtures work their way through the various committees of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Overture advocates from the sponsoring presbyteries, members of concerned interest groups within the denomination,

and other concerned Presbyterians may address each committee concerning each overture on the committee's docket.

The Reverend Mr. Wollenberg explained each of the overture motions and the parts of the *Book of Order* to which each related. Copies of relevant sections of the *Book of Order* were attached to handouts that contained the call to the meeting prepared by the Presbytery office. The Reverend Mr. Wollenberg noted that the fourth resolution would be presented if any one of the three preceding resolutions was adopted. A question pertaining to the funding stream for the fourth resolution was ruled out of order at this time as this was a point of debate on the motion.

As there were no further questions about the process through which the Presbytery would work, Moderator Monroe offered the constituting prayer at 10:00 a.m. The Stated Clerk, Elder Dr. Rebecca Blair, declared a quorum to be present and that the roll would be established from the registrations.

Ministers of Word and Sacrament – present on February 20, 2010

Mike Andrew	A	Dennis Hopes	A	Kurt Pasko	A
Noelle Andrew	A	John Hougen	A	Lori Patton	A
Mary Arnold	P	Beverly Hovenkamp	A	Connie Peake	A
Robert Baird, HR	E	Sue Howes, HR	E	Jesse Perry	P
Susan Barnes	P	James Huston	A	Joe Phipps	A
Teresa Bartlett	P	Kristin Hutson	P	Elizabeth Platt	A
Karen Downey Beals	P	Herb Isenberg	A	Al Polito	A
Mark Binder	P	David Ivie	A	James Pollock, HR	E
Diane Bishop, HR	E	Wil Jackson, HR	A	Russell Proffitt, HR	E
George Bishop, HR	E	William Jamison, HR	P	Mary Pugh	A
Jim Bonewald	P	R. Dixon Jennings, HR	E	Nancy Redman, HR	E
Robert Bouton, HR	E	David Jurgens, HR	E	Paul Rekward	A
Gary Burnett, HR	P	Thomas Kalshoven, HR	E	Gerald Rife	P
G. Maurice Campbell, HR	E	Robin Kash, HR	E	Carl Riggs, HR	E
David Castrodale, HR	E	Lucille King, HR	E	Lisa Ross Thedens	P
Howard Chapman	A	Richard King	A	William Saltzmann, HR	E
Stan Coller	A	Deb Kinney	P	Pam Saturnia	A
Robert David	P	Sonda KIRSTEATTER	A	Cindy Saul	A
Telford Dindinger, HR	E	Wade KIRSTEATTER	A	George Saunders, HR	E
Robert Dykstra	A	Kerin Lang	A	Julie Schuett	A
Jack Edmisson	A	Jim Langley	P	Kitch Shatzer	A
John Elliott, HR	E	Ron Lewis	P	Roger Simpson, HR	E
Barry Ensign-George	A	Willis Longer, HR	A	Paul Skelley, HR	E
Jon Evans	A	Mark Martin, HR	P	William Skinner, HR	E
Faye Fedlam	P	Charles McCracken, HR	E	Lauren A. Smith, HR	E
Jim Fedlam, HR	P	Cheryl McCullough	A	Vinton "Erv" Smith	A
Matthew Froeschle	P	Michael Manaugh	A	David Snyder	A
James Fyfe, HR	E	Sam Massey	P	Colette Soultis	P
Emory Gillespie	A	Jay Miller, HR	E	Ron Sumption	A
Mildred Grubbs, HR	E	Richard Miller	P	Emory VanGerpen	P
Pat Halverson	P	Ted Miller	P	Dick Wallerab, HR	A
Ed Hancock, HR	E	Buck Mills, HR	E	Bill Warhover	A

Bradley Hansen	P	Scott Minter	A	Wilmer Wernecke, HR	E
Ken Harden, HR	E	Marti Montovani	P	Bill Willis	A
William Harnish, HR	E	Kip Murphy	A	Troy Winder	A
Jean Hauter, HR	E	Scott Nesbitt	P	Karolee Wirt, HR	A
Heather Hayes	A	Nancy Oehler Love	P	Jean Wollenberg	A
Daniel Hemken	P	Duane Olsen	A	Bob Wollenberg	P
Patricia Henderson	P	Melody Oltmann	P	Lori Wunder	P
Robert Hill, HR	E	Kyle Otterbein	A		
Pamela Hoogheem	A				

ELDER COMMISSIONERS – present on February 6, 2010

Ainsworth, Bethel	A
Ainsworth Community	A
Argyle	A
Atkins	A
Bettendorf	A
Birmingham	A
Blairstown	A
Blue Grass	A
Bonaparte	A
Brighton	A
Burlington	A
Cascade	A
Cedar Rapids, Calvin Sinclair	A
Cedar Rapids, Christ	Mary Remington
Cedar Rapids, Echo Hill	Deb Sedlacek
Cedar Rapids, First (2)	Betsey Kutter, J.M. Sealy
Cedar Rapids, Hus Memorial	Mel Ramos
Cedar Rapids, Knox	A
Cedar Rapids, Olivet	A
Cedar Rapids, Westminster (2)	Butch Hataway, Mike Zimmerman
Center Junction	A
Clinton	Bob Seger
Coggon	A
Columbus Junction, Cotter	A
Columbus Junction, Salem Welsh	A
Columbus Junction, United	Georgia Kost
Crawfordsville	Jeff Johnston
Davenport, First (3)	Harry Hoyt, A, A
Davenport, New Hope	A
Davenport, Newcomb	A
Ely	Leonard Reyman
Fairfield	A
Farmington	Jim Zane
Ft. Madison	A

Hazelton	A
Hopkinton	A
Independence	John Klotzbach
Iowa City, First (2)	Tom Martin, Steve Schomberg
Iowa City, St. Andrew (3)	Barb Fleckenstein, James Hemsley, Alissa Villhauer
Keokuk	A
Keota	Dennis Gifford
Le Claire, First	A
Le Claire, Our Savior	Joanne Fahrenkrog
Lone Tree	Audrey Dodson
Lost Nation	A
Manchester	A
Marengo	Garth Bigbee
Marion (2)	A, A
Mechanicsville	A
Mediapolis	A
Middletown	A
Miles	A
Monticello	A
Montrose	A
Morning Sun	A
Mt. Pleasant	Clinton Rila
Mt. Vernon, First	A
Mt. Vernon, Linn Grove	Anne Kuntz
Muscatine	Gary Vance
New London	A
Newhall	A
Onslow	A
Princeton	Steve Suiter
Rowley	Pamela A. Collison
Scotch Grove	A
Shellsburg	A
Springville	A
Stanwood	A
Vinton	A
Wapello	A
Washington	Arnold Waring
West Liberty	A
West Point	A
Williamsburg	A
Wilton, First	A
Wilton, Sugar Creek	A
Winfield	A

Presbytery Moderator
Elder Cindy Monroe

Presbytery Vice Moderator
Elder Larry Lamont

General Presbyter/Facilitator
Elder Harry D. Olthoff

Stated Clerk
Elder Dr. Rebecca Blair

Presbytery Treasurer
Elder David Van Dusseldorp

Elder Members of the Administrative Unit
Elder Larry Moore

Moderators of Presbytery Committees
Elder Mary Atwood

Moderator of Presbyterian Women PEIA
Phyllis VanGerpen

Commissioned Lay Pastors
Elder Sallie Graves

Presbytery Staff
Richard Tiegs, Marue White

Visitors

Tom Birr (Cedar Rapids, Echo Hill), Betty Colby (Washington, United), Ted Coppock (Des Moines, Westminster), Paul and Marg Heidger (Iowa City, St. Andrew), Kim Koster (Le Claire, Our Savior, CLP student), Lara Marsh (Iowa City, First), Stephanie Nesbitt (Monroe WI, Union), Gary Olson (Iowa City, First), Dr. Nancy Olthoff (U of Iowa Campus Ministry), Joel Perry (Mt. Pleasant, First), Rick and Connie Richardson (Iowa City, First), Judy Whitford (Iowa City, First), Robert Zvacek (Ely, First)

Recap of the Roll

Ministers of Word and Sacrament (eligible to vote)	35
Elders Commissioned by Session (eligible to vote)	29
Other Elders (eligible to vote)	3
Presbytery Moderator (eligible to vote)	1
Presbytery Vice Moderator (eligible to vote)	1
General Presbyter (eligible to vote)	1

Stated Clerk (eligible to vote)	1
Commissioned Lay Pastors	1
Moderator, Presbyterian Women PEIA	1
Presbytery Staff	2
Visitors	14
Total	90

Moderator Monroe reminded presbyters that at called (special) meetings only those items of business specified in the call may come before the body for action. In the matters before the Presbytery at this meeting, she commented that it would be proper to designate the manner in which the votes were taken. **A motion to divide the house by standing was seconded. After debate, the moderator declared the motion FAILED. A division of the house was requested. The decision of the Moderator was sustained 23-43. A motion to cast votes by written ballot was seconded and APPROVED.**

Moderator Monroe called for prayer as the body entered into discussion. Intercessory prayers for each commissioner and for discernment were offered.

A motion to require two-thirds vote for passage of each overture motion was seconded. On appeal, the motion was RULED OUT OF ORDER as this special rule should have been placed in the call to the meeting and is not supported by Robert's Rules of Order or by Presbytery bylaws.

Moderator Monroe designated two microphones for use in the assembly as one for those speaking in favor of resolutions and one for those opposed to resolutions. A two minute time limit was recommended to allow all presbyters desiring to speak the opportunity to do so. Moderator Monroe requested that speakers identify themselves and their congregation.

The first resolution was moved and seconded by the Session of Iowa City, First and reads as follows:

1. that the Presbytery of East Iowa concur with the following overture from the Presbytery of Des Moines to the 219th General Assembly (2010) :

**An Overture to the 219th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church
(U.S.A.)**

On adopting an Authoritative Interpretation of W-4.9000 to Uphold Session and Pastoral Discretion in Their Responsibility and Accountability for Worship – from the Presbytery of Des Moines.

The Presbytery of Des Moines respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to adopt the following authoritative interpretation of W-4.9000 of the BOOK OF ORDER:

Persons authorized to conduct services of Christian marriage in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) may exercise pastoral discretion when asked to officiate at ceremonies for couples who have obtained a civil marriage license, and Sessions may permit the use of church property for such services. Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Commissioned Lay Pastors have the right to refuse to officiate at any marriage which they deem unwise or which would violate their conscience (W-4.9002b).

Rationale

It is the joy and responsibility of pastors to provide pastoral care to members of their congregations; and the church has recognized that worship is an important context for the exercise of pastoral care:

“All Christians are called to care for one another in daily living, sharing joys and sorrows, supporting in times of stress and need, offering mutual forgiveness and reconciliation. This care is primarily offered as the community of faith worships together...” [W-6.3002]

“The ministries of pastoral care support people in recognizing, accepting, and celebrating...times of adjustment, assisting them in working toward a new role in life and affirming their identity through transition.” [W-6.3010]

“The worship of God in the Christian community is the foundation and context for the ministry of pastoral care as well as for the ministry of nurture in the faith.” [W-6.4000]

While it has always been the case that persons authorized to conduct services of Christian marriage may not be required to marry a couple against their conscience and better judgment [W-4.9002b], to bind the conscience of Ministers and Commissioned Lay Pastors by forbidding them to conduct a legal marriage which they have prayerfully considered would be an unjustified interference in the exercise of pastoral care. Forcing pastors to violate their own consciences out of fear of judicial action causes grief to pastors, couples, and congregations, and undermines the peace, unity, and purity of the church.

W-4.9000 was written and adopted before any state created the possibility of marriage between two persons of the same gender. There is no mandatory language in the *Book of Order* that would prohibit a service of Christian marriage for persons who are legally permitted to marry. The Directory for Worship specifically states, “In addition to the terms defined in the Preface to the *Book of Order*, this directory also uses language about worship which is simply descriptive.” [Preface (b), Directory for Worship] The proposed Authoritative Interpretation would affirm the descriptive nature of references to “a woman and a man” in The Directory for Worship.

Debate began and many came forward to address the issue. In the course of debate, a question was put forward for Elder Tom Coppock to answer. **A motion to grant Elder Tom Coppock the right of the floor was seconded and APPROVED.** Debate continued. **A motion to call the question was seconded and APPROVED.** Moderator Monroe restated the motion and requested a few moments for silent prayer before balloting. The Overtures Task Force was appointed by the Moderator to the teller function. **The motion was APPROVED on a vote of 46-25.** In accord with the *Book of Order* G-9.0303, the Reverend Bradley Hansen registered his dissent with the decision of the Presbytery.

The second motion was moved and seconded by the Session at Iowa City, First and read:

2. that the Presbytery of East Iowa concur with the following overture from the Presbytery of Des Moines to the 219th General Assembly (2010) :

An Overture to the 219th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church
(U.S.A.)

On amending G-6.0106(b) of the BOOK OF ORDER – from the Presbytery of Des Moines.

The Presbytery of Des Moines respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

Shall the current text of G-6.0106b be stricken and new text be inserted to read as follows: [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

~~“G-6.0106 b. Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness. Persons refusing to repent of any self acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament. Persons called to office in the church are to live in faithful obedience to Jesus Christ the Head of the Church, according to the authoritative witness of the Scriptures, and guided by the Confessions of the church. Those ordained as deacons, elders, or ministers of Word and Sacrament are nonetheless sinners in need of God's grace, striving to fulfill the responsibilities of their office with accountability to the governing bodies of the church, which guide and support them as they seek to follow the living Christ.~~

Rationale

Accountability to Jesus Christ and the Authority of Scripture

In its opening paragraphs, the Form of Government affirms the fundamental Christian and Reformed affirmation that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church. Chapter I calls Christians to attend to the Scriptures, insofar as they set forth “Christ’s will for the Church,” and Chapter II identifies the Confessions as the church’s guides, subordinate to the authority of Jesus Christ and to the witness of Scripture. Thus our church has set forth a hierarchy of authority in which we are to obey Jesus Christ by heeding first the Scriptures and then the Confessions, as we seek to discern Christ’s will.

This fundamental hierarchy of authority is reflected in the first three constitutional questions which candidates for ordination are required to affirm. This understanding is distorted, however, by the current language of G- 6.0106b. Failing to acknowledge our obedience to Jesus Christ, G-6.0106b posits *obedience to Scripture* and *conformity to the confessions* as the primary requirements for ordination.

The proposed amendment would remove this paragraph and substitute new language reflecting the church’s true sources of authority (Jesus Christ and the witness of Scripture), and affirming our Biblical, confessional and constitutional accountability.

Sinfulness of All People

Summarizing the faith of the Reformed Tradition, Chapter II of the Form of Government draws special attention to only one example of sin, “the human tendency to idolatry and tyranny.” [G-2.0500a(4)] Yet the current language of G-6.0106b singles out an entirely different category of human behavior — marriage and sexual relationships — as a primary consideration in determining a person’s eligibility for ordination.

The proposed amendment would remove this apparent contradiction of our historic understanding of human sinfulness, and substitute new language affirming the church’s belief that we are all sinners in need of God’s grace.

Debate began with several individuals addressing the issues. **A motion to call the question was seconded and APPROVED.** Moderator Monroe called for a time of silent prayer prior to the vote. **The motion was APPROVED on a 45-26 vote.** In accord with the *Book of Order* G-9.0303, the Reverend Bradley Hansen requested that his dissent be registered in the minutes.

The third motion was moved and seconded by the Session at Iowa City, First and read:

3. that the Presbytery of East Iowa adopt and send forward the following overture to the 219th General Assembly (2010):

**An Overture to the 219th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church
(U.S.A.)**

On amending W-4.9000 to Uphold Session and Pastoral Discretion in Their Responsibility for the Covenant of Marriage – from the Presbytery of East Iowa.

The Presbytery of East Iowa respectfully overtures the 219th General Assembly (2010) to adopt the following change to W-4.9000 of the BOOK OF ORDER [Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]:

Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. ~~Marriage is a civil contract between a woman and a man.~~ For Christians, marriage is a covenant through which ~~a man and a woman~~ *two people* are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship. In a service of Christian marriage a lifelong commitment is made by ~~a woman and a man~~ *the couple* to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith. [W-4.9001]

- a) In preparation for the marriage service, the minister shall provide for a discussion with the ~~man and the woman~~ *couple* concerning [W-4.9002]

...
The service begins with scriptural sentences and a brief statement of purpose. The ~~man and the woman~~ *couple* shall declare their ~~the~~ intention to enter into Christian marriage and shall exchange vows of love and faithfulness. ... In the name of the triune God the minister shall declare publicly that the ~~woman and the man~~ *two* are now joined in marriage. [W-4.9004]

...
A service of worship recognizing a civil marriage and confirming it in the community of faith may be appropriate when requested by the couple. The service will be similar to the marriage service except that the opening statement, the declaration of intention, the exchange of the vows ~~by the husband and wife~~, and the public declaration by the minister reflect the fact that the ~~woman and man~~ *couple* is already married to one another according to the laws of the state. [W-4.9006]

Rationale

In the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, covenants between persons of faith are commonplace and blessed by God. The prophets and Jesus Christ our Lord affirmed that justice, mercy and faith constitute our core as people of faith. As

people of faith, in covenant relationship as proclaimed in Scripture and affirmed by our church's constitution, we affirm that all persons are created in the image of God and called to partake fully in the covenantal relationships that God has provided for all persons.

The practice of pastoral care honors our core covenantal responsibility to care for one another. The *BOOK OF ORDER* declares that pastoral care is an imperative responsibility for the whole church; and has recognized that worship is an important context for the exercise of pastoral care:

"All Christians are called to care for one another in daily living, sharing joys and sorrows, supporting in times of stress and need, offering mutual forgiveness and reconciliation. This care is primarily offered as the community of faith worships together..." [W-6.3002]

Pastoral care is specifically mentioned as being important for Christians during major life events such as loss and death, healing the effects of broken relationships, and life transitions:

"The church recognizes transitions which bring joy and sorrow in human life:

- a. children are born, grow up...
- b. people begin work, change jobs, ...
- c. households are established, ...
- d. people are empowered, restored, make new commitments.

The ministries of pastoral care support people in recognizing, accepting and celebrating these and other such times of adjustment, assisting them in working toward a new role in life and affirming their identity through transition." [W-6.3010]

To exclude an entire population of the church, namely same-gender couples, from the privilege of Christian marriage denies these persons the pastoral care they desire for fulfilling their service to God. While it has always been the case that persons authorized to conduct services of Christian marriage may not be required to marry a couple against their conscience and better judgment [W-4.9002b], to bind the conscience of Ministers and Commissioned Lay Pastors by forbidding them to conduct a legal marriage which they have prayerfully considered would be an unjustified interference in the exercise of pastoral care. Excluding same-gender couples from the privilege of Christian marriage where it is legally authorized undermines the peace, unity, and purity of the church. W-4.9000 was written and adopted before any state created the possibility of marriage between two persons of the same gender. The call of the prophets and the Word of God summon us to declare the holiness of the gift of marriage for all faithful couples, regardless of gender.

The floor was opened for debate. After some debate, **a motion to call the question was seconded and APPROVED.** Moderator Monroe called for a moment of silent prayer prior to the vote. **The motion was APPROVED on a vote of 44-27.**

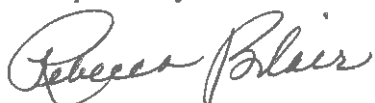
A fourth motion was moved and seconded by the Session at Iowa City, First, and read:

- 4. Motion from the Session of First Presbyterian Church, Iowa City that if the governing body approves any of the three action items above relating to overtures to the 219th General Assembly, that Elder Steve Schomberg be elected as the Overture Advocate to the General Assembly from the Presbytery of East Iowa and that Elder Lara Marsh be elected as the Alternate Overture Advocate with expenses for their attendance to the General Assembly to be partially provided by First Presbyterian Church, Iowa City.**

A motion to suspend the rules and cast a voice vote on this motion was seconded and APPROVED. The question ruled out of order earlier in the day was restated about funding sources if Iowa City, First, was only partially responsible. Moderator Monroe called upon General Presbyter, Elder Harry D. Olthoff, to address a portion of this issue. He noted that the proposed funding would have to come from general presbytery funds since the presbytery does not budget for overture advocates in its budget funds for General Assembly attendance. Elder Steve Schomberg rose to address how he envisioned covering most if not all of his expenses as an overture advocate since he is a former resident of the Twin Cities area and can stay with persons there. **The resolution was APPROVED.**

Moderator Monroe thanked presbyters for their attention to these details. **A motion to adjourn the meeting was seconded and APPROVED.** Moderator Monroe closed the meeting with prayer at 11:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Elder Dr. Rebecca Blair
Stated Clerk

*Approved
5-11-2010
RSB*

Richard Tiegs
Recording Clerk