

Since the November 2016 Assembly meeting...

Resignations from presbytery leadership:

- Teaching Elder John Van Nuys, Wabash Avenue, Crawfordsville from SMT
- Ruling Elder Judy Friend from COM and Council
- Teaching Elder David Wood, at large, from COM
- Teaching Elder Rebecca Kuiken, Elkhart, from Plymouth Team

Provided Stated Clerk support to Council, Commission on Ministry, Commission on Preparation for Ministry, Nominating Committee; provided preliminary training for PJC and teams commissioned by presbytery to work with congregations; consulted with Search Team for Stated Clerk; met with leadership team planning for 2017; answered lots of questions from clerks, pastors and others within and outside Wabash Valley about process and policies; handled correspondence and transactional documents.

NOTE FROM THE STATED CLERK

The 222nd General Assembly (2016) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved and recommended to the presbyteries, for their affirmative or negative votes, proposed changes in the language of the *Book of Order* that, if approved, will amend the Constitution.

Please note that with each proposed amendment reference is made to an item number, which is how the General Assembly kept track of this business in both committee and in plenary. These item numbers can direct you to the complete action of the assembly as well as the full text of offered rationale and advice from the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC) and other advisory and advocacy entities. You can access this information through PC Biz at <http://www.pc-biz.org>. In providing rationale and advice in this booklet, direct quotations are used whenever possible. However, rationale and advice in this booklet has been edited due to space constraints.

It is recommended that prior to voting, presbyters review all the information for each proposed amendment found in PC-Biz at www.pc-biz.org. Live links are provided that will take you to the General Assembly committee that handled the proposed amendment. From the list of committee business, click on the specific item number you wish to review.

Presbyteries may use a consent agenda or omnibus motion to vote on amendments as long as each proposed amendment is identified separately. Presbytery stated clerks are to report their votes to the Office of the General Assembly no later than June 25, 2017. However, in order to make changes and publish the 2017–18 *Book of Order* in a timely manner, receipt of votes prior to this deadline would be appreciated.

Thank you for your time and careful attention as you prepare to vote on these proposed amendments.

J. Herbert Nelson II
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

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PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Analysis by Association of Stated Clerks

16-A Child and Youth Protection Policy

On Amending G-3.0106 (Item 05-09)

Brief Description

This amendment originated as a recommendation from the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns. If approved, it will require all councils to adopt and implement a child and youth protection policy.

Assembly Action

The Assembly Committee on Mid Councils (05) amended and approved Item 05-09 with comment by a vote of 41/0. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) then approved a motion to reinsert [sexual misconduct policy and a] in the fourth paragraph of G-3.0106 and then approved Item 05-09 with amendment by a voice vote.

Arguments Supporting an Affirmative Vote

- Needed to prevent sexual harassment and for protection of children and youth

Arguments Supporting a Negative Vote

- There was concern over adding another policy to the Constitution
- Belief it should occur as a policy requirement outside the Book of Order
- May not be necessary for some smaller churches

**Amendment 16-E. Certified Service Requirements
On Amending G-2.1101 (Item 06-15)**

Brief Description

The proposed amendment originated from the Committee on the Office of General Assembly. It would delete the language in G-2.1101 which refers to a “handbook.”

Assembly Action

The Assembly Committee on Church Polity and Ordered Ministry (06) voted to approve Item 06-15 by a vote of 59/0. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) approved the committee’s recommendation by consensus.

Arguments in Support of an Affirmative Vote

Many of the relevant certifying bodies do not have handbooks and should not be required to have them

“Handbook” is an antiquated term

Arguments in Support of a Negative Vote

None

**Amendment 16-F. The Ministry of Members
On Amending G-1.0304 (Item 09-11)**

Brief Description

This amendment proposes to add the phrase “caring for God’s creation” to G-1.0304. This change is intended to show the importance of earth care issues and action.

Assembly Action

The Assembly Committee on Immigration and Environmental Issues (09) voted to approve Item 09-11 by a vote of 43/11. The 222nd General Assembly (2016) approved the committee’s recommendation by a vote of 429/120.

Arguments in Support of an Affirmative Vote

We are part of the earth

Climate change and lack of water in Peru show lack of care to God’s creation

Need to be more explicit that climate care is part of our calling

Glaring omission if not in the Book of Order

Incorporates a value

Arguments in Support of a Negative Vote

Some wanted more explicit language and amendment to do so was defeated

Already covered in Directory of Worship; no compelling reason to add