



November 14, 2025

Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church
789 Merrimon Avenue
Asheville, NC 28804

Dear Grace Covenant Congregation,

I hope you are all doing well and experiencing God's blessings in this fall season.

On behalf of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina, I want to share with you the Negotiated Agreement between the Prosecuting Committee of Heartland Presbytery and Rev. Jay McKell.

A joint Investigating Committee of Heartland Presbytery and the Presbytery of Western North Carolina charged Rev. McKell with three offenses:

- (1) violation of the Book of Order G-2.0905 ("After the dissolution of the pastoral relationship, former pastors and associate pastors shall not provide their pastoral services to members of their former congregations without the invitation of the moderator of session.)
- (2) violation of the Book of Order W-4.0404e ("Will you be governed by our church's polity, and will you abide by its discipline? Will you be a friend among your colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit?); and
- (3) violation of the Book of Order W-4.0404g ("Do you promise to further the peace, unity and purity of the church?")

Rev. McKell pled guilty to all three charged offenses. As a result of Rev. McKell's guilty plea, the Prosecuting Committee of Heartland Presbytery and Rev. McKell recommended to the Permanent Judicial Commission of Heartland Presbytery for Rev. McKell the censure of rebuke in accordance with the Book of Order D-9.0103 with two conditions. Below is the recommended pronouncement:

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Whereas, you, Rev. Jay McKell, have been found guilty of the offenses of violating Book of Order provisions G-2.0905, W-4.4040e, and W-4.0404g, and by such offenses you have acted contrary to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); now, therefore, the Permanent Judicial Commission of Heartland Presbytery, in the name and authority of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), expresses its condemnation of these offenses, and rebukes you. This rebuke is given not with malice or vindictiveness but in Christian love to offer you correction in error and restoration that you may be more watchful and avoid these constitutional offenses in the future. We urge you to use diligently the means of grace to the end that you may be more obedient to our Lord Jesus Christ.

For the two conditions, the parties recommend the following:

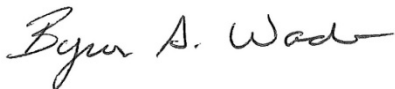
Rev. McKell will not attend any event or worship service at Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church in Asheville, North Carolina.

Rev. McKell will not contact any member of the session or the staff of Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church in Asheville, North Carolina.

Any violations of these two conditions shall be reported to the Commission on Ministry in Heartland Presbytery or other presbytery where Rev. McKell places his membership.

I know that the actions of Rev. McKell was and continues to be a traumatic event in the life of your congregation. You have experienced much harm in many areas of your life and ministry. I want you to be assured that the Presbytery of Western North Carolina continues to pray for your congregation and we will walk alongside you in this journey of healing and restoration. May each of you feel the presence God's comfort, hope, and peace as we anticipate the coming of the Christ Child this season.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Byron A. Wade".

Rev. Dr. Byron A. Wade
General Presbyter