

OUR PURPOSE

*The Presbytery of Geneva lives to support and equip congregations and leaders
to be Christ in the Finger Lakes and the world.*

OUR VISION

*Radiating the light of Christ, the Presbytery of Geneva thrives
as a community of servants, lifting up every congregation and leader
in ministering together.*

MINUTES

The Presbytery of Geneva held a duly-called Meeting on Tuesday, August 24, 2021, held electronically via Zoom.us.

GATHERING FOR SHARED WORK: OPENING BUSINESS

GATHERING

10:30 am Registration and Fellowship Time (through 11:00 am)

CALL TO ORDER

RE Virginia Champlin (Geneva), Moderator, called the meeting to order at 11:00 am, a quorum being present. TE Carol Wilson (HR) offered a brief devotional and the opening prayer. She noted the recent celebration of TE Cynthia Huling Hummel's (HR) 25th ordination anniversary.

ROLL

CONGREGATIONS: MINISTERS & COMMISSIONERS (CM = Corresponding Member; CP = Commissioned Pastor)

CONGREGATION	MINISTER(S)	COMMISSIONER	CONGREGATION	MINISTER(S)	COMMISSIONER
ADDISON	A - Peter Marr (CM)		MARION, UNITED	A - Denise Logan (CM)	
ANDOVER, FIRST	A - C. Mattison		MORELAND	A - Paul Yoder (CRE)	
ARKPORT, FIRST	A - Bruce Incze		NAPLES, TRINITY FEDERATED	A - Robin Lostetter	A - Jessie Olney
ATLANTA	----		NEWARK, PARK	----	A - Natalie Lemmon
BATH, FIRST	----	A - Kathleen Swan	OAKS CORNERS	A - Karl Warrington	
BELLONA, MEMORIAL	Amy Loving Austin	Ex - Jane Hansen	ONTARIO CENTER, FIRST	Deborah Grohman	
BIG FLATS, FIRST	A - Denise Stone	A - Robin Fitzgerald	OVID, FEDERATED	Rob Mellgard	Judy Mellgard
BURDETT	A - Richard Evans (CRE)		PAINTED POST, UNITED	EX - David Preisendanz	
CANANDAIGUA, UNITED	A - Wade Allen (CM)	A - Jim Boseck	PALMYRA, WESTERN	-----	Philip Opdycke
CANISTEO, FIRST	A - Michelle Serra (G)	A - Kathleen Weller	PENN YAN, FIRST	Paul Malles	EX - Rob Anderson
COHOCTON, FIRST	----		PHELPS, UNITED	Ex - Ellen Donnan	A - Margaret Carlson
CORNING, FIRST	A - Jeffrey Ugoretz	Kay Rogus	PRATTSBURGH, FIRST	-----	
EAST PALMYRA, FIRST	-----		PULTENEY, FIRST	A - Don Peek (CP)	A - Mary Jane Peek
ELMIRA, FIRST	A - Bill Reynolds (CM)	Charles Stewart	RED CREEK	Carleen Frost (CP)	
ELMIRA, NORTH	Evan Hansen	Annie LaFevre	ROCK STREAM	A - Lucinda O'Leary	
GENEVA, THE PC	A - Colin Pritchard	A - Chris Gerling	SENECA #9	Amy Loving Austin	EX- Pam Ells

HAMMONDSPORT, FIRST	-----		SENECA FALLS, FIRST	EX- Leah Ntuala	Marion Crull
HECTOR	A - Ben Masters		SHORTSVILLE, FIRST	A - Connie Franks (CP)	
HORNELL, UNITED	Katherine Griffis	A - Jim Varner	SODUS, FIRST	EX - Gail Heimberger	
HORSEHEADS, FIRST	Ex - Aaron Frank	A - Judy Sell	SPENCER, CHRIST THE KING FELLOWSHIP	Sabrina Slater	A - Gail Maureen
HOWARD, UNION	-----		TRUMANSBURG, FIRST ULYSSES	A - Daniel Russell	A - Pamela Postle
HURON	A - Nancy Farrell	A - Linda Hayes	WATERLOO, FIRST	A - Anita Milne	
ITHACA, FIRST	A - Cynthia Weaver A - Kirianne Weaver	Gail Farnham	WATKINS GLEN, FIRST	A- Cara Milne	A - Karen Rhodes
JASPER, UNITED	A - Brain Dieffenbacher (CM)		WEST FAYETTE	-----	Miles Persing
JUNIUS	EX - Ellen Donnan	A - Harriet Haynes	WESTON	-----	Barry Winters
LYONS, FIRST	-----	Joanne Reinhardt	WOLCOTT, FIRST	A - Walter Stuber (CM)	A- Dolores Gingerich

MINISTERS IN VALIDATED MINISTRIES / MINISTERS AT-LARGE / HONORABLY RETIRED MINISTERS

Present:

David Ashby (VM) Jane Winters (HR) Cynthia Huling Hummel (HR) John Milne (HR)

Excused:

Betsey Crimmins (HR) Harold Delhagen (AL) Glenn Kennedy (AL)

ADDITIONAL ELDER COMMISSIONERS (appointed by Presbytery to correct elder-clergy imbalance)

Present:

Virginia Champlin (Geneva) Donna Colvin (Pulteney, First) Ken Allen (Canandaigua, United)
Tom Bailey (Spencer, Christ the King) Linda Werts (Canandaigua, United)

PRESBYTERY STAFF (granted voice)

Elena Delhagen (Palmyra, Western)
Lea Kone (Genesee Valley Presbytery)

REGISTERED GUESTS (Current Meeting; Granted Voice for the purpose of giving reports)

Catherine Foerster (Penn Yan, First) Beth Newell (Geneva) Susan Harkey (Seneca Falls, First)

SUMMARIES FOR EACH MEETING 2021	Jan 23	Mar 23	May 25	Aug 24	Sept 28	Nov 22
Total Minister Commissioners Present*	33	34	23	11		
Total Elder Commissioners Present **	37	41	40	14		
Parity (expressed in terms of Elders, + or -)	+4	+7	+17	+3		
Total Minister Commissioners Absent, Unexcused***	1	2	12	15		
Total Churches Unrepresented by Elders****	28	23	24	42		
Total Churches Unrepresented by Elders and Pastors****	15	12	17	35		
Total Registered Visitors and Staff	12	5	8	5		
Total Registered Attendance*****	82	80	71	30		

- * Does not include Corresponding Members, with voice, not vote. Does include Validated, At-large, and Honorably Retired
** Includes Corresponding Members with voice and vote
*** Does not include Corresponding Members with voice only; Honorably Retired Ministers; and Excused Minister Members.
**** Includes churches marked "excused"; does **not** include Additional Elder Commissioners, as they are not elected by sessions.
***** Includes Corresponding Members without vote

INTRODUCTORY BUSINESS

The Moderator declared the quorum.

The Stated Clerk read the Presbytery's Purpose and Vision Statements.

APPROVAL OF DOCKET

The presbytery VOTED to approve the docket for the meeting, granting voice to guests offering reports:

10:30 AM	Registration and fellowship time (through 11:00 AM)
11:00 AM	Call to Order
	Opening Prayer and Devotions [TE Carol Wilson (HR)]
11:15 AM	Introductory Business
	Declaration of Quorum
	Reading of Purpose and Vision Statements
	Approval of the Docket
	Acknowledgment of the First Stewards of the Land
	Announcements relevant to the business meeting
11:20 AM	Business Related to Congregations and Leaders:
	Administrative Commission for West Fayette Presbyterian Church
	Approval of the sale of the West Fayette Presbyterian Church
	Recommendation for the distribution of funds
	Approval of the dissolution of the West Fayette Presbyterian Church
	Approval of a celebration of ministry
11:45 AM	Benediction and Adjournment

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE FIRST STEWARDS OF THE LAND

The Moderator offered acknowledgement of the first stewards of the land, the Seneca and Cayuga tribes, where we live and serve.

BUSINESS RELATED TO CONGREGATIONS AND LEADERS

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION FOR THE WEST FAYETTE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

TE John Milne (HR), chair of the Administrative Commission (AC) for the West Fayette Presbyterian Church, presented the report:

West Fayette Presbyterian Church Administrative Commission Report August 2021

A Brief History of West Fayette Presbyterian Church

Main source: materials from the celebration of the 175th Anniversary (August 2000)

In 1823, several members of the Romulus First Presbyterian Church met with the goal of forming a new church in West Fayette. Trustees were elected, land was donated, and in 1824 a church building was constructed. On September 6, 1825, the new church was recognized as the West Fayette Presbyterian Church by the Presbytery of Geneva. The first pastor was the Rev. Isaac Flagler and the last was Pastor Stephen Beals who served the congregation from 2008 to 2020.

The cemetery next to the church was originally owned by the church but was deeded to the West Fayette Cemetery Association in 1864. The last burial of a church member in the cemetery was only about 3 years ago.

Land next to the church was purchased in 1865 and a house was purchased and moved to this land to serve as the parsonage. The parsonage was home to many pastors and their families over the years. Once it was no longer needed as a parsonage, the house was rented out and in 1997 it was sold to its tenants.

The church building has been added to and improved during its nearly 200 years as a house of worship. Additions included a belfry, rooms at the north end of the church, a wing with offices and Sunday School rooms, and a fellowship hall and kitchen from which many community meals have been prepared and served.

The church has joined with area churches in shared ministry throughout its history. The longest formal relationship was with the Romulus First Presbyterian Church; the two churches were yoked from 1980 through 1994.

Known as "The small church with a BIG heart," the West Fayette Church is famous in Seneca County and beyond for its chicken and pork barbecues and its Advent Community Concert & Carol Sing. These events brought neighbors together for fellowship and provided needed funds to support the work of the church. Other mission projects of the church have included providing emergency assistance for community members, especially through the Seneca County House of Concern; providing scholarships for youth attending Camp Whitman; contributing to the Presbytery's 2 Cents a Meal Program; and to many special offerings, including the Presbyterian Women's Birthday Offering, Church World Service's Blanket Offering, and special offerings of the PC(USA).

Summary of the work of the Administrative Commission (AC)

Congregational meetings

Duly called congregational meetings were held on November 8, 2020 and December 6, 2020 to discuss the future of the church, the role of the AC and to act on the recommendations of the AC. The congregational meetings were announced at least two Sundays ahead of time and all members for whom addresses (email or USPS) could be found were informed of the meetings and their purpose.

At the congregational meeting held on November 8, 2020 after worship, options for the future of the church were discussed along with the role of the Administrative Commission and the steps that would be involved in closing the church, if that was the decision of the congregation. Those present reluctantly agreed that closure would be the likely outcome and set a date to start an inventory of the contents of the church and discuss which items should be returned to families who donated them, offered to other churches, or donated to the Center of Concern. A second congregational meeting was set for December 6, 2020 to vote on dissolution.

At the December 6, 2020 congregational meeting the following recommendations of the AC were approved unanimously by the members present:

- That the West Fayette Presbyterian Church and its corporation be dissolved;
- That the last worship service be on January 3, 2021;
- Debts and other obligations of the church, if any, be satisfied;
- The contents of the church be donated, sold or disposed of as the AC determines after discussion with the congregation, giving first priority to returning items donated by members to their family;
- The church real property be transferred to the Presbytery of Geneva and offered for sale;
- The corporation be dissolved, as soon as the way is clear.

The congregation also unanimously

- Authorized the AC to take any further actions on the Congregation's behalf necessary or advisable to complete the disposition of property and the dissolution of the West Fayette Presbyterian Church and Corporation.
- Recommended to the Presbytery of Geneva that funds from the sale of the church's real estate and any other funds transferred from the West Fayette Presbyterian Church to the Presbytery of Geneva be donated in the following way: 40% to the Seneca County House of Concern, 20% to Pathway House, 20% to Safe Harbors of the Finger Lakes, and 20% to the Varick Fire Department.
- Affirmed that the reading and approval of the minutes of the December 6 meeting be deferred until the next meeting of the AC.

In accordance with the Charge approved at the September 22, 2020 regular meeting of the Presbytery of Geneva, the additional following work has been completed:

Arrange for the pastoral care of church members

The Rev Daniel Russell served the congregation as temporary supply pastor during the months of discussion about dissolution of the church (August 2020 – January 3, 2021). His worship services provided much needed support and compassion for members of the West Fayette congregation.

Working as the session, in January 2021 the AC informed all members that the congregation had voted to dissolve the church and invited them to contact the AC if they would like their membership transferred to another church. They were informed that their membership would be held by the presbytery if no instructions were received about transfer.

A final worship service celebrating the life and ministry of the congregation was held on Sunday January 3, 2021.

Financial status and management of financial assets and obligations

A financial review of the Treasurer's books for 2020 found no issues of concern. There were no outstanding debts or obligations. Bonnie Saunders agreed to continue as church treasurer until the property is sold or transferred to presbytery.

The church property was appraised at \$156,000. We contracted with a Century 21 realtor to sell the church property, with an asking price of \$156,000. An offer of \$130,000 was accepted from the Lakeland Mennonite Church on July 14, 2021.

Securing the Session records

Church records, including all Session minutes, church registers, and other financial and legal records have been organized and boxed up to be delivered to the PC(USA) archives in Philadelphia.

Plan for the future ownership of the property

An inventory of church belongings was completed and a list of available items was shared with the presbytery. Photographs and other historical memorabilia were offered to the Seneca County Historical Society. Items from the craft room and the rummage sale room were taken to the Seneca County House of Concern.

Recommendations to the Presbytery of Geneva

1. Approve the sale of the West Fayette Presbyterian Church property to the Lakeland Mennonite Church for \$130,000. Authorize and direct the West Fayette Presbyterian Church Administrative Commission (AC) to take all actions useful and necessary to close the transaction on behalf of the Presbytery of Geneva and the West Fayette Presbyterian Church.
2. Recommend the Committee on Operations distribute funds resulting from the West Fayette Presbyterian Church property sale and any remaining funds from church accounts according to the recommendations of the congregation of the West Fayette Presbyterian Church and affirmed by the AC: Seneca Co. House of Concern (40%); Pathway Home (20%); Safe Harbors of the Finger Lakes (20%); Varick Fire Department (20%).
3. Concur with the congregation's vote to dissolve the West Fayette Presbyterian Church, effective the date of the closing day of the property sale or as soon thereafter as practicable.
4. Approve conducting a celebration of the ministry of the West Fayette Presbyterian Church at the September 28, 2021 meeting of Presbytery.

Respectfully submitted,

The Administrative Commission of the West Fayette Presbyterian Church

David Ashby TE, Catherine Foerster RE, John Milne TE (chair), Elizabeth Newell RE (clerk), M.J. Pershing RE, and David Saunders RE

Items for Presbytery Action

TE John Milne (HR) presented the motions. Following discussion, the Presbytery VOTED to:

- **Approve** the sale of the West Fayette Presbyterian Church property at 1063 State Route 336, Town of Fayette, Seneca County, New York, to the Lakeland Mennonite Church for \$130,000 in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Purchase and Sale Contract signed July 14, 2021; and **authorize and direct** the West Fayette Presbyterian Church Administrative Commission (AC) to take all actions useful and necessary, including the execution of documents by the Chair and Clerk of the AC, to close the transaction on behalf of the Presbytery of Geneva and the West Fayette Presbyterian Church.
- **Recommend** the Committee on Operations distribute funds resulting from the West Fayette Presbyterian Church property sale and any remaining funds from church accounts according to the recommendations of the congregation of the West Fayette Presbyterian Church and affirmed by the AC: Seneca Co. House of Concern (40%); Pathway Home (20%); Safe Harbors of the Finger Lakes (20%); Varick Fire Department (20%).
- **Concur** with the congregation's vote to **dissolve** the West Fayette Presbyterian Church, effective the date of the closing day of the property sale or as soon thereafter as practicable.
- **Approve** conducting a celebration of the ministry of the West Fayette Presbyterian Church at the September 28, 2021 meeting of Presbytery.

The Presbytery is grateful for the hard work of the Administrative Commission, and the Presbytery gives thanks for the ministry and legacy of the West Fayette Presbyterian Church.

The Presbytery VOTED to **adjourn** the meeting with prayer.

BENEDICTION AND ADJOURNMENT

The Vice-Moderator, TE Deb Grohman (First, Ontario Center), offered the closing prayer and pronounced the meeting to be adjourned at 11:25 am.

Attest: Amy Loving Austin, Stated Clerk