

The Presbytery of Prospect Hill  
Stated Clerk's Report to the Stated Meeting held June 6, 2020 via videoconference

October 26, 2019

Since the October 26, 2019 meeting, I have completed the following actions:

1. Dismissed the Rev. Molly Dowell Baum to Albany Presbytery at her request and with the approval of Committee on Ministry, December 16, 2019
2. Enrolled Shawn Harmon as a member of presbytery upon his ordination February 2, 2020

The report of the Administrative Commission for Shawn Harmon is attached, and the Commission has been dissolved with thanks.

I have also attended or participated in

- A retreat for Clerks of Session and Church Secretaries at the Lakeshore Center, October 28, 2019
- The All-Iowa Presbytery Gathering in Des Moines, November 1-2, 2019
- Commission on Ministry, seven meetings, some via videoconference
- Committee on Preparation for Ministry, two meetings, one via videoconference
- Moderator Team, five meetings
- The Tri-Presbytery Meeting in Ames, November 15, 2019
- Ordination Service for Shawn Harmon, First Presbyterian Church of Lake Park, February 2, 2020
- South Sudan Task Force
- Weekly videoconference updates with the Presbyteries of Prospect Hill and North Central Iowa beginning March 17, 2020, as face-to-face gatherings began to be limited by the spread of the COVID-19 virus.
- Weekly videoconference updates with the Association of Mid-Council Leaders
- General Assembly orientation via videoconference, March 30, 2020
- Synod of Lakes and Prairies conference via videoconference, April 3, 2020
- Videoconference, "Call Process During COVID-19" sponsored by the General Assembly, April 21, 2020
- Mid-Council leaders videoconference to discuss possibilities for a "virtual" General Assembly, April 24, 2020
- Synod of Lakes and Prairies via videoconference, May 4, 2020.

The State of the Presbytery

The difficulty of writing about the state of the Presbytery of Prospect Hill is disciplining myself not to use the word “unprecedented.” The Presbyterian Church in its various iterations has survived several outbreaks of disease that have forced us to change our approach to corporate life and worship, and some of those outbreaks—the 1918-1919 “Spanish Influenza,” for example—qualified as pandemics. But we have no experience in our own lifetimes with “sheltering in place” and “virtual worship” and the learning curve is steep. As someone remarked early on, “Overnight 10,000 Presbyterian pastors became televangelists.” The churches of our Presbytery, and their pastors, are doing some remarkably creative things. When it comes to making something out of nothing, the TV character McGyver has nothing on us.

We are being forced as a presbytery to live out the truth of what we have said all along that we believed: that the Church is the Body of Christ spread out across time and space, and that whatever institutions and buildings we have erected to facilitate the Six Great Ends of the Church<sup>1</sup> are not ends in themselves but means to an end. The Church is the Church whether it is gathered or scattered, and though the Presbytery of Prospect Hill is for the most part scattered, it is still an outpost of the Kingdom of God in northwest Iowa and northeast Nebraska. As one of our pastors, the Rev Missy Brown, put it,

- Our Faith is always evolving/developing/strengthening
- Hope does not close.
- The love of Jesus has not been quarantined and never will be.

That doesn't mean it hasn't been tough. We are all grieving what has been and fearing what might be coming. Pastors are working more, rather than less. Fortunately we have a strong leadership team in the presbytery and financial resources not only to meet the budget needs of the presbytery but also to support the mission and ministry of our local churches.

So we are hopeful. As Ian McMullen rightly reminds us, “hope is not a strategy.” But hope is the basis of our strategy—not a vague hope that things will get better, that we will “get through this,” but hope in Jesus Christ who loved us and gave himself for us, and

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<sup>1</sup> The great ends of the Church are:

- the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind;
- the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God;
- the maintenance of divine worship;
- the preservation of the truth;
- the promotion of social righteousness; and
- the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world. - F-1.0304

who sends the Spirit into our uncertain life to renew, strengthen, and empower us, for Jesus' sake.

Administrative Commission Report Form

Presbytery of Prospect Hill

The Administrative Commission met at 3:30 am/pm on (date), at the 2/02/2020  
First Presbyterian Church in LAKE PARK, IA for the (circle one)

Commissioning  
Ordination Ordination and ~~Installation~~ Installation of

Shawn Harmon

Kevin J. Freese, Moderator of the Commission, called the meeting to order and led in prayer.

1. The following members of the Commission were present:

Ministers of Word and Sacrament

Ruling Elders

Michael Gewecke (Spirit Lake) Bruce Hasara (Lake Park)

David Wllom (Estherville) Kaven Byers (Spirit Lake)

Kevin Freese (Battle Creek)

2. The following were absent:

none

3. The following were seated as corresponding members:

Name

Denominational Jurisdiction

Rev. Dr. Tim Harmon

Presbytery LAKE ERIE

4. Other actions taken by the Commission prior to the service:

reviewed order of worship

