

**PRESBYTERY OF BLACKHAWK ASSEMBLY MEETING MINUTES
VIA ZOOM
February 10, 2026**

The Presbytery of Blackhawk convened on Tuesday, February 10, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in a Stated Meeting held via Zoom. This was a joint meeting of the Ecclesial body, the Presbytery of Blackhawk, and the Corporate body, the Presbytery of Blackhawk, Inc.

WELCOME/OVERVIEW OF THE ZOOM MEETING PROCESS

Moderator Pastor Mike Engle welcomed all participants. He gave an overview of how the meeting would be conducted and instructed attendees on speaking and voting on Zoom during the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER AND OPENING PRAYER

Moderator Mike Engle opened with prayer and read the Blackhawk Presbytery Mission Statement. He called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

The following first-time minister members were welcomed: Maggie Goodwin, Ridgefield Cystal Lake and Kathie Luke, Waltham Church in Utica

The following corresponding member was introduced: Alan Willadsen, Pastor at First Presbyterian Fairbury. Alan is a member of Great Rivers Presbytery and also serves as our treasurer.

The following first-time ruling elders commissioners were welcomed: Debi Duggins, First Morris; Peggy Imgrum, First Elgin; Stefani Kluck, First Winnebago; Connie Koehn, Fulton; Rick Ponx, Oswego; Ann Schneider, Westminster, Rockford; and Evelyn Thomas, First, Dixon.

Moderator Engle declared that a quorum was present. All attendees are listed on the meeting roll call (attached). He presented the proposed docket for the meeting.

	<u>Item</u>	<u>Leader</u>
5:15	First opportunity to sign into meeting	
5:30	Call to order and opening prayer	Mike Engle
	Quorum/Minutes/Docket/Corresponding Members	
5:45	Worship	
	Scripture and sermon	Alan Willadsen
	Communion	Jan Chandler
	Offering	Mike Engle
6:15	Learning Opportunity	
	Who are we?	Eric Heinekamp
7:00	Stated Clerk Action	
	Changes to Ecclesiastical Administration Manual	Eric Heinekamp
7:20	Short break	
7:30	Council	Lisa Lopez-Meyer
	Committees of Council	
	Finance and Property	Scott Vandermyde
	Mission	Thea Kornelius
	Personnel	Clinton Roberts
	Visioning	Lisa Lopez-Meyer
8:00	Committees / Commission of Assembly	

	Commission on Ministry Committee on Preparation for Ministry Nominating Committee	Laurie Walker Lauren Patrus Betzel Jim McCrea
8:15	Reports General Presbyter/Stated Clerk Synod Report Stronghold Update	Eric Heinekamp KJ Wester Danny Pierce
8:25	Corporation/Trustees Treasurer report	Mike Engle Alan Willadsen
8:30	New and unfinished business	
8:30	Adjourn with prayer	Mike Engle

The next stated meeting of the Presbytery Assembly will be May 19, 2026, as an in-person only meeting at Stronghold Camp and Retreat Center. There will not be a Zoom option. The meeting will be at 9:30 am.

The moderator moved that if there were no objections, the corresponding members be seated, the docket be approved, and the minutes of the meeting on November 18, 2025 be approved. The motion was **Approved by Unanimous Consent**.

OPENING WORSHIP

Moderator Mike Engle moved the assembly into a time of worship with an opening prayer and led the liturgy. Pastor Alan Willadsen read scripture from James 1:22-27 and preached a sermon about identity and names, reflecting on how names change over time but God's love remains constant. Rev. Jan Chandler led the assembly in the sacrament of Holy Communion. The offering was taken via check to the presbytery office, on the website, or by scanning the QR code on the Power Point page and will be used to support our Kenya Partnership. Pastor Mike Engle closed the worship service with prayer.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITY PRESENTATION

Rev. Eric Heinekamp shared a presentation about changes in the Blackhawk Presbytery from 2019 to 2026. He presented data on Blackhawk Presbytery's decline in church membership and pastoral leadership. He noted that the number of churches has decreased from 73 to 62, with many congregations dissolving and two moving to other presbyteries. The presbytery now has 106 pastors, with only 23 being installed ministers of word and sacrament. Eric highlighted the increasing trend of shared ministry, where pastors serve multiple congregations. He also discussed the presbytery's rural nature, with 58% of congregations classified as rural, and the challenges of tracking unaffiliated church attendees. Eric highlighted that 7 churches are seeking new pastors, with retired pastors as gap or bridge pastors. There are no transitional pastors in the presbytery. Eric noted that presently there are no associate pastors in Blackhawk Presbyterian.

Following the presentation, the assembly was divided into small groups to discuss one of the following questions proposed by our Visioning Committee.

- What does it mean to be a Presbytery when we know we have been created in the image of God?
- Who are our neighbors in and around the Presbytery?
- What is God calling us to be and do in this time and place?
- What is exciting to you about the ministry of the Presbytery?

The assembly reconvened and the small groups reported out a brief summary of their discussions. The group discussed demographic challenges in congregations, such as age and income data collection, and considered strategies for delivering services and engaging diverse congregations.

STATED CLERK ACTION

The Stated Clerk **moved** to make significant revisions, as listed below, to the Ecclesiastical Administrative Manual, revised on February 2, 2026. The motion was seconded and **VOTED** to approve the motion, if the way be clear and we are approved by the Administrative Commission of the GA Commission on Mid Councils on March 13, 2026 to change our presbytery name to Illinois Prairie Presbytery. The Ecclesiastical Manual is on the website in entirety.

BLACKHAWK PRESBYTERY / ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PRESBYTERY

REVISIONS TO ECCLESIASTICAL ADMINSTRATIVE MANUAL

February 2026

MOTION: To approve the Ecclesiastical Administrative Manual revised February 2, 2026

The following changes and clarifications are included in this revision:

1. Globally replaced the name Blackhawk Presbytery with Illinois Prairie Presbytery with the assumption the name change will be approved on March 13, 2026.
2. Modified boundaries of the presbytery for Ford County to only include Piper City (page 1)
3. Split Visioning and Assembly Planning Committee of Council into two separate committees: 1) Visioning and 2) Assembly Planning (pages 8,11)
4. Reduced the size of the Mission Committee from 9 to 6 elected members (page 9)
5. Removed specifics of 6 subcommittees under Commission on Ministry (COM) and refers detail of how COM operates to the COM Manual (in development) (page 11)
6. Changed name of Committee on Preparation for Ministry to Commission on Preparation for Ministry since it is a commission of the Presbytery Assembly (page 12)
7. Added position of Associate Stated Clerk under officers and staff (pages 4, 15)
8. Clarified the composition of committees and commissions that may include at-large, ruling elder, or member of congregations. Committees are generally comprised of ministers of the Word and Sacrament and members of congregations. Commissions are generally comprised of ministers of the Word and Sacrament and ruling elders (page 6 and throughout document)
9. Made changes to clarify wording, remove redundant language, or correct inconsistencies.
10. Eliminated the list of policies since every time new policy is approved, we would need to update the manual.

COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL

MISSION

Moderator Rev. Thea Kornelius called attention to the committee's written report. She shared an opportunity to for our presbytery to partner with the Chicago Presbytery for an intergenerational mission trip to South Dakota June 13-19.

Here is a link to their website: <https://chicagopresbytery.org/2025/03/31/dakota-partnership/>

Laurie Walker thanked the presbytery for supporting the Kenya trip in October with the offering from this meeting.

VISIONING AND ASSEMBLY PLANNING COMMITTEE

Moderator Rev. Lisa-Lopez Meyer reminded attendees to fill out the meeting evaluations to aid the committee in their work.

COMMISSIONS/COMMITTEES OF ASSEMBLY

COMMISSION ON MINISTRY

Moderator Laurie Walker called attention to the committee's written report.

The COM **moved** that the Presbytery Assembly approve the revised Minimum Terms of Call Policy approved at the November 2025 Presbytery Assembly. The motion from the Commission did not require a second. The Presbytery Assembly **VOTED** to approve the motion.

The COM **moved** that the Presbytery Assembly approve the revised Sabbatical Policy. The motion from the Commission did not require a second. The Presbytery Assembly **VOTED** to approve the motion.

There will be a Zoom meeting on February 26, 2026 at 6:30 pm to help guide church using the new Sabbatical policy and the online resources.

The COM **moved** that the Presbytery Assembly approve forming an Administrative Commission (AC) for Central Presbyterian Church of New Lenox to dissolve their congregation. The motion from the Commission did not require a second. The Presbytery Assembly **VOTED** to approve the motion.

BLACKHAWK PRESBYTERY MINIMUM COMPENSATION REQUIREMENTS

Overview

The relationship between pastor and congregation, whether involving a minister of the Word and Sacrament or a commissioned pastor, is a unique employment situation. Presbyterian calls occur between pastors and congregations who have discerned God's direction in creating a relationship of mutual ministry, and who have had that call validated and affirmed by the Presbytery. The presbytery is a representative council of the church and is comprised of ordained ministers of the Word and Sacrament and ruling elders from all our churches. The connectional nature of Presbyterian call, and its initiation by God, preclude a purely economic or marketplace approach to the topic of compensation for pastors.

Like other members of the Body of Christ, pastors are called to be servants of God. God calls pastors into service in a variety of settings each of which, when faithfully discerned, ought to be honored regardless of size or wealth of the congregation or specialized ministry. At the same time, faithful discernment of a call includes a practice of good stewardship of the resources of the whole of the denomination. As the Holy Scripture teaches, "Elders who lead well should be paid double, especially those who work with public speaking and teaching. ... 'Don't put a muzzle on an ox while it treads grain,' and 'Workers deserve their pay.'" (1 Timothy 5:17-18, Common English Bible.)

The minimum effective salary for ministers of the Word and Sacrament and commissioned pastors, based on a full time work week of 40 hours, is determined by the Commission on Ministry (COM) and is approved by the Presbytery Assembly each year. Effective salary is only part of the overall compensation requirement for pastors. These overall minimum requirements

apply to both installed and contractually hired ministers of the Word and Sacrament and commissioned pastors, and include:

- effective salary, including housing allowance; as approved by the Presbytery;
- self-employment contributions (SECA);
- pension, death and disability coverage, as described below; medical coverage, as described below;
- vouchered allowances for
 - professional expense reimbursement, including mileage at the current IRS rate;
 - study leave;
 - health reimbursement per Blackhawk's Health Reimbursement Arrangement policy; and
- where applicable, sabbatical leave;
- where applicable, family leave;
- a minimum of four weeks vacation and two weeks study leave; and
- state and federal holidays.

Comment: Pastoral salaries, like all salaries, are subject to taxation. Bonuses, for example, can be treated by the IRS as income and taxed accordingly. For that reason, bonuses are discouraged, housing allowances should comply with IRS expectations, and all other allowances shall be vouchered. Any questions about tax issues, including SECA (selfemployment), should be referred to COM.

Medical Coverage

The Board of Pensions (BOP) is transitioning its medical coverage from providing full coverage for a pastor and their spouse and dependents (family coverage), to providing less expensive coverage only for pastors, though family coverage will still be available at a fixed and higher price. The situation is in flux. Presbyteries across the country are experimenting with ways of adapting to the new and evolving BOP insurance coverage options. Blackhawk Presbytery is in close communication with other presbyteries, and will update its guidance as the transition process proceeds.

Prior to 2024, all pastors were covered under the old BOP system, which automatically included family coverage. Pastors whose current call began prior to 2024 must continue to receive full BOP family coverage from the BOP without any reduction in the pastor's effective salary. Pastors whose calls began after 2024 have other options. If an installed pastor does not have a spouse or dependents, or if the pastor's family has alternate coverage (as may be the case if the pastor's spouse is employed), then the congregation need only provide BOP coverage for the pastor. If the pastor and their family require family coverage, such coverage should be provided by the congregation. However, family coverage may be sought from outside the BOP, and coverage for pastors who are not installed is not required to be provided by the BOP. If a pastor who is not installed does not require medical coverage, COM can approve a call that does not include medical coverage.

Minimum Compensation Requirements

In the past, Blackhawk Presbytery has approved calls that do not meet Presbytery minimum. Blackhawk Presbytery shall no longer approve such calls. Not only does the Book of Order not allow exceptions to minimum terms of call (G-2.0804), calls that do not meet Presbytery minimums are unfair to pastors and to congregations that do meet minimum standards.

God does not call anyone to discipleship beyond his or her abilities and resources. Therefore, any congregation that cannot meet the Presbytery minimum as its pastoral leadership is

currently structured, is presumably called to an alternate form of pastoral leadership. Discernment is surely needed. Therefore, any congregation that cannot meet Presbytery minimum may apply to the Presbytery for short-term assistance in meeting minimum terms of call. Such assistance shall only be granted on a short-term basis and on the condition that the congregation enters a period of discernment about how God is calling it to mission under its current circumstances.

SABBATICAL LEAVE POLICY **Illinois Prairie Presbytery**

INTRODUCTION

Sabbath rest is built into the fabric of creation and is necessary for the well-being of community, for it reminds us of who we are and who God is. Jesus offered this invitation to his disciples: “Come and rest awhile” (Mark 6:31). Amid the constant demands of ministry, Jesus knew the need for Sabbath time. A sabbatical is a time to dig deeper into oneself and one’s relationship to God, away from the demands of long-term ministry. It is a time to be renewed, refreshed, and revitalized by the breath of God.

Sabbaticals not only benefit the pastor, but the congregation or other validated ministry as well, giving all involved an opportunity to try new things and develop untapped gifts. Sabbaticals are a useful tool for maintaining a healthy and thriving relationship between pastors and those they serve, preventing pastor burn-out, and fostering vital ministry.

ELIGIBILITY

Illinois Prairie Presbytery recommends that all ministers of the Word and Sacrament and all commissioned pastors be eligible for sabbatical every seven years. Sabbaticals should be in the terms of call for all installed ministers of the Word and Sacrament and in the contracts for temporary ministers and commissioned pastors. Sabbatical time should also be provided to all pastors currently serving by adding it retroactively to the date of hire or the beginning of the call. **PROCESS** While Illinois Prairie Presbytery strongly recommends sabbaticals for all persons in ministry, it recognizes that pastors who serve in non-Presbyterian settings, such as hospital chaplains, may have fewer options or a different process. The process below is thus limited to those pastors working under a Presbyterian council (i.e. a session or the presbytery) in Illinois Prairie Presbytery. The following schedule applies:

1. After six years of service to a particular ministry, or as agreed upon by the employing council, the pastor may have up to three months of sabbatical leave to be taken in the following year.
2. Vacation time may be attached to the sabbatical with the employing council’s permission.
3. No study leave will be granted during the year of sabbatical.
4. The pastor must commit to remain at their church or other validated ministry for at least one year of service beyond the date of return. Any pastor who does not return to their employment for at least one year shall be required to refund the entire salary (excluding benefits) received for the period of the sabbatical leave. The requirement for repayment may not be waived without the specific approval of the employing council.

PLANNING

Advance planning of the sabbatical leave is vital to success and should not be overlooked. After assessing eligibility, the pastor shall:

1. Submit an initial request for sabbatical to their council one year in advance of the leave for the council’s approval.

2. Upon approval of the request, the council will appoint a Sabbatical Renewal Team (SRT) to work with the pastor on planning. The SRT shall consist of at least two elders and members at large of the congregation or other ministry.
3. The SRT will present a written plan to the council for its approval at least six months prior to the start of the sabbatical. The plan should include: a description of the goals to be achieved and the expected end result, a personal statement from the pastor as to why this sabbatical leave would be valuable to both the pastor and the ministry, and a preliminary proposal for coverage of the pastor's services, including the financial cost to the council of providing coverage.
4. Upon approval by the council, the plan will be forwarded to the Commission on Ministry (COM) for its review and its assistance in insuring adequate coverage.
5. Once the plan is approved by the council and COM, the SRT shall inform the congregation or other ministry of the sabbatical leave and the plans for coverage.

FUNDING

During the sabbatical leave, the employing council will continue to pay the pastor's salary and benefits at the same level as those in effect prior to the leave. Each council will also contract for the necessary interim staff coverage during the period of sabbatical leave. COM can assist in this process.

Since the leave itself can be expensive, pastors are encouraged to apply for grants supporting sabbatical leave. Possible resources are available on the Presbytery website.

RE-ENTRY

Experience has shown that sharing the sabbatical experience enhances the experience for both the pastor and those they serve. Thus, at the completion of sabbatical leave, the pastor shall present an oral and written report to their council and congregation or ministry with the details of their leave as well as reflections on its value. This is a time when the ministry participants can also share how their service was changed during the sabbatical time.

CONCLUSION

A sabbatical for clergy renewal creates space in which God can work in new ways, for both the pastor and the church. Let the creative juices and imagination flow. Avoid prescriptions; grow in your own way. Set out with enthusiasm and expectation. Breathe deeply as you go. Let yourself wonder and be open to the surprises of God, and know that years from now you and those you serve will still be reaping the benefits and the blessings of the experience.

RESOURCES FOR SABBATICALS ARE AVAILABLE ON THE PRESBYTERY WEBSITE

**Administrative Commission for Central Presbyterian Church of New Lenox
Charge to the Commission
Approved at the February 10, 2026 Presbytery Assembly Meeting**

MOTION: COM moves that the Presbytery Assembly create an Administrative Commission to work with the Central Presbyterian Church of New Lenox to guide them through the process of dissolving their congregation, at their request.

The Session of the Central Presbyterian Church of New Lenox voted on January 11, 2026 to dissolve April 26, 2026 or as soon as practical after that date. To support this request, the Commission on Ministry is asking the Presbytery Assembly to establish an Administrative

Commission to take all action needed to dissolve the congregation and handle the transfer of the property, including but not limited to, the following:

- assisting in and participating in a closing worship service,
- assisting with the dissolution of the pastor relationship
- taking possession of all records and minutes,
- holding the membership of the congregation and assisting in their transfer to another Christian congregation for a period up to one year,
- accounting for all assets, ensuring the financial matters of the congregation are closed in order
- closing bank and financial accounts assisting the session in dispensing all financial and other assets to entities desired by the congregation and
- when all matters are concluded, dissolving the corporation.
- upon a final report to the Presbytery Assembly request to be dissolved as a commission. The Administrative Commission will consist of 5 people balanced between Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and Ruling Elders. Members will be appointed by the moderator of the presbytery in consultation with the Stated Clerk.

REPORTING ON ACTIONS TAKEN BY COM:

New Calls

1. **Approved** covenant, if the way be clear, between Ridgefield-Crystal Lake and Maggie Goodwin (MSW) effective February 2, 2026.

Effective Salary	\$ 80,000.00
SECA (7.65%)	\$ 6,120.00
Reimbursable Expenses	\$ 17,900.00
Medical Coverage	\$ 14,000.00
Spouse Coverage	\$ 12,250.00
Pension	\$ 6,800.00
Death & Disability	\$ 800.00
Temporary Disability	\$ 400.00
Total Terms of Call	\$138,270.00
Business/Professional Expenses	\$ 3,000.00
Continuing Education	\$ 1,500.00
Medical Reimbursement (6%)	\$ 4,800.00
Moving Cost	\$ 8,600.00
Total Reimbursable Expenses	\$ 17,900.00

2. **Approved** covenant, if the way be clear, between Utica, Waltham and Kathleen Luke (MSW) effective January 12, 2026

Cash Salary	\$ 42,154.00
Fair Rental Value of Manse	\$ 13,846.20
Furnishing Allowance	\$ 4,000.00
Effective Salary	\$ 60,000.20
Utilities	\$ 3,141.00
Equivalent Salary	\$ 63,141.20
SECA	\$ 4,830.30
Medical Coverage	\$ 10,500.04
Pension	\$ 6,000.02
Total Terms of Call	\$ 84,471.56
Automobile Expense	\$ 2,000.00
Business/Professional Expenses	\$ 3,000.00

Medical Reimbursement	\$ 3,600.01
Moving Cost	\$ TBD
Total Reimbursable Expenses	\$ 8,600.01

New Commissions/Covenants*

3. **Approved** covenant between Wilmington, First and Mike Engle (CP) effective November 30, 2025 – November 30, 2026.

Supply Pastor	\$ 150.00/service
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Renewal of Covenants and Contracts

4. **Approved** renewed covenant between Rockford, Westminster, and Gretchen Hammeke (CP) effective January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026.

Full-time- 40 hours/week

Cash Salary/ Total Effective Salary	\$65,000.00/year
Housing	\$15,000.00
Total Effective Salary	\$80,000.00
Automobile Expenses	per WPC policy
Professional Expenses	\$ 2,500.00
Continuing Education (2 weeks)	\$ 1,500.00
Vacation: 4 weeks (including 4 Sundays)	

5. **Approved** renewed covenant between Elwood, Community and Mike Engle (CP) effective December 1, 2025 – November 30, 2026.

Cash Salary	\$23,000.00/year
Housing	\$17,000.00
Total Effective Salary	\$40,000.00
SECA Supplement	\$ 2,947.00
Health Insurance	\$ 3,600.00
Health Care Reimbursement	\$ 2,311.00
Automobile Expenses	\$ 2,400.00
Continuing Education	\$ 500.00
Vacation: 4 weeks (including 6 Sundays)	

6. **Approved** renewed covenant between Plainfield, Wheatland, and Chuck Johnson (CP) effective December 1, 2025 – November 30, 2026.

Part-time- 15 hours/week

Cash Salary	\$ 400.00/week
Total Effective Salary	\$ 20,800.00/year
Vacation: 4 weeks (including 4 Sundays)	

7. **Approved** renewed covenant between Joliet, Westminster, and Karen Williams (CP) effective January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026.

Part-time- 30 hours/week

Cash Salary	\$16,836.04/year
Housing	\$16,559.92
Total Effective Salary	\$33,395.96/year
SECA Supplement	\$ 3,006.00
Health Care Reimbursement	\$ 1,900.00
Automobile Expenses	\$ 1,200.00
Professional Expenses	\$ 2,000.00
Continuing Education (2 weeks)	\$ 1,200.00

Vacation: 3 weeks (including 3 Sundays)

8. **Approved** renewed covenant between Manteno, Community, and Paul Koch (CP) effective December 18, 2025 – May 17, 2026.

Part-time- 30 hours/week

Cash Salary \$ 220.00/week

Mileage (current IRS rate)

Bible Studies, meetings, etc. \$ 75.00/each

Vacation: 2 weeks (including 2 Sundays)

9. **Approved** renewed covenant between Caledonia, Willow Creek, and Tanya Muzzarelli (CP) effective January 6, 2026 – February 2, 2027.

As needed in pastor's absence Pulpit Supply \$150

Approved Moderators

11. Mendota, First for congregational meeting January 25, - Eric Heinekamp (MWS)

12. Ridgefield Crystal Lake, for congregational meeting February 1 – Ruling elder and clerk, Jim Pracht.

13. Rochelle, First for congregational meeting February 1 – Ruling elder, Lydia Roberts.

Miscellaneous

14. Earlville, United request approved for a waiver of term limits for Jennifer Miller, Lisa Karlson, and Al Matison to serve a third term as elder because of the lack of others willing to serve.

15. Earlville, United and Mendota, First request approved Elder, Dale Keilman to serve communion at Earlville, in the absence of Laurie Walker (CP).

OTHER INFORMATION

- Pastor Supply List is notably a very short list. COM and CPM are working to supplement this list.
- A big welcome to Ridgefield-Crystal Lake pastor, Maggie Goodwin (MSW).
- A big welcome back to Utica, Waltham pastor, Kathleen Luke (MSW).
- A reminder: The PCUSA 1001 Worshipping Communities is offering \$10k with matching grants available for any small group that wants to start something new outside of an existing church body. Please contact our New Communities Committee with ideas or for more information.
- **A Presbytery Liaison is meant to be assigned to every church in the Presbytery. Their job is to build a supportive relationship with the church and serve as a go-to person for questions or assistance about church ministry. Please let the new moderator of the Liaison Committee, Katie Ricks (MWS) or me know if you are interested in serving as a liaison. Elders are perfect for this special calling.**

COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY

Committee moderator Rev. Lauren Patrus-Betzel reported there are two new approved candidates for Commissioned Pastor/Commissioned Ruling Elder: Peggy Imgrund and Dale Keilman. Also, there is one candidate for Minister of the Word and Sacrament: Faith Herout.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Moderator Jim McCrea referred to the written report and **moved** to approve the following nominations. The motion from the committee did not require a second. After no nominations from the floor were received, it was **VOTED** to accept the following candidates.

Parliamentarian
2026 – David Spaulding – MWS

Recording Clerk
2026 – Dorene Tieche - RE

Presbytery Council:
2028 – KJ Wester – MWS
2028 – Claire Brennecke– RE

Committee on Representation
2026 – Jim McCrea -MWS (Moderator)
2026 – Spencer Lawrence – MWS/RE
2027 – Clinton Roberts – MWS
2027 – Michelle Crebo – RE
2028 – Bo Mircea – MWS
2028 – Ray Lantz - RE

Permanent Judicial Commission
2031 – Ray Lantz - RE

Nominating Committee
2028 – Rev. Jim McCrea – MWS (Moderator)

STAFF REPORTS

General Presbyter Report

Rev. Heinekamp presented his written report. He pointed out three things. He encouraged congregations to make changes to the name of the presbytery to Illinois Prairie Presbytery in their bylaws, website and any other documents. Eric reported he has visited, moderated, or preached at eight congregations since January 10, 2026 and welcomes invitations to churches or visits with pastors to support the congregations in the presbytery. He honored Rev. Dr. Roy Backus, a fantastic pastor and musician, and longtime member of Blackhawk Presbytery, who recently passed away.

Stated Clerk Report (attached)

- 1. Upcoming presbytery assembly meetings in 2026 are:**
May 19, in person at Stronghold.
September 15, morning on Zoom at 9:30 am
November 10, in person, location TBD
There will no longer be hybrid meetings.
- 2. Annual Session Minute Review**
Rev. David Spaulding, Rev. Jim McCrea, and the Stated Clerk have completed the annual review of session records.
- 3. Annual Statistical Reviews**
The final date to submit statistical reports online is February 20.
- 4. Administrative Commissions**

The First Presbyterian of Kankakee is finalizing the sale of the former church property. It is being sold to the Historical Society of Kankakee County.

First Presbyterian of Wenona has not been able to find a buyer and the building will be razed. It has been discovered there is asbestos in the building and remediation needs to be completed before razing the structure. The presbytery will pay for the remediation. United Presbytery Church of Somonauk is continuing to discern the future of the congregation. A structural engineer determined the sanctuary is no longer structurally safe. The presbytery is working to find a structural engineer to get an assessment of the structural safety of the building.

5. **Necrology Report**

Eric shared the necrology list for 2025.

Ruling Elders and Ministers of the Word and Sacrament Who Died in 2025

Braidwood, First

Chuck Cunningham (No obit)

Martha Stahl, March 20

Elwood Community Church

Joy Gillahan, March 7

Jerry Panzer, March 15

Galena, First

John Ray, June 23

Joliet, First

Thomas Cawley, December 26

Klint DeGeus, February 11

Mary Lynn Keir, December 19

Sheila Lundeen, February 5

LaRose, Crow Meadow

Delbert Shirley, July 5

Mendota, First

Helen Joyce Burright, February 17

Morrison, First

Jane James, November 17

Pontiac, First

James "Bernie" Curtis, June 25

Rockford, Third

Gene Archer, April 21

Heather Genrich, September 24

Dick Lindsey, August 9

Rockford Westminster

Conrad Wallace Lantz, August 25

Joan Knight Slack, June 8

Sandra Jean Stierman, October 18

Winnebago, First

Gene Gambrel, August 25

Jill Sunday, September 20

Winnebago, Middle Creek

James Bridgeland, April 6

Lawrence Hall, December 2

Harriett Langley, February 23

Woodstock, First

Tom Schwarz, March 28

Yorkville, Au Sable Grove

Louise Christian, November 17

Louis Thurow, January 10

Ministers of the Word and Sacrament

Rev. Russ Skorberg, December 29

The Stated Clerk also reported on two ministers who have died in 2026:

Rev. Peder Carlson, January 2

Rev. Dr. Roy Backus, January 24

SYNOD REPORT

Rev. KJ Wester of First Pres of DuPage in Bolingbrook reported Eric did a wonderful job at the Synod meeting sharing the information leading up to the request to change the presbytery name to Illinois Prairie Presbytery. The Synod of Lincoln Trails received a significant Lilly Foundation grant to support pastors and congregations who are doing multi-vocational ministry deeply embedded in communities. More information will be coming.

CORPORATION/TRUSTEES**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Pastor Willadsen reported the presbytery is in a strong financial position due largely to a gift received money from a member of the Kankakee congregation that is now dissolved.

The Treasurer's Report was received by **Unanimous Consent**.

NEW BUSINESS

Rev. Kornelius reported at the next presbytery assembly meeting there will be a portion of the meeting called "Big Questions." This will be an opportunity for robust discussion around big questions impacting the church today. At the meeting in May, the Big Question will center around AI and the church.

ADJOURN WITH PRAYER

Moderator Engle called to adjourn the meeting of the day. He closed the meeting with prayer at 8:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Eric Heinekamp
Recording Clerk

Dorene A. Tieche
Stated Clerk

The next stated meeting of the Presbytery Assembly will be May 19, 2026, as an in-person only meeting at Stronghold Camp and Retreat Center. There will not be a Zoom option. The meeting will be at 9:30 am.