

Minutes of the Called Meeting of the Presbytery of Transylvania
First Presbyterian Church, Winchester, KY

May 1, 2018

The called meeting of the Presbytery of Transylvania met at First Presbyterian Church, Winchester, KY, on Tuesday, May 1, 2018. A quorum was present.

Summary attendance: teaching elders present: 34; teaching elders excused: 8; teaching elders absent: 29; ruling elders present: 17; ruling elders excused: 2; churches with ruling elders absent: 60; commissioned ruling elders present: 2; commissioned ruling elders excused: 2; commissioned ruling elders absent: 8; coordinating commission members present: 3; presbytery staff: 1; visitors present: 1. (See Appendix A.)

Moderator David Hoskins called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM. The Stated Clerk moved the docket. Second, and motion passed. The Presbytery began its meeting with worship and proclamation of the Word.

The Moderator called for the report of the Church Closing/Dismissal Commission. The commission moved that the Presbytery of Transylvania dismiss the First Presbyterian Church, Catlettsburg, to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church as outlined in the attached Dismissal Agreement. Motion passed.

The commission moved that the Presbytery of Transylvania concur with the request of the congregation and session of the Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church to dissolve the church; that the Administration Commission/Trustees be charged with the financial and physical maintenance and upkeep of the property; that the Coordinating Commission, working with the Church Revitalization and Development Ministry, study and propose uses for the building and grounds, reporting progress at each presbytery meeting; and that the final worship service of the Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church be on Sunday, May 20, 2018, at 11 AM. Motion passed.

Worship resumed with the Sacrament of Communion. There being no further business to come before the Presbytery, the Stated Clerk moved that the Presbytery be adjourned. Second, and motion passed. The Moderator spoke a prayer and blessing and ended the meeting at 6:35 PM.

Submitted:

The Rev. Jerry L. Utt, II

Stated Clerk

ROLL:

The roll was formed as follows:

MINISTER ATTENDANCE

P = present; EX = absent;

A w/o EX = absent without excuse;

HR = honorably retired

Minister Sign-In Sheets

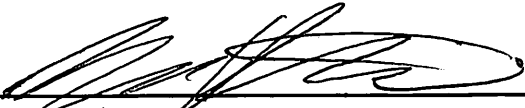

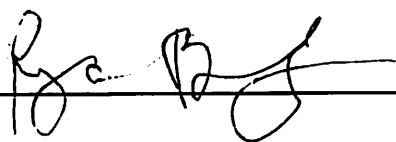

Called Meeting

May 1, 2018

First Presbyterian Church

Winchester

83

Anderson, The Rev. Rachel		
*Baker, The Rev. Darryl		
Beachy, The Rev. Duane		Excused
Benedetti, The Rev. Sara		
Benze, The Rev. Keith		
*Berry, The Rev. Woody		
Blankenbaker, The Rev. James		
Bradney, The Rev. Ryan		
*Bright, The Rev. Peggy		
*Brooks, The Rev. Dr. Gary		
Brothers, The Rev. Michael		
*Bunger, The Rev. Ron		
*Butler, The Rev. Angie		
Cervas, The Rev. Scott		
*Chamberlain, The Rev. Pat		
Christian, The Rev. Curtis T.		

ROLL:

The roll was formed as follows:

MINISTER ATTENDANCE

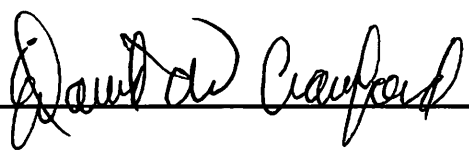
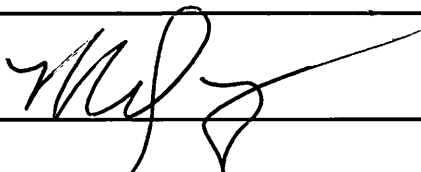
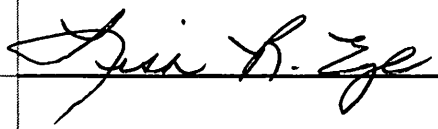

P = present; EX = absent;

A w/o EX = absent without excuse;

HR = honorably retired

Roll of Sign-
Caucus Meeting
May 1, 2018
First Presbyterian Church
Winchester

84

*Chumney, The Rev. David		
Clark, The Rev. E.G.		
Clark, The Rev. Patterson		
Conlee, The Rev. Kerry		
Crawford, The Rev. David		
*Daniel, The Rev. Dr. E. Randolph		
Davis, The Rev. Mark		
Denney, The Rev. Michael		
Dermody Jr., The Rev. Roger		Excused
*Deutsch, The Rev. William L		
*Divas, The Rev. Dr. L. Armando		
Ehlert, The Rev. Kristy		
*Ensminger, The Rev. Douglas		
*Erwin, The Rev. James		
Eye, The Rev. Lisa		
*Eyster, The Rev. Bert		
Falco, The Rev. Matt		

ROLL:

The roll was formed as follows:

MINISTER ATTENDANCE

P = present; EX = absent;

A w/o EX = absent without excuse;

HR = honorably retired

Minister Sign-In Sheets

Called Meeting

May 1, 2018

First Presbyterian Church

Winchester

85

*Fiscella, The Rev. Dr. Ruth		
Foehse, The Rev. Caitlin		
*Furrow, The Rev. F. Dewitt Jr		
*Gailey, The Rev. Carol		
Garrod-Logsdon, The Rev. Beth		Excused
Gilbert, The Rev. Anthony		Excused
*Gilbert, The Rev. James		
*Gnatuk, The Rev. Wayne A		
*Gordon, The Rev. Graham		
*Griffie, The Rev. Dr. L. Fred		
Groome, The Rev. Thomas		
*Guerrant, The Rev. Richard		
*Haga, The Rev. R. Jackson		
Hans, The Rev. Dr. Daniel		
Harris, The Rev. Cindy		excused
Hartsfield, The Rev. Karen		Karen Hartsfield
*Henery, The Rev. Dr. James		

ROLL:

The roll was formed as follows:

MINISTER ATTENDANCE

P = present; EX = absent;

A w/o EX = absent without excuse;

HR = honorably retired

Minister Sign-In Sheets

Called Meeting

May 1, 2018

First Presbyterian Church

Winchester

86

*Hibbard, The Rev. Maurice		
*Hicks, The Rev. Roy		
Hood, The Rev. Dr. Fred		
*Howard, The Rev. Scott		<i>Scott A. Howard</i>
Howie-Kipphut, The Rev. Lorilyn		<i>Lorilyn - Kipphut</i>
*Huffman, The Rev. Gary		
*Iversen, The Rev. Eric		
Johnson, The Rev. Jennifer		
*Jones, The Rev. Jon F.		
Kelly, The Rev. Joel		<i>excused</i>
Kim, The Rev. Yongwha		
Kupar, The Rev. Greg		<i>Greg Kupar</i>
Lattimore, The Rev. John		
Lee, The Rev. Hyeon Gu		<i>Hyeon Gu</i>
*Lindberg, The Rev. Jackie		
Lotspeich, The Rev. Philip		<i>Phil</i>
Love, The Rev. Jane Ann		<i>Jane Love</i>

ROLL:
 The roll was formed as follows:
 MINISTER ATTENDANCE
 P = present; EX = absent;
 A w/o EX = absent without excuse;
 HR = honorably retired

Minister Sign-In Sheets
 Called Meeting
 May 1, 2018
 First Presbyterian Church
 Winchester

87

Maconochie, The Rev. Linda		<i>Linda Maconochie</i>
Majors, The Rev. Phil		
*Malott, The Rev. Fred		
*Matthews, The Rev. Griffith		
*McAtee, The Rev. Dr. William M.		
*McGlawn, The Rev. Burt		
*McGowan, The Rev. Bryce L.		
McIntyre, The Rev. Hannah		
McKnight, The Rev. Laurie		<i>excused</i>
*Mendenhall, The Rev. Ray		<i>Ray Mendenhall</i>
*Mesta, The Rev. Edward Hugh		
*Moffett, The Rev. Howard W.		<i>Howard W. Moffett</i>
*Mount, The Rev. Dr. C. Eric Jr		
Mumper, The Rev. Jay		<i>JMumper</i>
*Murray, The Rev. Charles M.		
Noel, The Rev. Tim		<i>Tim Noel</i>
Olive, The Rev. Wanda B.		<i>Wanda B. Olive</i>

ROLL:
 The roll was formed as follows:
 MINISTER ATTENDANCE
 P = present; EX = absent;
 A w/o EX = absent without excuse;
 HR = honorably retired

Minister Sign-In Sheets
 Called Meeting
 May 1, 2018
 First Presbyterian Church
 Winchester




88

Olt, The Rev. Julie		<i>Julie Olt</i>
Olt, The Rev. Schuyler		
Pace, The Rev. Steve		<i>Steve Pace</i>
Pachuaui, The Rev. Kima		
*Palmer, The Rev. Stephen		
*Pettijohn, The Rev. Bonnie		
Phillips, The Rev. Griffin		
*Pogue, The Rev. Philip		
*Prewitt, The Rev. Janet		<i>Janet Prewitt</i>
*Rasmussen, The Rev. Dr. Kenneth		
*Redmond, The Rev. Katherine		
*Reed, The Rev. Mary		
*Rhodes, The Rev. Dr. Steve		
Riley, The Rev. Kathy		<i>Kathy Riley</i>
*Roberts, The Rev. F. Morgan		
Robinson, The Rev. Dr. Jack H		<i>Jack Hughes Robinson</i>
Rouse, The Rev. Erin		<i>Excused</i>

ROLL:
 The roll was formed as follows:
 MINISTER ATTENDANCE
 P = present; EX = absent;
 A w/o EX = absent without excuse;
 HR = honorably retired

Minister Sign-In Sheets
 Called Meeting
 May 1, 2018
 First Presbyterian Church
 Winchester

89

*Rucker, The Rev. Dr. Jim Sr.		
Rucker, The Rev. Pamela C.		
Sanders, The Rev. Dr. Stephen A.		
Schmidt, The Rev. Tammy		
Scott, The Rev. Dr. Geary Neal		
*Sevier, The Rev. Dr. Melissa		
*Shaffer, The Rev. Robert		
Shrauner, The Rev. Ryan		
Silence, The Rev. Jay T.		
*Smith, The Rev. Joanne		
*Spickler, The Rev. Harry		
Stamper, The Rev. Janice		
*Stanley, The Rev. Donald		
*Steiner, The Rev. Betsy		
*Stewart, The Rev. Jim		
*Stricklin, The Rev. Dr. Ernest		

ROLL:

The roll was formed as follows:

MINISTER ATTENDANCE

P = present; EX = absent;

A w/o EX = absent without excuse;

HR = honorably retired

Minister Sign-In Sheets

Called Meeting

May 1, 2018

First Presbyterian Church

Winchester

90

*Tarter, The Rev. Dr. Rollin		
Thompson, The Rev. Gene		
Thro, The Rev. Julie Urback		
Utt, The Rev. Jerry L. II		just
*Vanzant, The Rev. William		
Ward, The Rev. Michael		present
*Warren, The Rev. Susan		McL W-d
Weese, The Rev. Mary Seeger		
*Weis, The Rev. Richard		Richard D. Weis
White, The Rev. John C.		John C. White
*Wilhelm, The Rev. Jack		
Williams, The Rev. Susan		Susan Williams
*Woodring, The Rev. James		

Commissioned Ruling Elders
May 1, 2018
First Presbyterian Church, Winchester

Bainum, Barry

Brown, Richard

Burns, Gayle

Excused

Burns, Tom

excused

Dougans, James

James Dougans

England, Robert

Estes, Dewayne

Grooms, Leslie

Lee, Arlie

McIntyre, Pat

Reed, Bill

William B. Reed

Wilson, Sarah

Non-Presbyterian Supply

House, Brian

Schneider, Stewart

Steele, Brian

Present

Elder Commissioners
Called Meeting
May 1, 2018
First Presbyterian Church, Winchester

Ashland, First

Ashland, Normal

Augusta

Augusta, Sharon

Bellefonte, Community

Beattyville, McGuire Mem.

Berea, Whites Memorial

Blackey, Doermann Mem.

Booneville, First

Buckhorn, Buckhorn Lake

Canada, Highland

Carlisle

Catlettsburg, First

Cawood

Corbin

Cow Creek

Cynthiana

Danville

Roy Stein

Charles W. Williams

Jean Harney
Rita Bloom
Peggy Tudor

Elder Commissioners

93

Called Meeting

May 1, 2018

First Presbyterian Church, Winchester

Darfork, Hull Memorial

Dry Hill, Anna C. Brush Mem.

Ezel, United

Flemingsburg, First

Frenchburg, United

Georgetown, First

Grayson, Bayless Memorial

Greenup

Harlan, First

Harrodsburg, United

Hazard, First

Lois M. M. M.

Jerry G. G.

Indian Creek

Isom

Jackson, Guerrant Memorial

Lancaster, First

Lawrenceburg, First

Lexington, Beaumont

Mike Ricci

[Handwritten signature]

Elder Commissioners

94

Called Meeting

May 1, 2018

First Presbyterian Church, Winchester

Lexington, Bethel

Lexington, Chapel Hill

Lexington, Eastminster

Lexington, First

Jane Osborn

Lexington, Hunter

Anne Chesnut
Cathy Martin

Lexington, Lex. Korean

Lexington, Maxwell Street

Lexington, Meadowthorpe

Lexington, Mt. Horeb

Lexington, Second

Karen S. May

Lexington, Walnut Hill

Elder Commissioners
Called Meeting
May 1, 2018
First Presbyterian Church, Winchester

London, First

Manchester

Mays Lick

Maysville, First

McAfee, New Providence

Middlesboro, First

excused

Midway

Millersburg, First

Morehead, Faith

Diehl Ackerman

Mt. Sterling, First

Paint Lick, Old Paint Lick

Paris, First

Rogus Bards

Paris, Hopewell

Perryville

_____Excused_____

Pikeville, First

Pineville, First

Prestonsburg, First

Richmond, First

Elder Commissioners

96

Called Meeting

May 1, 2018

First Presbyterian Church, Winchester

Somerset, First

Somerset, Pisgah

Stanford

Versailles

Versailles, Pisgah

Jennifer Chandler

Versailles, Troy

Delma Mills

Washington

Whitesburg, Graham Memorial

Wilmore

Winchester, First

Winchester, Salem

Doris Stanley

**Coordinating Commission
Ruling Elders
May 1, 2018
First Presbyterian Church, Winchester**

Busroe, Katie



Hoskins, David; Moderator

Nell Line

Line, Nell; PW

Woodford, Catesby; Treasurer



Presbytery of Transylvania
Visitors
May 1, 2018
First Presbyterian Church, Winchester

Print Your Name

Robert Justus
Linda Cranford

Business Manager
Sacred Presb

Proposed Docket
Presbytery of Transylvania
Called Meeting
May 1, 2018
First Presbyterian Church, Winchester

5:00 PM General Registration

5:30 PM Call to Order

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. Declaration of Quorum | David Hoskins, Moderator |
| 2. Presentation of Docket | Jerry L. Utt, II, Stated Clerk |
| 3. Worship | Stated Clerk |
| 4. Report of Closing/Dismissal Commission | (See Bulletin) |
| 5. Adjourn and Closing Prayer | Moderator |

Worship Bulletin

OPENING PRAYER (UNISON)

Many: You alone are Lord, Almighty God,
 and all that we have and are that is good comes from you.
 You have called each of us here.
 You have blessed us so
 that we might be a blessing to others in the world.
 Help us to set aside our selfish desires
 so that the church's witness may be for your glory.
 Grant us your Spirit
 to guide us through the future as you have the past.
 Help us listen for your Word of Life
 among all the words that we will speak here today.
 And may your will be done.
 We offer ourselves to your service at this time,
 in this place,
 for your glory,
 through Christ our Lord.
 Amen.

OPENING HYMN: #210 "Our God, Our Help in Ages Past"

CALL TO CONFESSION

CONFESSION OF SIN (UNISON)

Many: Merciful God,
 in your gracious presence we confess our sin,
 and the sin of our church.
 Although Christ is among us as our peace,
 we are a people divided against ourselves,
 as we cling to the values of a broken world.
 The fears and jealousies that we harbor
 set Christian against Christian.
 We abuse your good gifts of imagination and freedom,
 your gifts of intellect and reason,
 and have turned them into bonds of oppression.
 Lord, have mercy upon us;
 heal and forgive us.
 (Silent Confession)
 Set us free to serve you in the world
 as agents of your reconciling love in Jesus Christ.
 Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE READING: Romans 12:1-18

SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah 65:17-24

SERMON

DECISION AGENDA: Report of Church Closing/Dismissal Commission

PASTORAL PRAYER

THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

PASSING THE PEACE

CLOSING HYMN: #560 “We Plow the Fields and Scatter”

MOTION TO ADJOURN

BENEDICTION

Bulletin Notes:

Liurgies for today's service taken from *Book of Common Worship* and *Scriptures for Times of Conflict*, a resource of the Office of Theology and Worship.

Church Closings and Dismissals Commission
Report to Presbytery
May 1, 2018

The Church Closings/Dismissals Commission moves that the Presbytery of Transylvania dismiss the First Presbyterian Church, Catlettsburg, to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church as outlined in the attached Dismissal Agreement. The First Presbyterian Church, Catlettsburg, has requested dismissal from the PCUSA to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Over several years, the former Commission on Ministry, an administrative commission, and the Church Closings/Dismissals Commission, have all worked with the church on the various issues involved in dismissing the church. Throughout this process, the church has continued to pay per capita and honor its commitments to the PCUSA.

The Church Closings/Dismissals Commission moves that the Presbytery of Transylvania concur with the request of the congregation and session of the Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church to dissolve the church; that the Administration Commission/Trustees be charged with the financial and physical maintenance and upkeep of the property; that the Coordinating Commission, working with the Church Revitalization and Development Ministry, study and propose uses for the building and grounds, reporting progress at each presbytery meeting; and that the final worship service of the Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church be on Sunday, May 20, 2018, at 11 AM.

AGREEMENT OF DISMISSAL

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS the parties listed below do enter into this **AGREEMENT OF DISMISSAL**.

WITNESSETH the party of the first part, First Presbyterian Church, an Association in Catlettsburg, Kentucky and the parties of the second part, Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA), Synod of the Living Waters and the Transylvania Presbytery of Kentucky and all acts being confirmed by the respective representatives with attached signatures below do hereby enter into this **AGREEMENT OF DISMISSAL** this ____1st__ day of ____May_____, 2018.

The party of the first part having requested, pursuant to the Book of Order, to be dismissed from the PCUSA and its respective subdivisions and the parties of the second part, being represented by a Closing Commission from the Transylvania Presbytery, have agreed to the following terms and conditions for the dismissal of the First Presbyterian Church, Catlettsburg to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

These terms and conditions of the **AGREEMENT OF DISMISSAL** shall be recorded in the Boyd County Court Clerk's Office in the Miscellaneous Book.

This Agreement of Dismissal will be referenced in a Deed setting out the terms, conditions, recitals and stipulations that will affect various claims and interests of property located in Catlettsburg, Boyd County, Kentucky which is the place of worship for the party of the first part.

The parties are aware there is potential litigation over the ownership rights and

interests of the real and personal property. In conformity with the Book of Order, and in an effort to avoid prolonged litigation, the parties of the first part and the parties of the second part do hereby agree to the following terms, conditions, recitals and stipulations.

1. The party of the first part have voted overwhelmingly to be dismissed from the parties of the second part to Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church has confirmed with both parties they are willing and have accepted the party of the first part into the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

2. The parties of the second part being PCUSA, the Synod of Living Waters and the Transylvania Presbytery will sign and execute all deeds tendered to them for the purpose of extinguishing any and all claims which they may have and quitclaim all interest to the real property which is the subject of this agreement upon fulfillment of the terms set forth herein.

3. The total consideration for the parties of the second part quitclaiming all interest they may have to real property occupied by the party of the first part shall be as follows: The party of the first part, shall, for a period not to exceed ten (10) years but be no less than five (5) years, pay to the parties of the second part fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000.00) in no less than one-thousand five-hundred dollar (\$1,500.00) increments for the ten (10) year period. Upon the fifth anniversary date of the signing and execution of this document, if so desired by the party of the first part, the party of the first part may pay the balance which is owed of the fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000.00), complying with and satisfying all the provisions of this paragraph. This provision is to be considered a lease purchase for the interest the parties of the second part have in land which is the current place of worship for the party of the first part.

4. The party of the second part shall have a right of reversion to the party of the first part for a period of ten (10) years which is inclusive of that term of years which is stated in the

previous numerical paragraph three (3). The right of transfer shall terminate on the ten (10) year anniversary date of the signing and execution of this document, so long as all terms set forth herein have been met.

5. The right of reversion will only inure to the benefit of the parties of the second part in the event the Evangelical Presbyterian Church dismisses the party of the first part, without the party of the first part going into and being accepted by another reformed denomination. If the Evangelical Presbyterian Church releases the party of the first part to another reformed denomination then no reversion would occur.

6. The party of the first part shall obtain liability insurance in an amount sufficient to indemnify and hold harmless the parties of the second part. Any insurance obtained, indemnifying and holding harmless the parties of the second part, shall only be for the purposes of liability. The party of the first part will obtain insurance for property damage and destruction due to fire loss or other catastrophic event. The party of the first part shall be the sole recipient and beneficiary of any and all proceeds of this policy. This paragraph is only to be in affect so long as the parties of the second part have not been fully paid the fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000.00) due from the party of the first part. Upon the payment in full of the fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000.00), the party of the first part has no obligation to obtain insurance listing the parties of the second part as additional insureds.

7. Any improvements to the subject property, would be included and transferred to the parties of the second part in the event of a reversion within the ten (10) year period. The parties of the second part will agree to sign any and all documents which are necessary for the purpose of collateralizing the property within the ten (10) year period. The party of the second part shall not be responsible for any debt or expenses related to said collateralization, except to

the extent the property would stand as collateral and security for any indebtedness, loan or mortgage on said property. The remaining balance of the monies owed the parties of the second part under this agreement shall act as a superior claim to any further collateralization and shall not be subrogated to such.

8. Upon the tenth (10th) anniversary of the signing and execution of this document, and upon the fulfillment of all terms contained herein, the right of reversion would cease to exist and the parties of the second part would have no claim whatsoever, to the realty or the improvements thereon. Further, beginning on the date of the signing and execution of this agreement, the parties of the second part will have no claim to any personalty, of any kind and nature, including but not limited too all bank accounts, vehicles, moveable or intangible property, which are in the name of the party of the first part.

This agreement and the provisions contained herein shall apply to, bind, and inure to the benefit to all successors, legal representatives and assigns.

This is the full and exclusive agreement of the First Presbyterian Church, Catlettsburg, the party of the first part and PCUSA, the Synod of Living Waters and the Transylvania Presbytery, the parties of the second part. The individuals as Trustees and Elders on behalf of the party of the first part have signed solely in their capacity as the representatives of First Presbyterian Church, Catlettsburg. Further, the signatures on behalf of the Transylvania Presbytery, the Synod of the Living Waters and PCUSA are attached and affixed hereto, by persons in their representative capacity as the Board of Trustees with the authority to bind the parties of the second part.

This agreement represents the entire agreement between the parties. This agreement may not be changed, amended, altered or modified except by written document and consent of all parties.

WITNESSETH this _____ day of _____, 2018.

CLERK
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, CATLETTSBURG
BY AND THROUGH THE TRUSTEES AND SESSION

CHAIR OF THE TRUSTEES
TRANSYLVANIA PRESBYTERY by on on behalf of itself and;
SYNOD OF THE LIVING WATERS
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH USA (PCUSA)

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY)

COUNTY OF FAYETTE)

The foregoing Agreement was subscribed, acknowledged and sworn to before me this _____ day of _____ 2018, by _____, as agent for The Presbytery of Transylvania (U.S.A.), Inc., a Kentucky corporation, for and on behalf of the corporation.

Notary Public
My commission expires: _____

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY)

COUNTY OF BOYD)

The foregoing Agreement was subscribed, acknowledged and sworn to before me this _____ day of _____, 2018, by _____.

Notary Public
My commission expires: _____

STATE OF KENTUCKY,

COUNTY OF BOYD,

I, _____, Clerk of the Court for the county aforesaid, do certify that on this day this Agreement of Dismissal was received and lodged in my office for record, and that I have truly recorded it, together with this and the foregoing certificate thereon endorsed, in Miscellaneous Book _____ at Page _____ in my said office.

Witness my hand this _____ day of _____, 2018.

CLERK, BOYD COUNTY

DEPUTY CLERK

Dear Commissioners of the Presbytery of Transylvania:

At the request of the Chapel Hill Session and Congregation, one of the actions being considered at this called meeting of the Presbytery is the dissolution of the Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church in Lexington, KY. The leaders at Chapel Hill have not come to this decision lightly or quickly. The church has experienced significant declines in membership and worship attendance over the past 10-15 years. They have looked at their community, experimented with new programs and different ways of reaching out. The energy of the leaders and the congregation is at a low point. Finances are stressed and with a \$400,000 mortgage and building maintenance needs on the horizon, it has become an unsustainable situation. We believe their decision is a courageous one. Instead of holding on until the last dollar is spent and the final member leaves, they are living into a faith that speaks of resurrection.

In times like this, the innate desire of those around the Presbytery will be to ask, “Why?”. Why did this happen? It’s a natural question, and you may have others. The answers and reasons behind this decision are complex and multi-faceted and will take time to discern and, to be honest, are irrelevant in the face of a faithful group of people who have carefully and prayerfully considered their future and concluded that the ministry given to them has been accomplished. As a Presbytery, we may differ on whether this action is the right path for Chapel Hill Church and we all have the right to our own opinion about the matter. Yet the reality is, we trust those at the congregational level to advise us as to the best path forward for their church and the Presbytery.

The Chapel Hill congregation will gather on May 20th to celebrate the ministry and impact of their life together. Our hope is that sister churches across the Presbytery will lift them up in prayer that day. May 27th will be their final public worship service. While we are ending the public witness of the congregation on May 27, 2018, their legacy and impact will last for many generations.

For some, this action will seem sudden and there will be questions about what the Presbytery will do with the property. At this time, we are looking at various options but have not settled on anything. We intend to proceed deliberatively. We understand that if the property is sold, we will be giving up a prime space for future ministry. Once we have done the work and considered the options, the Coordinating Commission and Trustees will bring a recommendation to the Presbytery. We hope to have an update at the August meeting.

It would be appropriate at this meeting if a motion were made to examine the factors and conditions leading to the closure of Chapel Hill and bring findings to a future Presbytery meeting for discussion and consideration. We can learn from the life and ministry of this church and in the process, strengthen our common mission. It would be appropriate that any such motion be referred to the Revitalization and Development Ministry or to a special task force appointed to accomplish this task.

Remember to pray for the Chapel Hill congregation as the closing date approaches.

In Christ,

Philip Lotspeich
General Presbyter

Jerry Utt
Stated Clerk