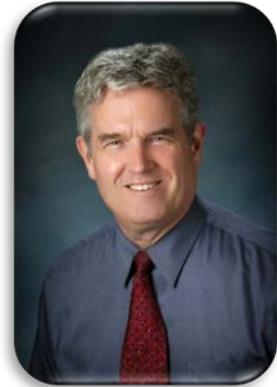

REPORT OF THE STATED CLERK

37th General Assembly

“I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now” (Philippians 1.3-4).

Paul’s words to his brothers and sisters in Christ in Philippi are constantly on my mind as I think of the leaders and members of the EPC. I’m grateful for the opportunity to serve our Lord Jesus in this distinctive and challenging role as Stated Clerk. This is truly a “never a dull moment” ministry as we continue to develop as a denomination of more than 600 churches and face new and different opportunities and challenges. Please know how very grateful I am for your encouragement, support and prayers. I am often asked, “What is your church home?” My response is, “The 600 churches of the EPC is my church home.”



Jeff Jeremiah
Stated Clerk

Since 2009 we’ve been faithful to our mission “to carry out the Great Commission of Jesus as Presbyterian, Reformed, Evangelical and Missional congregations.” As we stay focused on that mission and aggressively pursue those opportunities He gives us to participate in the establishment of His kingdom reign in this country and throughout the world, we can expect great things to happen for Christ and His kingdom in the months ahead!

Since 2016 my role as Stated Clerk has focused on three general areas:

1. Promoting the EPC as a mission and vision-driven denomination of churches.
2. Protecting the EPC in the face of increasing cultural and government opposition to biblical Christianity.
3. Providing for the promotion and protection of the EPC.

Promoting the EPC

It’s exciting to see evidence the Lord is at work as we act on our mission and vision, especially in the four strategic initiatives that are embedded in our vision. More thorough reports are provided in other parts of this Handbook and will be presented at our meeting. The following are brief comments on each.

Global movement – In 2016 we entered into a fraternal relationship with the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico (INPM). We will partner in church planting efforts in Hispanic communities in the US and in northern Mexico. Challenges in meeting immigration regulations have not been a surprise to us. Lake Forest-Huntersville, NC (Mike Moses, lead pastor) is leading the way in helping us navigate through this matter.

As soon as the immigration issue is resolved and as funding becomes available, at least two presbyteries are ready to launch Hispanic church plants led by an INPM pastor.

Church planting – Led by Tom Ricks, the Church Planting Team (CPT) is spearheading our drive to become a “church planting culture.” The role of the CPT is to support and resource the planting efforts of our presbyteries and churches. In 2016 Tom reported that we had 32 church plants across the EPC. Since then two of those have become particular (full) members of the EPC. In 2017 we have 36 church plants, with two more in the final planning for launch. This means that church plants are 5.9% of our churches.

Church revitalization – Led by Ken Priddy, the Go Center Team continues to offer revitalization help to churches that have said, “Enough!” to plateaued or declining church life. Over 200 of our churches have been exposed to presentations at the presbytery or local church level, with more than 70 “following through by taking the next steps in their pursuit of church vitality and growth. The 2016 and 2017 Bart Hess Award winners are “turn-around churches.”

Effective biblical leadership – Establishing a “leadership development culture” is much broader than the other initiatives and therefore includes more elements. The Interim Committee on Ministerial Education (ICME) continues its work developing the practical experience and character development components in addition to the academic requirements for ordination. Our partnership with the Coalition for Christian Outreach (CCO) is becoming substantive. More than 60 EPC churches are in conversation with CCO about bringing on a CCO staff member. Under Bill Enns and Bob Hopper’s leadership, in the past year more than 40 EPC ministers received first-time Transitional Pastor training. The Women’s Resource Council has developed excellent discipleship and leadership resources that are available on their web page.

Protecting the EPC

- A. **Legal protection of EPC churches**. The unexpected election of Donald Trump as President has slowed (for now) the federal government’s assault on religious liberties in the US. The possibility of the Trump Administration advancing the protection of religious liberties was confirmed by his May 4 “Presidential Executive Order Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty.” The order primarily addressed two issues. First, it instructed the Internal Revenue Service to “not take any adverse action against any individual, house of worship, or other religious organization” that endorse or oppose candidates from the pulpit, which is currently outlawed by a provision typically referred to as the Johnson Amendment. Second, it instructed the Departments of Treasury, Labor, and Health and Human Services to consider amending regulations in the Affordable Care Act that require most employers to cover contraception in employee insurance plans. A number of religious non-profit organizations have been litigating their objections to this requirement. The EPC has joined amicus curiae in support of those organizations. Responses to the Executive

Order from evangelical Christian leaders have been mixed. While acknowledged it's a good first step to securing religious freedom, the Executive Order leaves many issues unsolved, including religious objections to same sex marriage.

As we keep an eye on the federal government, we continue to be vigilant in tracking potentially threatening developments at the state and local level. Of concern, here is "regulations" or "guidelines" that a state or local government release which threaten our First Amendment freedoms. We also are aware of the work of the Freedom from Religion Foundation, an atheist group which continues to press for the deletion of the clergy housing allowance benefit from the US Tax Code.

We enjoy personal connections with lawyers of the Beckett Fund and Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF). These organizations are committed to defending religious liberty and do *pro bono* work for churches whose First Amendment rights are threatened. At the NLT's urging, these relationships were established so that in the event that an EPC church faced a lawsuit we would not "cold call" these groups asking for help.

- B. **Andrew Brunson** – May 7 marked the seventh month of Andrew's incarceration in Izmir, Turkey. Thanks, in large part to the work of Director of Communications Brian Smith, we release substantive updates on Andrew's status on a regular basis. Far beyond the EPC, we are aware that groups throughout the world are aware of and regularly praying for Andrew.

- C. **Persecution of Christians** – It is not possible to pray for Andrew Brunson and his family without considering the suffering of brothers and sisters in Christ globally. The plight of Christians in the Middle East, especially Coptic Christians in Egypt is constantly before us. If you're a member of the "Malay Breakthrough" prayer effort, you're aware of Pastor Raymond Koh. He was abducted in Malaysia in February. There has been no information about his status since he was kidnapped.

Providing for the EPC

In the last year, you have asked a number of great questions about the EPC budget. How is it funded? How much is it? What are the funds used for? I'd like to address those questions with you. Over 90% of the revenue for the annual budget of the EPC comes from our churches in the form of Per Member Asking (or PMA), which is \$23 per member. In 2016, if all of our churches gave 100% of their Per Member Ask, revenue for our budget would have been \$3.33 million. In 2016, we received \$2.26 million. That's 68% of the PMA potential.

Our proposed budget for FY 2018 beginning on July 1 is about \$2.3 million. In the budget, the second largest expense category is Travel: \$226,000 for Committee, GA staff and

Executive travel. Keeping travel costs down was a big factor in our move to Orlando. Reduced airfare costs have enabled us to also cover the hotel cost for all GA committee members. The EPC was not able to cover this cost of lodging when the office was in MI.

Personnel is the largest portion of the budget, and deserves some comment. In 2007, when we anticipated that a large number of churches could be coming to us soon, we promised we had no intention of building a bureaucracy at the national level of the EPC. In 2007 we had 182 churches, 8 presbyteries and 66,300 members. Our national office was staffed that year with the equivalent of 16.0 full-time employees (FTE). In 2017 we have 605 churches, 13 presbyteries and 144,800 members. Before we departed Livonia, MI, our national office was staffed with the equivalent of 20.0 FTE. At the end of this fiscal year the national office will be staffed with 17.3 FTE.

Year	Presbyteries	Churches	Membership	GA Staff (FTE)
2007	Eight	182	66,300	16.0
2016	Thirteen	602	150,042	20.0
2017 (year-end)	Fourteen*	610	151,000	17.3

*If the 2017 Assembly approves the division of Pacific Presbytery

Our guiding principle has been this: “At the national level our structure must be large enough to fulfill our mission and it must be small enough to not impede our mission.” This is one result of the conservative approach we’ve taken to staffing at the national level of the EPC.

Another result of this conservative approach: It opened the door for us to fund the strategic initiatives of global movement, church planting, church revitalization and effective biblical leadership.

From 2009-2013 our PMA revenue exceeded our expenses. By the end of 2013 we had an “undesignated reserve” or “surplus” of \$1.3 million. Just as we didn’t want to build a bureaucracy at the national level, we didn’t want to build a large reserve sitting unused either. The national leadership recommended and the 2014 General Assembly allowed drawing down this reserve by investing in vision-driven strategies. Four strategic opportunities were identified:

- 1) Global movement (which includes EPC World Outreach)
- 2) Church revitalization
- 3) Church planting
- 4) Effective biblical leadership

With the exception of EPC World Outreach and some leadership development activities, funding for these opportunities was not in the EPC budget. Since 2014 we've been reducing this undesignated reserve as we've invested in these strategies. Each of these strategies have been enthusiastically received across the denomination. As 2016 came to an end we've succeeded in drawing down our undesignated reserve to less than \$200,000. In light of three factors - diminished undesignated reserve, a revenue shortfall due to under-supporting churches, and strong support for the strategic initiatives across the EPC - the National Leadership Team decided to ask for your input. This was the reason for the focus groups at the 2016 General Assembly and the survey of EPC lead pastors in September.

Future General Assemblies

As we have grown in presbyteries and churches the number of EPC churches that can reasonably host our General Assembly has decreased substantially. Commissioners to this Assembly will be asked to give their input to a number of options we may need to consider as early as 2020.

Staff Transitions

This year we're saying goodbye to two staff members and welcoming a new one.



Ed McCallum has served as our first and only Assistant Stated Clerk since 1998. Across the nineteen years of service Ed has been the “go to guy” for all matters constitutional and procedural as the Office of the General Assembly has sought to ensure that our connectional life is consistent with Presbyterian polity as it is expressed in God’s Word. In addition, he has been a wise and trusted counsel to leaders in our presbyteries and local churches. Having had minimal interaction with the national office of the EPC when I became Stated Clerk in 2006, Ed was invaluable to me for his counsel and his institutional memory. Of course, if you have attended our annual meeting in June you know that Ed has led the General Assembly staff that year in and year out has done an outstanding job with this important event.



Bill Enns’ two-year term as Interim Executive Associate will come to an end June 30. He did a wonderful job “filling the gap” while I took a three-month sabbatical in 2015. His primary responsibility was overseeing the strategic initiatives, with special focus on church revitalization and effective biblical leadership. His lasting impact will be the Transitional Pastors training program he launched with Bob Hopper in the past year.



Jerry Iamurri has succeeded Ed McCallum as Assistant Stated Clerk. His first day in his new role was spent at the April 24 NLT meeting! He comes to the GA Office from Bethany EPC-Havertown, PA, where he had served as lead pastor since 2008. Under his leadership, the congregation transitioned to the EPC in 2012. He previously served Presbyterian congregations in Forest Grove, Philadelphia, and Ardmore, Pa.; El Paso, Texas; and Toms River, N.J. In addition to his ministry experience, Iamurri was an Assistant District Attorney for the Philadelphia (Pa.) District Attorney's Office from 1999 to 2003. As a trial and appellate attorney, he litigated more than 5,000 preliminary hearings and tried more than 500 felony cases. He also is a previous chairman of the EPC Ministerial Vocation Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey Jeremiah". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeffrey Jeremiah, Stated Clerk

June 2017

Churches Received, Dissolved, or Dismissed May 28, 2016 – May 22, 2017

CHURCHES RECEIVED:

Presbytery of the Alleghenies

Church	City	State	Received	From
Mill Creek United Presbyterian Church of Hookstown	Hookstown	PA	9/24/2016	PCUSA

Presbytery of the East

Church	City	State	Received	From
First Presbyterian Church of Williamson	Williamson	NY	9/24/2016	PCUSA

Presbytery of Florida

Church	City	State	Received	From
Providence Church	Brooksville	FL	8/28/2016	Organized

Presbytery of the Great Plains

Church	City	State	Received	From
First Presbyterian Church of Cushing	Cushing	OK	10/29/2016	PCUSA
Turner County Evangelical Presbyterian Church	Davis	SD	10/29/2016	PCUSA

Presbytery of the Gulf South

Church	City	State	Received	From
First Presbyterian Church of Ingram	Ingram	TX	3/4/2017	PCUSA

Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic

Church	City	State	Received	From
Bensalem Presbyterian Church	Eagle Springs	NC	8/28/2016	PCUSA
Elon Presbyterian Church	Madison Heights	VA	5/4/2017	PCUSA
Park Avenue Presbyterian Church	Rockingham	NC	6/24/2016	PCUSA
Pineland Presbyterian Church	Jacksonville	NC	11/6/2016	PCUSA

Presbytery of the Midwest

Church	City	State	Received	From
Cedarville United Presbyterian	Cedarville	OH	5/2017	Independency

Presbytery of the Pacific

Church	City	State	Received	From
Covenant Community Church	Vacaville	CA	6/2/2016	PCUSA

Presbytery of Rivers & Lakes

Church	City	State	Received	From
First United Presbyterian Church	Moline	IL	9/23/16	PCUSA
Romine Prairie Church	Kell	IL	9/23/16	PCUSA

Presbytery of the West

Church	City	State	Received	From
Panhandle Presbyterian Church	Guymon	OK	10/16/2017	PCUSA renounced

CHURCHES DISSOLVED OR DISMISSED:**Presbytery of the Gulf South**

Church	City	State	Received	Dismissed/ Dissolved
New Covenant Presbyterian Church	Natchez	MS	11/10/2002	4/23/2016

Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic

Church	City	State	Received	Dismissed/ Dissolved
Christ Covenant Community Church	Fredericksburg	VA	10/5/2008	4/30/2016

Presbytery of the Pacific

Church	City	State	Received	Dismissed/ Dissolved
Orondo Community Church	Orondo	WA	12/1/2014	4/15/2016

Presbytery of Rivers & Lakes

Church	City	State	Received	From
First Presbyterian Church	Pembine,	WI	10/29/2012	4/28/2017

Presbytery of the Southeast

Church	City	State	Received	Dismissed/ Dissolved
New Beginning EPC	Hebron	KY	5/1/1992	5/6/2016