

EAST CENTRAL PRESBYTERY
Meeting Minutes, January 29, 2025

Meeting at Highland Park Presbyterian Church in Dallas, Texas, during the National Gathering, the presbytery was called to order by moderator Robin Keesee at 12:25 p.m. on Wednesday, January 29. A quorum was not present (19 present, 24 required). He opened the meeting with prayer.

He called on various individuals to share about ministry experiences, including the following:

- Ezzat Shaker Elyas, Moderator of the Synod of the Nile, thanked the members of the presbytery for their support and reported there are 500 presbyterian churches, 1,500 evangelical churches total, in Egypt.
- Kelly Love and Bennie Good (Community West Church, Richmond, VA) spoke about Trail Life. ECO and Trail Life are the same age. Trail Life was formed as an alternative to Boy Scouts, honoring the legacy and maintaining the traditionally high standards. Trail Life is a Christ-centered, male only, organization. They use outdoor adventure to share faith with boys and male youth.
- Brett Deal, pastor at Eternity Church in Richmond, VA, shared about hearing often from people about the hurt they have endured within the Church. He shared that his friend Brian Lee has created resources for these hurting people. His website and conferences are called “Broken to Beloved”. Brett reminded everyone that pastors cannot do it all by themselves and Broken to Beloved offers many helpful resources.
- Rev Steve Hartman, Chair of the Ministry Partnership Team, introduced Marty O’Rourke, a validated minister ordained by ECP Sep 2024 in a service at Centreville PC. He is the Youth Ministry Director at The Falls Church Anglican in Falls Church, VA. Marty can provide pulpit fill and assist with student ministry.
- A gentleman without a nametag introduced Courtney Vereidi and announced she was moving into ECO.
- Rev Hartman spoke about the April approval of the MPT Manual. The changes within the manual were typed up a one-page cover sheet for ease of use. One of the changes to be discussed is the change in polity about MAGs being no longer required, so MPTs need to develop accountability structures. There is also an error in the 2022 MPT Manual about who can give voice and vote to assistant pastors. A third point of concern he mentioned was that in the new manual, MPTs need to be involved in all nondisclosure agreements (NDAs). He took questions from presbytery members. It was discovered that the manual and the cover letter were not sent to validated ministers. Robin said he would correct that.

- Austin House, missionary in southeast Asia, thanked the presbytery for their support. He is very encouraged about the way ECO touted the influence of the global Church at the National Gathering.
- Matthew Lee, joined by his wife Teresa and infant daughter Juliette, spoke about their work with Wycliffe Bible Translators. They are Covenant Partners at First Presbyterian Church in Harrisonburg, VA. Matthew continues to work for Wycliffe, but now stateside instead of in Cameroon. They are seeking more financial partners to continue their work of Bible translation. He shared the importance of having the Bible in your own language. He also explained the depth and breadth of those needed to do the translating. He is a lead for language translation technology for Wycliff. His presentation showed the technology aids for identifying and cataloging phonemes, the construction of alphabets, keyboards to use the alphabets to exploit the new alphabet.
- Dorothy Hood (and her husband, Brandon, a navy chaplain) gave an update on their church plant, Sojourner Church in Chesapeake. The meetings of the plant have moved out of the Hood's home into a coffee shop, rented one day a week, Sundays, for use by Sojourner. The shop's owner is a Christian with a shared mission and vision. They have their first launch family, and the children of the family were baptized on 11/10/24. They are not yet offering a worship service, but they do meet for Bible study, prayer, and singing. There is a children's program that Brandon oversees, and their oldest daughter runs with her friends. They held a caroling and cocoa outreach in December and hosted 34, mostly unchurched neighbors, on Christmas Eve. The Hood's children are thriving as leader-assistants in the children's gatherings. The discipleship and prayer groups are growing and multiplying. Dorothy shared her plant plan and budget and encouraged the churches to support them.
- Eric Beckman, Assoc Pr of Greenwich PC, Nokesville, VA, shared that they continue in their discernment process toward moving to ECO.
- Robin Keesee reminded everyone that the next meeting is in Huntington, WV, and closed the meeting with prayer at 1:30 p.m.