

EAST CENTRAL PRESBYTERY

Meeting Minutes, February 4, 2026

Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, during the National Gathering, Moderator Doug Nagel opened the meeting in prayer at 8:31 a.m. on Wednesday, February 4. No official business was conducted, but representatives shared updates from their teams, and then there was a time of sharing from churches. All congregations were represented except the following: Bethel Presbyterian Church, Staunton, VA, Christ Presbyterian Church, Richmond, VA, Church of the Living Hope, Chesapeake, VA, First Presbyterian Church, Dublin, VA, First Presbyterian Church, Catlettsburg, KY, Shepard Memorial Presbyterian Church, Stopover, KY, and Windy Cove Presbyterian Church, Millboro, VA.

Updates from Council:

- Clerk report—Dorothy Hood requested churches send in updates when they get a new clerk of Session.
- Treasurer’s report—Bill Smith had prepared a report that was distributed. There was a request for our presbytery to take up the practice of reverse tithing.
- Church Planting—Rob Burns shared that his team is looking at ways to do church planting well and shared some ways for churches to get involved.
- Ministry Partnership Team—Steve Hartman shared that MPT updated the policy of our presbytery since there was a lack of clarity in the Synod’s policy regarding congregations approving compensation for their installed pastors. East Central’s policy is that when a senior or associate pastor is initially called by a church, the congregation will be required to vote to approve the compensation package for the pastor. This is not required for assistant pastors since they are hired by the Session.
- PMOT—Keith shared that Mary Harrison and Wael Melek were recently ordained. Courtney Vereide and James Wilson are ready to receive a call. New ordination candidates are Rob Dowdy, Jessica Kirwan, and Paulina Contreras.

Presentations:

- Keith introduced Dr. Samuel, president of ETSC Seminary in Cairo, Egypt. Samuel gave greetings from his seminary and extended an invitation to partnership.
- Brian Stewart introduced Daniel Njeru Wachira, pastor of a PCEA church in Baltimore. His church is looking for a denomination body to join, and are interested in ECO.
- Doug Nagel presented ordination certificates to Mary Harrison and Wael Melek.

More updates from Council:

- Global Engagement & Mission: LJ Jaworski gave an update and invited us to join their team. They are working to reach out to every church in our presbytery to connect them with opportunities to engage with global missions.

- Nominations: No report.

This portion of the meeting adjourned at 9:02 a.m., and churches were invited to share updates.

- Sojourners Church: Dorothy and Brandon Hood shared updates of what God is doing in and through Sojourners and invited churches to partner with them.
- Centreville: Aaron McMillan shared that Courtney Vereide will soon be ordained.
- Community West: Ann and Bennie Good shared about some of the ways their church is serving through Operation Christmas Child, Free Kind, Uzbekistan with LJ, and Trail Life.
- Neelsville: Jeff Rickett shared his concern for caring for the immigrant communities. It was suggested that churches join in a conversation on Zoom to share ideas and pray together.
- Christian Arabic Church: Fakhri Yacoub shared that they had three baptisms recently. There are many difficulties with the changes in the immigration process. He asked for prayers of provision of jobs, housing, and schooling, for the affected families.
- People's Community: Rob Laukoter shared that his congregation participated in a test group in Cultivating Flourishing Congregations. They are focusing on becoming people who make disciples.
- Eternity: Brett Deal and Peter DuMont shared that they are celebrating having a large number of children who are thriving at their church, as well as the joy of teaching hermeneutics to their youth.
- Grace Covenant: Barbara Fleming shared Ezekiel 11:19 and asked us to pray for immigrants.
- Grace Covenant: Jesse Hill shared that two people in his congregation feel called to ministry and are beginning the ordination process. There are three more people who are beginning the CLP program. They are celebrating that so many are feeling called to serve.

Doug Nagel invited everyone to spend some time in prayer in small groups.

This portion of the meeting ended with the singing of the doxology at 9:58 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dorothy Hood
Stated Clerk