

Report by the Transformational Presbyter Nominating Committee

Procedure:

The Transformational Presbyter Nominating Committee (TPNC) was elected at the November 12 meeting of Blackhawk Presbytery. The members of that committee are Chrystal Abbott, Jeff Borgerson, John Gerlach, Jim McCrea, Susan Presley, Dale Prindiville and Deb Swets. Sara Dingman, the Synod Executive of the Synod of Lincoln Trails, has provided guidance to the group from the beginning. Our goal was to work on an accelerated process with the hope of having a name to present to the June 2, 2020 presbytery meeting and to have that person begin the position by August 1.

Sara informed the group that most General Presbyter Nominating Committees choose co-moderators, so the group elected Deb Swets and Jim McCrea to perform that function. Susan Presley volunteered to serve as secretary and the group gratefully accepted that offer.

The next task was to generate a Ministry Information Form (MIF). After analyzing examples from searches performed by similar presbyteries, the members discussed at length the qualities that would make for a successful transformational leader. Those ideas were then combined into an MIF that was posted on the denomination's Church Leadership Connection website and the Blackhawk Presbytery website. Next we created a brief advertisement designed to encourage interested readers to look up our MIF. The following ad appeared in *Presbyterians Today* and *Presbyterian Outlook* magazines as well as on those two websites:

TRANSFORMATIONAL PRESBYTER

"We've never done it that way before" may be the seven first words of hope in an era of change. Blackhawk Presbytery is looking for someone with vision for seeing beyond the ordinary to help guide our 73 congregations in sharing the love of Christ in more effective ways for the modern world. To learn more or apply, visit blackhawkpresbytery.org. Application deadline is March 12th.

All applications were directed to the Synod Office. And then the group waited to see what would happen.

Once the application deadline had passed, we discovered to our surprise that we had received only six applications. It wasn't clear if that was due to the job requirements, the wording of the ad and/or MIF, the tight deadline or some other factor. Two women and four men applied. In any case, Sara provided the committee each of the applications with the names blacked out to help the group focus on each individual's qualifications and to avoid any bias towards or away from any applicant our members might know.

Each member of the committee reviewed the applications in their separate homes and then we met for a Zoom meeting to discuss what we saw as the pros and cons of each application. (Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the vast majority of the group's meetings were held via Zoom. The silver lining in that particular tragic cloud was the number of driving hours saved by the committee members and the budget savings caused by not having to pay transportation, hotel and meal costs for candidates the group wished to interview.)

Interestingly, the persons chosen for both the highest and lowest scored Personal Information Forms (PIFs) were nearly unanimous. However, numbers two through five were rated in widely divergent ways. (That was seen by one of the co-moderators as being a reassuring sign of the diversity of our committee which, in turn, suggested that the group was well chosen as being truly representative of the presbytery as a whole.) After much discussion, the group came to an agreement on which were the top three candidates — one woman and two men. The TPNC then arranged to hold individual interviews with each of those candidates.

Following each interview, the committee discussed the pros and cons of what they heard. We discussed the possibility of selecting our top two candidates for a second interview; however, we unanimously agreed that the candidate whose PIF had previously stood out from

the rest continued to shine significantly above the others. Therefore, we decided to focus solely on him. At that point we sent “gentle rejection” letters to the first three candidates who weren’t chosen for interviews; we later sent similar letters to the other two non-chosen candidates as well.

The committee then developed a list of questions to pose to the references provided by that candidate and notes were carefully taken on the responses to those questions. In addition, each of those references was asked to name one or two other individuals we could contact as secondary references not named by the candidate. We received the candidate’s permission in advance to pursue this process, although he didn’t know specifically who we would call in the round of secondary references. The references all painted a uniformly glowing portrait of our candidate’s gifts and character.

The group paid for a psychiatric evaluation done on him by Leaderwise. Following that evaluation, we held a lengthy discussion with Dr. Mark Sundby concerning our candidate’s strengths and weaknesses. Continuing our desire to perform due diligence, the committee arranged for a second interview with our favored candidate — Eric Heinekamp. The interview confirmed the feelings of the committee that Eric was the correct choice.

Following that interview, the group unanimously voted two things:

1. That we recommend Eric Heinekamp to the Presbytery Council and to the full presbytery as our candidate to be the Transformational Candidate.
2. That we recommend to the Personnel Committee that Eric also remain as Stated Clerk with the proviso that a review be held after one year to be sure that having both positions combined is working for both Eric and the presbytery.

At that point, the co-moderators set up a meeting with Eric to negotiate the terms of his contract. The co-moderators held two such meetings, sandwiching a meeting with Anita Stuart-Steva and Mike Selburg of the Personnel Committee and Sara Dingman to determine how much flexibility we had in negotiating those terms. All in all, the TPNC met a total of 15 times — either as a gathering of the group as a whole or through representation by the leadership. The TPNC developed the following recommendations:

Recommendations:

1. That Eric Heinekamp be named Transformational Presbyterian/Stated Clerk to begin August 1, 2020. That the combined position be a single full-time job, not a full-time job plus an additional part-time position.
2. That the terms of his compensation be:

Effective Salary:	\$80,000
Pension and Medical (37%):	\$29,600
SECA (7.65%):	\$6,120
Professional Expenses:	\$12,000
Study Leave:	\$1,500
Medical (6%): (Eric is covered by wife’s job)	\$0.00
Total:	\$129,220
3. That consideration be given to changing the title from Transformational Presbyterian to Transformational General Presbyterian/Stated Clerk to avoid the current unfortunate acronym.
4. That the Transformational Presbyterian Nominating Committee remain an officially constituted group at least until the September presbytery meeting to serve as a support group for Eric as he transitions into this new position.

In Christ,
Jim McCrea and Deb Swets, co-moderators