

## **Report from the Stated Clerk Search Committee of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina**

**July 28, 2009**

**The Stated Clerk Search Committee nominates Elder William A. (Bert) Sigmon for the position of Part-time Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina with a renewable three-year term of office beginning 1 August 2009.**

The Search Committee, Ms. Mary V. Atkinson, Ms. Patricia Clark, Mrs. Pat Green, Rev. Calvin Lewers, Rev. Ike Kennerly, Rev. Dr. Don Scofield (Chair), and Rev. Otis Wilson, began our work after being elected by the Presbytery on April 29, 2009. After some initial discussions regarding process, we interviewed the current Stated Clerk, Rev. Dr. James Aydelotte, and the General Presbyter, Rev. Bobbi White. These interviews proved to be most helpful as we sent out a notice regarding the position opening to all ministers and elders on the Presbytery's email list and followed additional leads on other possible interested parties. We received inquiries from a number of highly qualified applicants for the position, reviewed the materials submitted by each one carefully, and offered interviews to a select few.

The following questions were asked to each candidate interviewed:

How would your spiritual journey impact what you would do in this position? Are there parts of your spiritual journey which will help you with your job?

How do you anticipate dealing with diverse congregations—diverse theologically, ethnically, and in size of congregation?

What are resources you bring to dealing with conflict?

Describe your experience in managing your work time.

What things do you do to create balance between work and personal, physical, emotional and spiritual health?

How would you manage the tension/balance between your commitment to the staff team and the Presbytery?

With regard to Presbytery meetings, are there things you would like to see done differently? How will you work this out?

How would you see your role at Presbytery meetings? What are the things you view as important?

How will you develop a relationship of trust with Presbytery?

Are you comfortable with the terms of the call for this position?

In addition, specific questions based on the candidates experience and current ministry setting were presented and questions from each candidate were addressed.

On the basis of these interviews (and further interviews of the nominee with the General Presbyter and members of the Presbytery Staff), careful discernment, and much prayer, we are very pleased to recommend that the Presbytery call Elder William A. (Bert) Sigmon for the position of Part-time Stated Clerk.

We are tremendously impressed by Bert’s faith and commitment to our Lord Jesus, his commitment to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), his experience as an attorney representing “the least of these” at Broughton Hospital, and his valuable service as a Commissioned Lay Pastor of this Presbytery. We appreciate Bert’s honest and humble demeanor and believe he will quickly become a valuable member of our Presbytery staff.

When asked what gifts and skills he will bring to this position, Bert wrote:

“I bring patience, persistence, attention to detail, advocacy, diplomacy, supportiveness and leadership as needed in team-work settings. . . . What I don’t bring to the position, which I think many people expect of a lawyer, is a bull-dog attitude. I don’t particularly like to fight but I will, zealously, when convicted of the rightness of a cause. I don’t find it necessary to grill people. I love to talk to them, about their lives, about their joys and troubles and accomplishments.”

And when asked how, in serving as Stated Clerk, he sees his relationship to Presbytery and Presbytery staff, Bert commented:

“I see the Stated Clerk position as a bridge between the people of the Presbytery and their staff. The Clerk has duties of care for everyone within the Presbytery including the staff. I believe the Clerk should be flexible, visible, neutral, meticulous, and a steady, calming influence.”

Our committee is confident that we will be blessed by the ministry of Bert Sigmon and enthusiastically nominates him to become the next Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina. We look forward to his gifted leadership and are confident that God has carefully prepared and is now lifting up Bert to faithfully serve our Presbytery family in this wonderful part of God’s Kingdom.

## **TERMS OF CALL**

### **Stated Clerk Position—15 hours per week**

Salary	\$19,750
FICA	1,511
Continuing Ed	1,000

**Total**                **\$22,261**

- \*        **Travel to be included in PWNC travel pool**
- \*\*       **Blackberry/Cell Phone provided**
- \*\*\*     **\$650 Stated Clerk Business Expense**

**Presbytery of Western North Carolina**  
**STATED CLERK**  
**Position Description**

**DEFINITION**

The Stated Clerk is an officer of the Presbytery who performs the duties and responsibilities as directed in the *Book of Order* and the *Handbook for Stated Clerks* of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and in this position description.

**ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Stated Clerk is accountable to the Presbytery through its Coordinating Council. The Stated Clerk shall work closely and cooperatively with the General Presbyter and other members of the Presbytery staff in support of Presbytery's mission. The Stated Clerk's performance shall be annually evaluated by a committee appointed by the Coordinating Council (normally the Personnel Committee).

**QUALIFICATIONS**

The Stated Clerk

- Is committed to the Lord Jesus Christ and confirms the constitutional vows taken at ordination (elder or minister);
- Has demonstrated the cooperative, flexible spirit of a team player;
- Has an in-depth knowledge of the connectional workings of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the requirements of its Constitution, and the provisions of the current edition of *Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised*;
- Generally has a university degree and good administrative experience;
- Has a creative, knowledgeable and positive approach to problem-solving;
- Has good written and verbal communication skills;
- Has demonstrated discretion with confidential information; and
- Is a person of integrity and humility, and a strong pastoral concern for all with a good sense of humor.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Fulfill the duties set forth in the *Book of Order*, especially those in the Form of Government and the Rules of Discipline.
2. Serve as the official correspondent for receiving and sending communications on behalf of the Presbytery.
3. Oversee the recording and editing of the minutes of all Presbytery meetings, and preserve all official minutes, statistics, records and rolls of Presbytery.
4. Serve as the constitutional advisor to the Presbytery, its committees and staff in offering interpretations of the *Book of Order* and *Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, particularly as the parliamentarian at Presbytery meetings.
5. Meet with and assist the following:
  - a. Coordinating Council,
  - b. Committee on Ministry,
  - c. Permanent Judicial Commission.
6. Meet with and assist the following (on an as needed/as available basis):
  - a. Sub-Committees of Committee on Ministry,
  - b. Committee on Preparation for Ministry.

7. Plan, with the Moderator and the General Presbyter, the meetings of Presbytery for approval by the Coordinating Council.
8. Support in an impartial manner all judicial proceedings, investigating committees, and administrative commissions of Presbytery..
9. Monitor and support, in cooperation with the General Presbyter, any legal matters involving Presbytery.
10. Prepare and conduct annual educational events for all Clerks of Session that involve a review of all Session/Congregation minutes
11. Attend staff meetings.

## **TERM OF OFFICE**

The Stated Clerk is elected by the Presbytery of Western North Carolina for a term of three years, and is eligible for re-election.

Approved by Council  
May 13, 2009

I was born on December 18, 1954, and was raised in Catawba County, North Carolina. I lived in or near the city of Hickory all my life prior to going away to college.

I was raised in the Baptist tradition, but I was deeply discontented with it by the time I was 14. When I went away to Louisburg Junior College in 1973, I did so almost exclusively for the purpose of escaping the church and my parents' influence. I didn't darken the door of any church for more than two years. Then in 1976, at age 21, I joined Laurinburg Presbyterian Church in Laurinburg, North Carolina, after two successive summers as a counselor at Fayetteville Presbytery's "Camp Monroe." During the first of those summers I experienced what I have always believed was a true epiphany. The unspoken words, which I nevertheless heard with my heart, were "You and I can have our own relationship. It doesn't have to be exactly like anything anyone else has told you about before. Trust me." And I have ever since. From that day, Christ has always been as close to me as my next breath.

Shortly after my epiphany I began to confront major life issues, and especially the question of what I should do with my life. Vocational testing led to the suggestion that I should pursue a career either as a minister or as a lawyer. For the first time in my life, I submitted a critical life choice to God and pledged to do whatever he called me to do. In 1977 He resolved the question for me by calling me to complete my college education, and thereafter to enter Campbell's law school. During those years, I supported myself and helped to pay for my college and law school education, in part, by serving as the adult choir director at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Fayetteville. I graduated from law school in May of 1983, passed the bar exam in August of that year, and returned to Hickory to live and work.

By the time I had been in private practice for 15 years I was exhausted and disillusioned. I never regretted going into the practice because I always felt that it was truly what God had called me to do. But I continued to feel that there was something else God wanted me to do. During those 15 years I became deeply involved in my church (Northminster in Hickory), and served two terms as an elder and two interims as a choir director. I also became involved in Habitat for Humanity and served on the local board for six years, one of those as president. Through it all I never lost sight of the fact that my other option, to pursue ministry in some form, had not been closed to me when the door to law school had been opened.

I briefly considered the possibility of going to seminary, but I had two children whose college years were quickly approaching and that was the higher priority. Then, to my surprise, I was called to a very different and immeasurably fulfilling niche in my legal career: in 2001 I was hired by the State to represent mentally ill people who are involved in involuntary commitment proceedings at Broughton Hospital in Morganton. I never imagined that this kind of work would bring me joy, but it has. In this role I learn more about myself and about the human condition every day.

With the benefit of hindsight I believe now that God led me to pursue commissioned lay pastorship as a natural outlet for talents he has entrusted to me. I graduated from the School of the Laity in 2003 and served the Bostic and Duncan's Creek Churches for six and a half years in that capacity.

I have felt numerous callings in my life, the most recent being the challenge to weave together my training and experiences in law and ministry in service to the larger church as the Stated Clerk. God continues to amaze and humble me with opportunities and blessings like these. To God be the glory!

I believe in one God, Creator and Sustainer of all life, the origin of all that we human beings see, hear, feel and perceive.

I believe that God has created human life for many purposes and has put many of those purposes just beyond the reach of human perception in a place where we must strive to find and understand them through faith, in lieu of revelation to or confirmation by our physical senses. He has cultivated curious, seeking, sojourning hearts in us and has offered us truth to be searched for, and new truth to be continually challenged and refreshed by. God has offered us the opportunity for relationship with Him and has allowed us freely to choose whether to pursue deeper, more intimate knowledge of Him, to keep Him at a comfortable distance from our lives, or to deny His existence altogether. Yet His constant desire is for us to share close communion with Him.

Above all else, God is the author of love, and He has imbued all of Creation with love. He has installed it in the hearts of human beings, and in so doing has left an indelible imprint on us – it is the mark by which He claims us. The love of God inspires all of the good that human beings produce and achieve.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God made man, fully human and fully God, the vessel of God's love in flesh, sent to us to reveal to our senses what God's love looks, sounds and feels like and how it believes and behaves in human form. Christ was sent to us to instruct our hearts as to how we should strive to experience and express God's love for us and to share it with others. He was sent to us to introduce us to the Holy Spirit and to invite us into closer communion with God. I believe that Christ is new in every age and in every individual Christian. He is, was and always will be the essence of God, one with God, our bridge to God.

I believe in the Holy Spirit as the presence of God within each individual human heart, God's envoy reaching directly into each individual life, offering our spirits the assurance, moment to moment, that we are not alone, that we are never beyond God's reach. The Holy Spirit is God whispering to us when we are willing to be still enough to hear, guiding us when we are willing to be led, and praying for us when we are too weak to pray.

I believe that the Bible contains the infallible word of God as recorded by the fallible hand of man. The record of God's returning love, interwoven with the cycle of faith and apostasy of his people, draws a richly detailed map of the spirit journey of an entire nation. When illuminated with the light of the New Covenant in Christ, God's recorded Word is authoritative in one respect above all others: it is a call to intimate relationship with God, and a guide for all who reverently pursue the deepening of that intimacy.

I believe in the Church as the essential bonding together of faithful people into the body of Christ on Earth. I take very seriously the promise that Christ is present wherever two or more who believe are together, and I don't believe that the importance of this promise can be overstated. This promise is simple, clear, and worthy of acceptance. It is no less important than the promise that we are forgiven of our sins and saved by Grace. When we can't feel worthy of forgiveness, when we have so isolated ourselves that we can't sense the Holy Spirit at work within us, we can come together with other believers. We can join our hearts in worship, participate in the Sacraments through which we experience true communion with others and with Christ, and can claim the promise of Christ's presence in our midst as the Church. In this way, we can be instrumental in the daily salvation of our brothers and sisters in Christ, and in the sharing and spreading of the gospel and the miracle and hope of Christ in the world.

**INSTALLATION OF THE STATED CLERK**

Sentences of Scripture

Call to Discipleship

Questions to the Stated Clerk-elect:

- Who is your Lord and Saviour?
- Will you be Christ's faithful disciple, obeying his Word and showing his love?
- Do you welcome the responsibility of being our Stated Clerk because you are determined to follow the Lord Jesus, to love our neighbors, and to work for the reconciling of the world?
- Will you serve our Presbytery with energy, intelligence, imagination and love, relying on God's mercy and rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit?

Questions to the Presbytery:

- Do you, commissioners of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina, confirm the call of God to our brother Bert Sigmon as our Stated Clerk in the service of Jesus Christ? **[We do.]**
- Will you support and encourage him in this ministry? **[We will.]**

Prayer

[Various petitions, concluding in unison:]

**Almighty God, in Jesus Christ you called disciples and, by the Holy Spirit, made them one Church to serve you and your people. Bless your servant Bert in his new ministry. Let your Spirit rule your Church, so that we may be joined in love and service to one Lord, Jesus Christ, who, having gone before us, is coming to meet us in the promised kingdom. Amen.**

Charge

Blessing