

Twenty First Stated Meeting of the Lowcountry Presbytery

April 27, 2021

**The Twenty First Stated Meeting of the Lowcountry Presbytery was held at 9:00 a.m., April 27, 2021 at First Scots Presbyterian Church in picturesque Beaufort, SC.**

- Worship Service 9am TE Alex Mark welcomed presbyters and led the presbyters then read Jeremiah 31:7 as the Call to Worship. After reciting the Lord's Prayer the congregation stood and sang Psalm 46, *A Mighty Fortress is Our God*. A responsive Confession of Sin from the Ten Commandments was followed by the Assurance of Pardon from Jeremiah 31:3. An offering was collected. TE Alex Mark preached a message from Ephesians 1:3-10 titled *Exulting in Our Election*. After the message, TE Mark prayed and then the congregation responsively recited Heidelberg Catechism Question #1. The congregation then sang stanzas 1&2 of *My Hope is Built*. Then TE Mark and TE Walton properly fenced the Lord's Table and we celebrated the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Following the Lord's Supper, the congregation sang stanzas 3&4 of *My Hope is Built* and then TE Mark pronounced the Benediction.
- Call to Order The Twenty First Stated Meeting of the Lowcountry Presbytery was called to order by the moderator TE JP Sibley at 10:14am by prayer.
- Quorum The moderator asked if there was a quorum.  
The recording clerk declared that there was a quorum present.
- Docket Approval **M/S/C:** that the docket published and printed on the website and electronically distributed to presbyters be approved as presented.
- Ministry Equipping Time *We heard a report from Chris Johnson of Lifeline Christian Services and Aaron Halbert of MTW gave a report of his ministry of church planting in Honduras.*
- Prayer Time 10:35am TE Ron Steel came and led the presbyters into a season of prayer. Following prayer they sung the *Doxology*.
- 11:00am BUSINESS TE JP Sibley called the presbyters back to order after the season of prayer to conduct the business of the presbytery.
- M/S/C:** Approval of the minutes from the 20th Lowcountry Presbytery as published on the website.
- The Moderator appointed a committee of thanks: TE Bill Harritt and TE John Schley.
- M/S/C:** to form a Commission to approve the minutes of the Executive Session of the Called Meeting of the Lowcountry Presbytery held on February 16, 2021. Members: TE Rob Hamby; TE Bill Harritt; RE Rich Wyly and RE Ron Woernle
- M/S/C:** to form a committee of the whole to review the minutes of the churches from 2020.

**Candidates &  
Credentials  
Committee:**

TE Alex Mark. First Scots Presbyterian Church, Beaufort  
[amark@firstscotsbeaufort.org]

TE Mark opened in prayer.

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Under Care Exam: Mr. Joel Brown. New City Fellowship, Orangeburg, SC.

**1. Testimony of Joel Brown**

I grew up in a Christian home, my church denomination was African Methodist Episcopal (AME). The summer of 1985, at the age of 5, my mother introduced me to Christ. Though I was saved, I didn't understand the gospel. I believed my salvation was based on works. I believed my sin was a result of a lack of good deeds. At the age of 24, I came to finally to the understanding the gospel. I came to the realization that I was sinful and the only thing that could help me was Jesus. Till this day it is only by the grace and mercy of God that I am here today.

**2. Sense of Call**

My sense of call came in Dec of 1997. During the Christmas break, I was watching a talk show where a man claimed to be delivered from homosexuality. The crowd that was listening to his testimony became greatly skeptical and begin to mock him. There was only person in the crowd who believed and defended him. That is when I heard the Holy Spirit speak to me. I remember the Lord telling me, "People don't know me." That is right then and there I knew I was called to preach the gospel so that people can come to know Christ. My call was confirmed by the steward and trustee of my church. I gave my trial sermon March 28<sup>th</sup>, 1998. The title of the sermon was "He is Unstoppable." For years I was trained up in ministry through the AME church. In 2004 was when I came to joined the PCA church.

TE Mark reported that Mr. Joel Brown has been a member of New City Fellowship for more than 6 months. Mr. Brown shared his testimony. Mr. Brown also shared about his sense of call.

**M/C:** The committee moves that in accordance with BCO 18-3 the examination of Joel Brown, who has completed the requirements of BCO 18-2, be sustained and that Joel Brown be added to the Lowcountry Presbytery's roll of Candidates for the Ministry.

**M/C:** The Candidates and Credentials Committee recommends the initiation of Mr. Joel Brown's internship at New City Fellowship in Orangeburg, SC.

The Moderator posed the questions of BCO18-3 to Mr. Joel Brown: Mr. Brown answered in the affirmative to these questions.

TE Sam Joyner then charged Mr. Joel Brown from Paul's words to Timothy and he then prayed for Mr. Brown's future ministry and service to Jesus Christ.

**Transfer of Ordination: TE Nick Batzig** (Christian Experience, views in theology, sacraments, and church government, BCO 13-6). Rev. Batzig is currently in the Tennessee Valley Presbytery and is being called to serve as Senior Pastor of Church Creek Presbyterian in Charleston, SC.

TE Alex Mark led the examination of TE Nick Batzig in the area of his Christian Experience.

TE Batzig shared his testimony & sense of call.

**M/C:** The committee moves that the examination of TE Nick Batzig in Christian Experience be arrested.

**TE Batzig** stated that he had no differences with the constitution of the PCA.

**M/C:** TE Alex Mark led the examination of TE Nick Batzig in the area of his views touching Theology.

The committee moves that the examinations of TE Nick Batzig on his views touching Theology be arrested.

**M/C:** TE Alex Mark led the examination of TE Nick Batzig in the area of his views touching Sacraments.

The committee moves that the examination of TE Nick Batzig on his views touching Sacraments be arrested.

**M/C:** TE Alex Mark led the examination of TE Nick Batzig in the area of his views touching Church Government.

The committee moves that the examination of TE Nick Batzig on his views touching Church Government be arrested.

TE Batzig was excused from the floor.

**M/C:** The committee moves that the examinations of TE Nick Batzig in Christian Experience, Views in Theology, Views in Sacraments, and View of Church Government be sustained.

**M/C:** The committee moves that the examinations for transfer of ordination for TE Nick Batzig in its entirety be approved.

**M/C:** The committee moves that TE Nick Batzig be received into membership in the Lowcountry Presbytery, pending official notification of his release from that Tennessee Valley Presbytery.

TE Batzig was asked to return to the floor.

The terms of the call was read by the Shepherding Committee.

**M/S/C:** to approve the terms of the call for TE Nick Batzig as presented by Church Creek.

The Moderator asked the Stated Clerk to study the issue of calls and how the presbytery will handle them in the future.

**M/S/C:** Motion to approve a Commission to install TE Nick Batzig with TE Michael Walters as the convener and empowering the moderator to appoint the remaining members of the commission consisting of 2 RE and TEs as a quorum.

TE Mark read from 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 and then prayed for the future ministry of TE Batzig.

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ORDER OF  
THE DAY:

TE Sibley prayed for the lunch and TE Mark gave instructions concerning lunch

TE Bill Harritt speaking for the Committee of Thanks read the following resolution of Thanks before the presbyters and before the wonderful volunteers of First Scots who ministered to the presbyters:

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*First Scots Presbyterian Church  
April 27, 2021*

*Whereas, the 2021 spring meeting of Lowcountry Presbytery met at First Scots Presbyterian Church in Beaufort SC, and;*

*Whereas, the brothers and fathers received a strong encouragement to rest in the love of the trinity that calls us to himself by his irresistible grace, and;*

*Whereas we were richly blessed by an extension of our prayer time as a great reminder of our desperate need to cling to and cry out to Christ, and*

*Whereas we all were delighted to praise the Lord through his work in building his church at First Scots and the church building itself being a gracious blessing of still having that new church smell as opposed to the COVID antibacterial smell we are all so accustomed to, and*

*Whereas, we were reminded by Rev Batzig of the great grace of our spouses and there is no man here who has not really really really really married up; and*

*Whereas, we give thanks to God for the work of Lifeline ministries as they care for the least of these, and*

*Whereas, we enjoyed a lunch provided by the servants of First Scots that fed us and met our needs physically to match the spiritual feeding we have had through the word, prayer and sacrament.*

*Therefore, be it resolved that Lowcountry Presbytery gives thanks to the Lord Jesus for his service to his people. And we give thanks to the servants here at First Scots who have been blessed to be a blessing.*

The resolution was accepted by common consent.

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Resumption of  
Business

At 12:55 TE Schley opened in prayer by the request of the moderator. .

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**Transfer of Ordination: TE Richard Downs** (Christian Experience, views in theology, sacraments, and church government, BCO 13-6). Rev. Downs is currently in the Southern New England Presbytery and is being called to serve as Interim Pastor of Grace Coastal Church. Please READ the attached Ministerial Review on TE Downs before presbytery.

TE Alex Mark led the examination of TE Rick Downs in the area of his Christian Experience.

TE Downs was asked to share his testimony and sense of call.

**M/C:** The committee moves that the examination of TE Rick Downs in Christian Experience be arrested.

TE Alex Mark asked TE Rick Downs if there had been any changes to any of his ordination vows of BCO 21-5. TE Rick Downs indicated that there were no changes to his ordination vows.

Rev. Downs recognizes the following differences from the Westminster Standards :

**Concerning the Westminster Standards position on Creation:**

*If anything, I would favor a framework view. I have preached on Genesis 1 and mentioned different views without advocating for one or the other. I think a good exegesis of the chapter would seek not to impose upon it questions it itself does not deign to answer. There are so many helpful things, one could say 'more important' things, to be gleaned from the creation account.*

**M/C:** The committee moves that TE Rick Downs' views on the "space of six day" be judged to be more than semantic, but "not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine" (BCO 21-4)

**Concerning the Westminster Standards' position on the Sabbath:**

*I have happily existed under the umbrella of the WCF and its Catechisms for nearly 40 years. At my ordination exam I took exceptions to the Puritan Sabbath expressed in WCF XXI-7, 8 and an exception to XIX-1, 2 wherein is implied, if not asserted, that the Ten Commandments were, in some fashion, in the possession of Adam. Any exception now would be less strenuous. I'm more inclined these days to acknowledge that the Confession is wiser than I.*

*I do understand the Ten Commandments to be essentially Mosaic and part, rightly speaking, of the Mosaic Covenant. That Joseph acknowledges, pre-Moses, the seventh commandment, and that the second table is replicated in the New Testament affirms that there is a transcendent moral law that bridges the covenants. Adam was likely aware of such, but it seems to me a stretch to say that he had the Ten Commandments. The complexity of Jesus' interactions with Jewish leaders on the Sabbath as well as the ease with which the church moved from the seventh day to the first as the Lord's Day speak to me of the Fourth Commandment being a little different from the others. I'm certainly inclined to embrace the wisdom of the Fourth Commandment, but I understand its moral force to be different from the other nine.*

*I am not a libertine on the Sabbath. I have encouraged students to avoid studying and workaholics to rest on Sunday. I take Sabbath observance in some fashion to be essential and an increasingly counter-cultural demonstration of*

*faith. I question moving public worship to Saturday night or other days in the week. I like the evening service and would like a Sunday bracketed by morning and evening worship. I puzzle over brothers and sisters who claim fealty to the confession but somehow justify shopping and going to restaurants.*

**M/C:** The committee moves that TE Rick Downs's views on the Sabbath be judged to be more than semantic, but "not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine" (BCO 21-4)

TE Alex Mark led the examination of TE Rick Downs in the area of his views touching Theology.

**M/C:** The committee moves that the examinations of TE Rick Downs on his views touching Theology be arrested.

TE Alex Mark led the examination of TE Rick Downs in the area of his views touching Sacraments.

**M/C:** The committee moves that the examination of TE Rick Downs on his views touching Sacraments be arrested.

TE Alex Mark led the examination of TE Rick Downs in the area of his views touching Church Government.

**Rev Downs also acknowledges the following difference from the PCA Book of Church Order:**

*I think that the office of deacon should not be gender-specific. Romans 16 indicates that Phoebe was a deaconess and 1 Timothy 3.11 seems best understood as describing female deacons. It seems to me that the gender-specific authority asserted in 1 Timothy 2.12 does not extend to the office of deacon. The BCO's vow that the congregation should honor the authority of officers (24.6) would best be limited to the office of elder. Deacons should be honored and encouraged, not obeyed in the same way elders are obeyed.*

*This being said, I think that the convictions held by many against female deacons should be honored. I do not seek to change the BCO and am content with the provision in it for deacon assistants of both genders.*

The committee acknowledges that such a position is contrary to the PCA Book of Church Order, and therefore this position may not be taught or practiced within the bounds of our presbytery.

**M/C:** The committee moves that the examination of TE Rick Downs on his views touching Church Government be arrested.

TE Downs was asked to leave the floor.

The committee moves that the examinations of TE Rick Downs in Christian Experience, Views in Theology, Views in Sacraments, and View of Church Government be sustained.

**M/S/C:** to divide the question.

**M/S/C:** The committee moves that the examinations of TE Rick Downs in Christian Experience be sustained.

**M/S/C:** The committee moves that the examinations of TE Rick Downs in Views in Theology be sustained.

**M/S/C:** The committee moves that the examinations of TE Rick Downs in Views in Sacraments be sustained.

**M/S/C:** The committee moves that the examinations of TE Rick Downs in View of Church Government be sustained.

**M/C:** The committee moves that the examination for transfer of ordination for TE Rick Downs in its entirety be approved and that he be entered on the rolls of Lowcountry Presbytery.

**M/C:** The committee moves that TE Rick Downs be received into membership in the Lowcountry Presbytery, pending official notification of his release from that Southern New England Presbytery.

TE Rick Downs was invited back to the floor of presbytery.

TE Alex Mark welcomed TE Rick Downs as a Teaching Elder of the Lowcountry Presbytery and extended the right hand of fellowship to him, after which he was asked to sign the ministerial obligation form per BCO 13-7.

TE Alex Mark led the presbytery in prayer for TE Rick Downs and his future ministry at Grace Coastal Church as their Stated Supply.

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**M/S/C:** Motion to table the discussion of the Motion from the Candidates and Credentials Committee until next presbytery.

TE Mark closed the report in prayer.

**MNA/MTW  
Committee**

Craig Bailey, Redeemer PCA, [craig@redeemer-charleston.org](mailto:craig@redeemer-charleston.org)

RE Wylly opened the report in prayer.

Brief report covering the Vision Mission Fund and church planting.

Vision Mission Fund deadline is (funding for RE & TE who have not gone a mission trip) April. So please get your applications in.

J.P. Sibley gave an update on New City Fellowship.

RE Wylly closed the report in prayer.

**Campus  
Ministries  
Committee**

Rob Hamby, Point Hope Presbyterian, [rob@pointhopepres.com](mailto:rob@pointhopepres.com)

TE Hamby opened the report in prayer.

- Update on the Ministry of RUF at the College of Charleston
- Update on the Work of the Committee in Identifying the Next RUF Minister for the College of Charleston
- Update on the Plan for RUF at the College of Charleston this Fall
- Report from Joel Brown – SC State and Claflin.

TE Hamby closed the report in prayer.

**Judicial  
Committee:**

TE Michael Walters. Church Creek PCA, Charleston [m.allenwalters@gmail.com].

No report

**Shepherding  
& Church  
Vitality  
Committee:**

TE Ron Steel, Chairman, Eastbridge PCA, Mt. Pleasant [ron.steel48@gmail.com].

TE Steel opened the report in prayer.

**Motion to take as omnibus: M/S/C:**

**Motion** to designate today's offering of \$132 from the worship service to be given to Lifeline Children's Services

**Motion:** That the Report of the Commission to install TE John Schley as Senior Pastor at Metro North held on January 31, 2021 be approved.

**Motion** (needs 2<sup>nd</sup>) that the presbytery approve the change of call status of TE Walton of First Scots from Assistant Pastor to Associate Pastor per the request of the congregation of First Scots Presbyterian Church on April 18, 2021 of Beaufort, SC.

**Motion:** that TE John Olson be designated Honorably Retired on the rolls of Low Country Presbytery per the Church Creek congregation's approval of the dissolution of the pastoral relationship effectively immediately. The presbytery wishes to express much thanks to God and appreciation for our brother's faithful labors for almost 20 years as an RE and 24 years as a TE. The entirety of his ministry as an RE and as a TE was with the Church Creek congregation. Additionally, because John and his wife Libby were stricken with COVID this past January and still suffer from its effects, we petition our heavenly Father to grant healing mercies to them both so that they may fully enjoy this season of much deserved rest.

**Motion:** "The Session of Eastbridge Church makes a motion to dissolve the call of Bill Harritt as Associate Pastor of Eastbridge Presbyterian Church, pending a congregational meeting which has been properly called for May 2nd, 2021." FYI, Bill has accepted a call from Southwood Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Huntsville, AL.

Omnibus Motion passed.

**M/S/C:** To approve Grace Coastal Church as having Stated Supply per BCO 22-5 and BCO 22-6. TE Rick Downs will serve as their Stated Supply Pastor.

TE Steel reported on the work of the Shepherding Committee with TE Danny Clark moving towards reconciliation. If any churches can assist the Clarks through their Deacon's fund that would be greatly appreciated.

The report of the Shepherding Committee was closed in prayer.



**Administrative  
Committee**  
10 minutes

**Important Information:**

- The mailing address for Lowcountry Presbytery is P.O. Box 31775, Charleston, SC 29417-1775. The website address is [www.lowcountrypresbytery.org](http://www.lowcountrypresbytery.org)
- Stated Clerk: RE Rich Wylly [statedclerk@lowcountrypresbytery.org](mailto:statedclerk@lowcountrypresbytery.org) 843-606-0572
- Treasurer: RE David Walters, Sr. [treasurer@lowcountrypresbytery.org](mailto:treasurer@lowcountrypresbytery.org) 843-297-2517
- Recording Clerk: TE Mark Turner [recordingclerk@lowcountrypresbytery.org](mailto:recordingclerk@lowcountrypresbytery.org) 843-224-9337
- Moderator: TE JP Sibley [jsibley@gmail.com](mailto:jsibley@gmail.com) 803-747-4935
- REMINDER: churches are asked to submit their annual statistical reports either via signed original or through the web to be received by the PCA Administrative Committee by February 15, 2021.

RE Rich Wylly opened in prayer and gave the Report of the Stated Clerk and the Treasurer:

**1. Report of Stated Clerk**

- Stated Clerk's report  
Presbytery minutes from 2020 were submitted to the PCA Admin Committee in February 2021.

**2. Nominations for G.A.:**

- Volunteers for Floor Clerks
- Permanent Committees (1 TE and 1 RE)
- Nominating Committee
- RPR Committee
- Commissioners
  - D.B. Cummings
- Committees:
  - Michael Bauer, Christ Church – Overtures Committee
  - Tobe Hester, Church Creek – Overture Committee
  - Nick Batzig, Church Creek – Admin Committee
  - David Walters, Jr., Church Creek – Admin Committee

**M/S/C:** Motion that we approve these names and empower the Stated Clerk and Moderator to approve any additional slots which can be filled before General Assembly.

**2. Report of the Treasurer**

- Treasurer's report  
RE David Walters, Sr. gave a brief Treasurer report.

**The Stated clerk reminded presbyters of Upcoming Stated Meetings:**

22<sup>nd</sup> – 7/24/2021 – Eastbridge Presbyterian

23<sup>rd</sup> – 11/4/2021 – Location needed

**M/S/C:** Motion to approve the excused of TE Craig Bailey due to sickness.

**M/S/C:** The Committee of a whole recommends that the 2020 minutes of Two Rivers Presbyterian, Redeemer Presbyterian, Hilton Head Presbyterian and Grace Coastal be approved with notations.

Commission to approve minutes will report next presbytery.  
RE Wylly closed the report in prayer.

Motion to adjourn. TE Sibley closed in prayer at 3:15pm.

**Appendixes:**

- A. Attendance Roster – Teaching Elders
- B. Attendance Roster – Ruling Elders
- C. Guest Attendance Roster

**Appendix A**

**Teaching Elder Attendance for April 27, 2021 Twenty First Stated Meeting of Lowcountry Presbytery:**

P=present; X=Excused; U=Unexcused; HR=Honorably Retired

Bailey, Craig	Redeemer Church, Charleston	X
Bauer, Michael	Christ Church, Charleston	U
Bowen, Chris	Hilton Head Church, Hilton Head	P
Brown, Christopher	LOB, Chaplain, MUSC, Charleston	X
Cole, Howard	Metro North Church, Goose Creek	U
Francis, Nathan	Church Planter, Cane Bay	P
Hamby, Rob	Church Planter, Cainhoy Peninsula	P
Harritt, Bill	Eastbridge Church, Mt. Pleasant	P
Joyner, Sam	Grace Coastal Church, Okatie	P
Konopa, Ben	HR, Eastbridge, Mt. Pleasant	HR
Mark, Alex	First Scots, Beaufort	P
McCutchen, William	Hilton Head Church, Hilton Head	P
Mullen, Jeremy	Two Rivers Presbyterian	P
Olson, John	Church Creek, Charleston	HR
Patrick, John Mark	Trinity Church, Orangeburg	P
Payne, Jon	Christ Church, Charleston	U
Schley, John	Metro North Church, Goose Creek	P
Schweitzer, Bill	MTW, England	ME
Sibley, J.P.	New City Fellowship Plant	P
Song, John	Redeemer Church, Charleston	P
Steel, Ron	Eastbridge Church, Mt. Pleasant	P
Stogner, Phil	MTW Scotland	ME
Turner, Mark	Oakbrook Church, Summerville	P
Walters, Michael	Church Creek, Charleston	P
Walton, Steve	First Scots, Beaufort	P
Watson, Thom	Without Call	U

**Appendix B**

**Ruling Elder Attendance for January 23, 2021 Twentieth Stated Meeting of Lowcountry Presbytery:**

Barry	Brinson	P	Two Rivers Presbyterian
Mark	Senn	P	First Scots Presbyterian
DB	Cummings	P	Church Creek
Ron	Woemle	P	First Scots Presbyterian
Ron	Hemingway	P	Eastbridge
Matt	Richardson	P	Grace Coastal
Rich	Wylly		Eastbridge Presbyterian

**Appendix C:**

**Guest Attendance for January 23, 2021 Twentieth Stated Meeting of Lowcountry Presbytery:**

Chris Johnson, Lifeline; Joel Brown, New City Fellowship. Cathy Leeke, Lifeline; TE Nick Batzig; TE Rick Downs; TE Aaron Halbert; Iglesia Presbyterian