Iowa Way Forward Task Force
Final Report
April 28, 2025

"The Merton Prayer"
for Discernment of God's Will

My Lord God, we have no idea where we are going.
We do not see the road ahead of us.
We cannot know for certain where it will end.
Nor do we really know ourselves,
and the fact that we think that we are following your will
does not mean that we are actually doing so.
But we believe that the desire to please you
does in fact please you.
And we hope we have that desire in all that we are doing.
We hope that we will never do anything apart from that desire.
And we know that if we do this
you will lead us by the right road,
though we may know nothing about it.
Therefore will we trust you always,
though we may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.
We will not fear, for you are ever with us,
and you will never leave us to face our perils alone.
Amen.

The Iowa Way Forward Task Force would like to express gratitude and appreciation for the work and words of those who participated in the original Iowa Conversations. Their faithful exploration and visioning of a new staffing structure for the presbyteries was a bold, necessary step forward when needed. We have learned and will continue to grow, in part, because of their work.

We also would like to acknowledge the gifts and faithful work of the shared presbyteries' staff, who have adapted and shown tremendous flexibility as this staffing model has evolved. Thank you to Ruling Elder Amgad Beblawi, Rev. Ian McMullen, Laura Schieber, Jeannie Stolee, Rev. Dr. Annika Lister Stroope, and Mickey Van Baale.

Lastly, we would like to thank Northminster Presbyterian Church in Ames for allowing us to meet as a Task Force in their building. Their hospitality was and is a blessing.

In Fall of 2019, the Presbyteries of Des Moines, North Central Iowa, and Prospect Hill approved a shared staffing model effective January 1, 2021. The vision for this model was to find a way to share ministry in flexible, permission-giving ways while supporting, encouraging, and respecting each other as independent presbyteries. After the first 3 years of this model operating, it was evaluated. On July 18, 2024, the leadership councils of each presbytery met for their joint gathering and anecdotally agreed

- The current staff is appreciated and doing good work,
- The current model is financially unsustainable and needs to be adjusted to a sustainable model, and
- The councils intend to honor the current staffing agreement through the end of 2025.

So in September and October 2024, the Leadership Councils of the Presbyteries of Des Moines, North Central Iowa, and Prospect Hill approved the formation of the Iowa Way Forward Task Force to include two people from each participating presbytery. The Task Force was commissioned to meet the following goal:

- By mid-year 2025, present a proposal for a new model, starting January 1, 2026, that includes:
    - staff structure including job descriptions and salaries,
    - proposing new presbytery boundaries if necessary, and
    - coordinate administrative contracts of tri-presbyteries (e.g. websites, copier).

After each presbytery named, appointed, and communicated with those individuals, the Task Force met promptly on Tuesday, December 10, 2024. Shortly after that initial meeting concerns about the amount of work that would be needed to accomplish that goal, with those inclusions, in that time frame, were expressed to all three leadership councils. The guidance offered to the Task Force was to prepare a proposal for the Leadership Councils on how to move forward and if that

proposal is approved or adapted, the Leadership Councils will work, probably with a team of others, to actually implement the proposal. The Task Force is not responsible for implementing the tasks or logistics of the proposal.

Since its first meeting, the Task Force has met, on average, every other week December through April, with the addition of a 36-hour retreat at Lakeshore Center at Okoboji in March. Time was spent in prayer, looking at scripture, as well as looking at the *Book of Order* and the purpose of a presbytery. All documents regarding the Tri-Presbyteries Staffing Plan and Operational Covenant, survey results from the presbyteries, minutes of leadership council and presbytery meetings, and financial information for each presbytery were reviewed. Task Force members also reached out to colleagues in presbyteries both within and beyond the Synod of Lakes and Prairies to gather and analyze other presbytery staffing models. The Task Force spent time meeting with each staff member via Zoom to discuss the ideals vs the reality of the shared staffing model and any suggestions they might have for going forward. We also offered the opportunity for each staff member to submit additional comments in writing. Representatives from the Presbytery of East Iowa were also included in a number of these conversations. While the Presbytery of East Iowa is in a similar time of transition, and future conversations are still possible, their future is beyond the scope of this specific Task Force. All of this work has led us to this recommendation:

> **The Task Force recommends to the Leadership Councils of the Presbyteries of Des Moines, North Central Iowa, and Prospect Hill that the Shared Staffing Model, in its current form, be dissolved effective December 31, 2025.**

The Task Force has additional recommendations for each presbytery in looking towards the future and those are included later in this report, after the explanations of this initial recommendation.

Included in the Frequently Asked Questions of the Joint Presbytery Staffing Plan Final Report were these two questions: How will we know this model is working? and How will we evaluate the progress towards the ends that demonstrate the model is working? The following ends were proposed to evaluate whether this model was working:

- An increased sense of connectedness and collegiality within each presbytery;
- A deeper awareness of what other congregations are doing;
- A deeper understanding of what it means to be a 21st century Church;
- An ease in connecting with staff and having questions answered; and
- A greater awareness of common concerns and how to address them.

Progress towards these ends was to be evaluated in the following ways:

- An annual survey of Ministers;
- A bi-annual (*sic*, biennial?) survey of Sessions;

- An annual meeting together of the leadership councils of each presbytery for the sake of relationship building and evaluation;
- With the help of the Synod and research services of the General Assembly, we will develop a survey to assess connection to presbytery, congregational vitality, congregational mission, risk taking, engagement in community, understanding of mission, understanding of stewardship, purpose of presbytery, relationships with pastors, needs in Iowa, impact of Presbyterians in Iowa and sense of relationship with the presbytery. Each presbytery will take a baseline survey in the spring of 2020. The survey will be used annually to assess progress toward goals.
- Reports on the assessments will be shared with each presbytery on an annual basis.

Recognizing that no one could have predicted or imagined the outbreak and impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic, these were still the ends and ways of evaluating that were adopted by the presbyteries. As the Task Force gathered information and compared what we learned with these ends, several things became apparent.

- A number of the ways that were to be used in evaluating the model were not implemented, which makes data supporting the ends that were being evaluated scarce, incomplete, or solely anecdotal. The Task Force believes part of this failure to evaluate the model was and is due to the fact that there was no clear designation of who was responsible for completing these tasks.
- Anecdotally, the Task Force has the general impression that very few of the five ends proposed for evaluation have been met or accomplished. This leads the Task Force to conclude that the Shared Staffing Model, in its current form, is not working.
- The workload for the staff, with it including so many churches, pastors, and miles, is stretching the staff too thin and past their capacity.
- While this model was attempting something new and different, the only thing it changed was the configuration of staff and responsibilities. The structure of each presbytery, their functioning and needs, their expectations of what staff of the presbyteries would provide did not fundamentally change. This means the model was basically a rearrangement of resources.
- The original plan was clear that this shared staffing model was not a money-saving plan and would, in fact, cost more. Due to greater than expected loss of members and per capita income, this model has been and is financially unsustainable. In fact, the original proposed staff configuration was for five full-time positions. At the implementation of this shared staffing model it was decided not to fill the Full time Program and Communications Administrator position due to financial concerns and constraints.
- There was and is an overall lack of administrative accountability and communication in implementing the vision of the shared staffing model.
- There appears to be a significant lack of trust and/or broken relationships between churches and the presbyteries, between pastors, churches, and the presbytery staff, and

among the churches in each presbytery. It is possible part of this is due to the appearance that, over the past few years, more and more of the decision-making authority has moved to the Presbytery Leadership Councils with less being discussed and decided by the Presbytery as a whole.

Recognizing that it is important for all transitions to be acknowledged in some way, the Task Force **strongly recommends that the ending of the shared staffing model be marked and ritualized in and through worship** that celebrates the leadership and attempt at something different, rejoices in the willingness to work together and all that was learned, and acknowledges the pain and hurt this attempt may have created. Members of the Task Force would be willing to design and lead said worship service.

This recommendation to dissolve the shared staffing model and the reasoning behind the recommendation are considered by the Task Force to be Phase 1. As part of the implementation of this phase, **the Task Force recommends that the shared Personnel Commission be dissolved at the end of 2025 and that the presbyteries reform and reconstitute personnel committees or commissions.**

Phase 2

Phase 2 turns us towards the future and what's next. The Task Force looks at Phase 2 as the liminal year or liminal time. The Task Force also recognizes that this is not only a liminal time for the presbyteries but also for the denomination, the churches, and pastors. As Susan Beaumont explains, "the institutional Church is experiencing a liminal era that will not be resolved any time soon. The models and structures that have defined the Church are crumbling around us. New ways are emerging, but we do not yet know what, if any, institutional church structures will remain." A liminal time requires a different approach to leading and guiding an organization. Beaumont goes on to say,

> In place of the pursuit of 'wins,' liminal times require leaders who can practice *presence*. Such leaders help people to manage their anxiety and embrace the freedom of not-knowing. We must be deeply suspicious of prescribed solutions that worked in other settings. We must yield to the uncertainty of the moment and truthfully acknowledge what is not working. At the same time, the leader must inspire confidence in the organization and in their leadership. They must help the organization to learn. Attending to all that is arising, the liminal leader is deeply connected to God and the soul of the institution, and helps individuals and groups to embrace the liminal state for as long as it takes to get clear about identity and to discern new pathways forward. (https://susanbeaumont.com/2019/10/29/how-to-lead-when-you-dont-know-where-youre-going/)

The Task Force believes these are important ideas for the presbyteries to be mindful of in this liminal time.

The Task Force also recognizes that wise decisions have never been made when anxiety and stress are elevated. Acknowledging the shortcomings of the shared staffing model, the Task Force realizes this means the presbyteries are currently functioning in a space of elevated stress and anxiety. Keeping that in mind, our goal in looking towards the future was to attempt to bring the presbyteries back to more stable ground. Then the important work of discernment about the function of the presbytery, and the form that function takes, can be given adequate space, time, and prayer.

The Task Force looked to *The Book of Order* to provide a foundation for what we believe is the work and function of a presbytery. G-3.03 states that, "The presbytery is responsible for the government of the church throughout its district, and for assisting and supporting the witness of congregations to the sovereign activity of God in the world, so that all congregations become communities of faith, hope, love, and witness" (G-3.0301). So, at its most basic, the purpose of the presbytery is to care for its congregations and its pastors.

Therefore, the Task Force has the following recommendations for the three presbyteries, recognizing that the recommendations for this second phase will naturally lead into a third phase once discernment is completed, decisions are made, and implementation begins.

Des Moines Presbytery

Until recently, the history of leadership in Des Moines Presbytery has been long term executive presbyters, with the Rev. Gus Nelson serving 19 years and the Rev. Phil Barrett serving 21 years. Transitioning to new leadership required the system to discern its core identity and function. The Presbytery of Des Moines has a mission statement included in the Manual of Operations that says, "Connecting and equipping pastors and congregations to live out the transforming grace of God." If this is the mission and identity of the Presbytery of Des Moines, then the form of the leadership and presbytery structure needs to be measured against that statement. Is what the presbytery doing connecting and equipping pastors and congregations? If the answer to this question is no, then considerations need to be made about continuing those things. If this is not the mission and identity of the presbytery, then a new mission statement needs to be identified. This is the work of discernment. After all the conversations and information gathering, it appears that the Des Moines Presbytery is uncertain about its vision, identity, and the function it serves. Without a central function, it is difficult to determine the form that leadership needs to take.

It is also important to recognize that the current structure of the committees and leadership makeup of Des Moines Presbytery is unsustainable. The number of people needed to fill all leadership and committee positions, as they are currently defined in the Presbytery's Manual of Operations, is 97 (assuming no one person serves in more than one position). The minimum number of minister members needed to fill the positions is 43. As of the 2022 annual statistical

report, Des Moines Presbytery had 25 ministers serving congregations, 4 serving in other ministry capacities, 11 at-large members, and 40 retired minister members (https://church-trends.pcusa.org/minister/occupation/combined/presbytery/080168/). There is no possible way of filling all of the committee minister member positions without asking retired ministers to serve in some capacity. This structure cannot be sustained in this manner.

With all that in mind, the Task Force has specific recommendations for the staffing of the Presbytery of Des Moines and for the work the presbytery needs to do.

The Task Force recommends that the Presbytery of Des Moines do significant and intentional discernment work to identify its core mission and function. In order to help facilitate this work, the Task Force recommends the following staff configuration to begin in 2026:

- **Full time Transitional Presbyter,**
- **½ time Stated Clerk,**
- **Full time Office Administrator.**

DRAFT

Presbytery of Des Moines
Transitional Executive Presbyter
Position Description (2025)

OVERVIEW

The Presbytery of Des Moines is looking for an Ordained Minister of the Word and Sacrament or Ruling Elder with at least 10+ years of ministry experience. We are looking for someone with both parish and mid-council experience, as well as someone with experience in rural settings. Due to the important and intense nature of this position, we expect this work to take at least two to three years.

HIGHLIGHTS

- This is a full-time position.
- Salaried, plus full benefits as outlined by the Board of Pensions.
- A professional expense allowance will be included for items such as travel, conferences, trainings, and other resources essential to job performance.

ACCOUNTABILITY

This position is accountable to the Presbytery through the Personnel Committee. An annual review of performance and compensation will be conducted by the Personnel Committee.

JOB DESCRIPTION

1. Healing Pastor: To directly facilitate the healing of broken relationships and distrust present in our presbytery. Applicant must be experienced in leading reconciliation practices, conflict mediation, and respectful communication. Proficiency in articulating and implementing systems theory is required. (If necessary or desired, training at Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, or a similar program, can be provided.)
2. People Centered Minister: Supporting and encouraging congregations and pastors by modeling collaboration, shared leadership, and delegation; strengthening and supporting the work of the presbytery's committees and commissions and other church centered ministries; taking the initiative to understand, nurture, and strengthen the congregations and fellowships of the presbytery and their congregational leaders, especially to amplify the perspectives of quiet or silenced communities in our presbytery in order to include all voices in decision-making processes in the presbytery.
3. Visionary Guide: To help the presbytery evaluate the value and effectiveness of current programs, services, structure, and ministries. Guide reflection, revision, and discernment of the presbytery's mission and help develop a united understanding of the identity of the presbytery. Then assist in developing a structure that reflects that identity with

appropriate staffing and reorganized committees that are equipped, fully functional, and working together to achieve common goals and outcomes.

4. Presbytery Connector: Serve as liaison for national and mid-council associations, liaison for ecclesiastical connections with Synod and GA, liaison to the Board of Pensions and the Church Leadership Connection. Lead as Head of Staff with accountability to the presbytery through the Personnel Committee. Supervise and support the work of presbytery committees and commissions with detailed attention to action plans, deadlines, and efficiencies.

QUALITIES

- Flexible Risk Taker: Willing to try new things, fail, succeed, learn, and try again.
- Visionary: Helping us reimagine how we do our work together, understanding systems theory, and having experience working in unhealthy systems to bring about healing and change. Demonstrated ability to provide innovative and visionary organizational leadership rooted in spiritual depth, informed by the challenges and opportunities of our current times.
- Transitional pastor training and/or experience.
- Change theory experience: Experience leading adaptive and incremental change.
- One who is an authentic Servant Leader.
- One who is comfortable with conflict and can navigate resentment, frustration, unequal power dynamics, and strong personalities in a manner that fosters grace, parity, justice, and reconciliation and one who is able to create conditions for healing.
- One who is open, inclusive, respectful, collegial, honest, humble, energetic, pastoral, and spiritual.
- One who demonstrates love to others and can create a culture of abundance (enough for everyone).
- A strong and growing Christian faith grounded in a keen understanding and practice of Reformed Theology and Presbyterian polity.
- Superior administrative, organizational, and communication skills, both verbal and written, and the ability to be self-motivated, meet established deadlines, and move easily between projects and tasks.

The provisions of the Personnel Policies of the Presbytery shall apply as appropriate.

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DRAFT

Presbytery of Des Moines
Stated Clerk
Job Description (2025)

PURPOSE
Perform all duties prescribed by the *Book of Order*, the Presbytery Bylaws and Operating Procedures or Manual, as well as other duties as may be assigned. (G-3.0104)

ACCOUNTABILITY
This position is accountable to the Presbytery and the Personnel Committee through the Head of Staff.

TIME COMMITMENT
The position of Stated Clerk shall be considered an exempt, part-time or an average of twenty (20) hours per week.

QUALIFICATIONS
Ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament or Ruling Elder in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and certified, or in the process of becoming proficient, in Robert's Rules of Order and the *Book of Order*.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION
There will be an annual performance review and evaluation by the Personnel Committee through the Head of Staff, and at least every five years, a comprehensive review and evaluation in accordance with the personnel policies of the Presbytery.

TERM OF OFFICE
The term of office for the Stated Clerk shall be five years, eligible for reelection. This agreement can be changed by either party with a 90-day written notice.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Preserve and record the official records and minutes of the Presbytery.
    a. Process and preserve corporate and ecclesiastical business.
    b. Provide endorsements and attestations as approved by Presbytery Commissions and ensure actions are reflected in the minutes.
2. Communication with Councils
    a. Process official reports and maintain correspondence with councils.
    b. Respond to inquiries for interpretation of the *Book of Order*.
    c. Communicate in an advisory capacity with sessions concerning bylaw changes.

    d. Coordinate preparation of statistical data for the Presbytery, the Synod, and the General Assembly as requested by such.
3. Commission/Committee Responsibilities
    a. Resource all Presbytery Commissions, Committees, and Task Forces in regard to the *Book of Order*, the Presbytery Bylaws, the Presbytery Operating Procedures or Manual, and other questions for interpretation.
    b. Serve as secretary and keep minutes for the Leadership Council and Commission on Ministry.
    c. Resource and train the Permanent Judicial Commission, administrative commissions, and those involved with the judicial process.
    d. Prepare and train clerks of session and provide a method for Session Record Review at least every other year. (G-3.0108a)
4. Presbytery Meetings
    a. Prepare the agenda in consultation with the Council and Executive Presbyter.
    b. Be responsible for documents as necessary and pertinent to each meeting of the Presbytery.
    c. Arrange for facilities for each meeting of the Presbytery and seek approval for such locations and dates from the Councils.
    d. Be available as a ready resource for the Presbytery Moderator, alerting them to any changes or items of concern.
    e. Serve as ecclesiastical resource for Presbytery leadership.
    f. Serve as parliamentarian for each meeting of the Presbytery.
5. Other
    a. Guide parties through proper use of Church Discipline when needed.
    b. Assure that administrative commissions of the Presbytery are properly constituted, convened, and dismissed.
    c. Participate in the Synod record review.
    d. Work with the Commission on Ministry to provide required boundary training.
    e. Provide needed training and resourcing for the Presbytery Moderator.
    f. Attend General Assembly and National/Mid Council Leader Gathering
    g. Provide annual officer training

The provisions of the Personnel Policies of the Presbytery shall apply as appropriate.

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DRAFT

Presbytery of Des Moines
Office Administrator
Position Description (2025)

PURPOSE
Provide administrative support to the Executive Presbyter and the Presbyteries' committees.

ACCOUNTABILITY
This position is accountable to the Presbytery and the Personnel Committee through the Head of Staff. An annual review of performance and compensation will be conducted by the Personnel Committee.

HIGHLIGHTS
- This is a full-time position.
- Salaried, plus full benefits as outlined by the Board of Pensions.

RESPONSIBILITIES
1. Provide clerical and organizational support to the Executive Presbyter and the Stated Clerk with strong adherence to confidentiality, timelines, and accuracy.
2. Maintain permanent Presbytery records in coordination with the Stated Clerk.
3. Maintain the membership database for the presbytery.
4. Support the work of the Presbytery Committees.
5. Serve as the point of contact for congregations.
6. Support the work of the Stated Clerk in setting up presbytery meetings.
7. Perform general office work.
8. Handle all financial deposits ensuring designations are reported. Process check requests and other financial information as needed.

The provisions of the Personnel Policies of the Presbytery shall apply as appropriate.

Note: The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by individuals assigned this classification. This is not to be construed as an exhaustive list of all duties performed by personnel so classified. This job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and the employee, and is subject to change by the employer as the needs of the employer and the requirements of the job change.

North Central Iowa and Prospect Hill Presbyteries

Prospect Hill Presbytery

Conversations about sharing staff between Prospect Hill and North Central Iowa Presbyteries have been taking place in various forms for almost two decades. Prospect Hill had moved from a staffing model with an Executive Presbyter to a staffing model that had a full time "Mission Coordinator." That position was discontinued in 2015 because of budget concerns.

Minutes from the July 14, 2015, Prospect Hill Presbytery meeting reflect contentious conversation about how best to move forward with a different staffing model. The motion sent to presbytery was replaced with the following:

> *The revised language is as follows: that a Task Force be formed to evaluate the call of the Presbytery of Prospect Hill and explore how we can answer that call by reviewing such things as stewardship of resources, staffing to meet the call, possibilities for future ministry, how to best be about the mission of God with the resources we have. The Presbytery voted to make the substitute motion the main motion. The Presbytery approved the motion.*

It is interesting to note that the following presbytery meeting (October 26, 2015) would take place at Lakeshore Center and would include educational events with the Presbytery of North Central Iowa.

In subsequent years, Prospect Hill has attempted various leadership structures in an attempt to be fiscally responsible while continuing to have a declining number of congregations. Prior to the three presbyteries' shared staffing model, Prospect Hill had entered into an agreement with North Central Iowa where the two presbyteries shared a Presbytery Executive and an Office Administrator.

In the midst of the current Tri-Presbyteries model, Prospect Hill Presbytery has diligently pursued the work of discernment through a detailed survey of congregations. This points to an openness from the Prospect Hill Council and presbytery to take an honest look at their present ministry context. Prospect Hill will need to share staff or merge with another presbytery in order to have a sustainable future.

North Central Iowa Presbytery

Rev. David Feltman served as Pastor to the Presbyteries for 13 years before retiring in June of 2019. Before his retirement, at the request of Des Moines Presbytery, he jointly served Des Moines Presbytery ⅓ time and North Central Iowa Presbytery ⅔ time starting in the fall of 2018. Following his tenure, North Central Iowa Presbytery hired a shared transitional executive presbyter with Prospect Hill Presbytery, as well as a shared office administrator. That arrangement was temporary, leading into the current shared staffing model.

North Central Iowa entered into the Tri-Presbyteries arrangement with a strong pastor cohort program and a variety of educational opportunities provided mainly through the Vital Ministries Initiative. With the COVID pandemic and the loss of key voices within the presbytery, there was a sharp decline in these cohort and educational opportunities. Now, five years into that decline, there appears to be, anecdotally at least, a disconnect between churches in the presbytery. Pastors and congregations feel "out of the loop". The challenge to fill and equip committees to do their work has been made more difficult by this disconnect and the limited people available to serve in the traditional committee roles.

In order for North Central Iowa Presbytery to have a sustainable future, presbytery staff will need to be shared with another presbytery and committee structure, as well as training and resourcing of committees, should be carefully discerned.

The Task Force recommends that North Central Iowa and Prospect Hill Presbyteries share an Executive Presbyter and an Office Administrator. The Task Force recommends that each presbytery employ a part-time stated clerk. The recommended staff configuration to begin in 2026 is:

- **Full-time Executive Presbyter,**
- **¼ time Stated Clerk per Presbytery,**
- **Full-time Office Administrative.**

As the two presbyteries continue to look towards the future, the Task Force has a few additional recommendations.

- **The Task Force recommends that an in-depth evaluation of the current committee structures be completed, and work be done to ensure the adequate training and equipping for all committee members be completed.**
- **The Task Force recommends that North Central Iowa and Prospect Hill Presbyteries explore the joining or merging of the two presbyteries by 2028 to work together for a faithful future, as well as exploring adjusting boundaries with adjoining presbyteries.**

The Task Force makes this recommendation on the two presbyteries exploring a merger because it sees a number of advantages to an eventual merger of North Central Iowa and Prospect Hill Presbyteries. These advantages include:

- A lighter and more streamlined administrative job due to having one set of committee, council, and presbytery meetings.
- Offer a larger pool of presbytery members to staff essential committees.
- Allow for and encourage a focus on the commonality of ministry in a similar context.
- Create a larger pool of Teaching Elders and Commissioned Ruling Elders for mutual support, training, and encouragement.

DRAFT

Presbyteries of North Central Iowa and Prospect Hill
Executive Presbyter
Position Description (2025)

OVERVIEW
This position will provide support to pastors and congregations. The focus is on building the health and vitality of the presbyteries' congregations and leaders, while also providing administrative expertise and support to each presbytery.

HIGHLIGHTS
- This is a full-time position.
- Salaried, year-round, with the location to be determined.

ACCOUNTABILITY
This position is accountable to the presbyteries joint Personnel Commission. An annual review of performance and compensation will be conducted by the Personnel Commission.
- In addition to Personnel, the Executive answers to an Executive Committee made up of the Moderators and Council Chairs of the two presbyteries.
- The Council of each presbytery as colleagues and partners in ministry.

Responsibilities:
1. Support pastors in their ministries through conversation, sharing of resources, pastoral care and prayer. This may include developing and supporting peer cohorts, coordinating shared emergency grants for pastors with the Synod and Board of Pensions, and more.
2. Support congregations as they face the challenges of a changing world and find ways to faithfully serve God in their contexts. This may include educational events for congregational leaders, presence at significant events, sharing resources and ideas with congregational leaders and committees, and more.
3. In coordination with the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, support upcoming leaders in the church as staff resource for those committees who work with people who are preparing for ministry as a Teaching Elder or Commissioned Pastor.
4. In coordination with the Commission on Ministry, support congregations in times of transition by working with transitional pastors and being the primary staff resource for Pastor Nominating Committees.
5. Do executive to executive reference checks.
6. Serve as primary staff resource to committees with Commission on Ministry functions.
7. Serve as a resource to the shared Personnel Commission of the presbyteries.
8. Provide pulpit supply on Sundays with another day off during the week.

9. Connect congregations and pastors to wider denominational and relevant religious resources, programs, and communities.

The provisions of the Personnel Policies of the Presbytery shall apply as appropriate.

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Presbytery of Prospect Hill
Stated Clerk
Job Description (2025)

PURPOSE
Perform all duties prescribed by the *Book of Order*, the Presbytery Bylaws and Operating Procedures or Manual, as well as other duties as may be assigned. (G-3.0104)

ACCOUNTABILITY
This position is accountable to the Presbytery and the Personnel Committee through the Head of Staff.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Preserve and record the official records and minutes of the Presbytery.
    a. Process and preserve corporate and ecclesiastical business.
    b. Provide endorsements and attestations as approved by Presbytery Commissions and ensure actions are reflected in the minutes.
2. Communication with Councils
    a. Process official reports and maintain correspondence with councils.
    b. Respond to inquiries for interpretation of the *Book of Order*.
    c. Communicate in an advisory capacity with sessions concerning bylaw changes.
    d. Coordinate preparation of statistical data for the Presbytery, the Synod, and the General Assembly as requested by such.
3. Commission/Committee Responsibilities
    a. Resource all Presbytery Commissions, Committees, and Task Forces in regard to the *Book of Order*, the Presbytery Bylaws, the Presbytery Operating Procedures or Manual, and other questions for interpretation.
    b. Serve as secretary and keep minutes for the Leadership Council and Commission on Ministry.
    c. Resource and train the Permanent Judicial Commission, administrative commissions, and those involved with the judicial process.
    d. Prepare and train clerks of session and provide a method for Session Record Review at least every other year. (G-3.0108a)
4. Presbytery Meetings
    a. Prepare the agenda in consultation with the Councils and Executive Presbyter.
    b. Be responsible for documents as necessary and pertinent to each meeting of the Presbytery.
    c. Arrange for facilities for each meeting of the Presbytery and seek approval for such locations and dates from the Councils.

d. Be available as a ready resource for the Presbytery Moderator, alerting them to any changes or items of concern.
e. Serve as ecclesiastical resource for Presbytery leadership.
f. Serve as parliamentarian for each meeting of the Presbytery.

5. Other
    a. Guide parties through proper use of Church Discipline when needed.
    b. Assure that administrative commissions of the Presbytery are properly constituted, convened, and dismissed.
    c. Participate in the Synod record review.
    d. Work with the Commission on Ministry to provide required boundary training.
    e. Provide needed training and resourcing for the Presbytery Moderator.
    f. Attend General Assembly and National/Mid Council Leader Gathering
    g. Provide annual officer training

TIME COMMITMENT
The position of Stated Clerk shall be considered an exempt, part-time or an average of fourteen (14) hours per week.

QUALIFICATIONS
Ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament or Ruling Elder in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and certified, or in the process of becoming proficient, in Robert's Rules of Order and the *Book of Order*.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION
There will be an annual performance review and evaluation by the Personnel Committee through the Head of Staff, and at least every five years, a comprehensive review and evaluation in accordance with the personnel policies of the Presbytery.

TERM OF OFFICE
The term of office for the Stated Clerk shall be five years, eligible for reelection. This agreement can be changed by either party with a 90-day written notice.

The provisions of the Personnel Policies of the Presbytery shall apply as appropriate.

Note: The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by individuals assigned this classification. This is not to be construed as an exhaustive list of all duties performed by personnel so classified. This job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and the employee, and is subject to change by the employer as the needs of the employer and the requirements of the job change.

DRAFT

Presbytery of North Central Iowa
Stated Clerk
Job Description (2025)

PURPOSE
Perform all duties prescribed by the *Book of Order*, the Presbytery Bylaws and Operating Procedures or Manual, as well as other duties as may be assigned. (G-3.0104)

ACCOUNTABILITY
This position is accountable to the Presbytery and the Personnel Committee through the Head of Staff.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Preserve and record the official records and minutes of the Presbytery.
    a. Process and preserve corporate and ecclesiastical business.
    b. Provide endorsements and attestations as approved by Presbytery Commissions and ensure actions are reflected in the minutes.
2. Communication with Councils
    a. Process official reports and maintain correspondence with councils.
    b. Respond to inquiries for interpretation of the *Book of Order*.
    c. Communicate in an advisory capacity with sessions concerning bylaw changes.
    d. Coordinate preparation of statistical data for the Presbytery, the Synod, and the General Assembly as requested by such.
3. Commission/Committee Responsibilities
    a. Resource all Presbytery Commissions, Committees, and Task Forces in regard to the *Book of Order*, the Presbytery Bylaws, the Presbytery Operating Procedures or Manual, and other questions for interpretation.
    b. Serve as secretary and keep minutes for the Leadership Council and Commission on Ministry.
    c. Resource and train the Permanent Judicial Commission, administrative commissions, and those involved with the judicial process.
    d. Prepare and train clerks of session and provide a method for Session Record Review at least every other year. (G-3.0108a)
4. Presbytery Meetings
    a. Prepare the agenda in consultation with the Councils and Executive Presbyter.
    b. Be responsible for documents as necessary and pertinent to each meeting of the Presbytery.
    c. Arrange for facilities for each meeting of the Presbytery and seek approval for such locations and dates from the Councils.

d. Be available as a ready resource for the Presbytery Moderator, alerting them to any changes or items of concern.
e. Serve as ecclesiastical resource for Presbytery leadership.
f. Serve as parliamentarian for each meeting of the Presbytery.

5. Other
    a. Guide parties through proper use of Church Discipline when needed.
    b. Assure that administrative commissions of the Presbytery are properly constituted, convened, and dismissed.
    c. Participate in the Synod record review.
    d. Work with the Commission on Ministry to provide required boundary training.
    e. Provide needed training and resourcing for the Presbytery Moderator.
    f. Attend General Assembly and National/Mid Council Leader Gathering
    g. Provide annual officer training

TIME COMMITMENT
The position of Stated Clerk shall be considered an exempt, part-time or an average of fourteen (14) hours per week.

QUALIFICATIONS
Ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament or Ruling Elder in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and certified, or in the process of becoming proficient, in Robert's Rules of Order and the *Book of Order*.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION
There will be an annual performance review and evaluation by the Personnel Committee through the Head of Staff, and at least every five years, a comprehensive review and evaluation in accordance with the personnel policies of the Presbytery.

TERM OF OFFICE
The term of office for the Stated Clerk shall be five years, eligible for reelection. This agreement can be changed by either party with a 90-day written notice.

The provisions of the Personnel Policies of the Presbytery shall apply as appropriate.

Note: The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by individuals assigned this classification. This is not to be construed as an exhaustive list of all duties performed by personnel so classified. This job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and the employee, and is subject to change by the employer as the needs of the employer and the requirements of the job change.

DRAFT

Presbyteries of North Central Iowa and Prospect Hill
Office Administrator
Position Description (2025)

PURPOSE
Provide administrative support to the Executive Presbyter and the Presbyteries' committees.

ACCOUNTABILITY
This position is accountable to the Presbytery and the Personnel Committee through the Head of Staff. An annual review of performance and compensation will be conducted by the Personnel Committee.

HIGHLIGHTS
- This is a full-time position.
- Salaried, plus full benefits as outlined by the Board of Pensions.

RESPONSIBILITIES
1. Provide clerical and organizational support to the Executive Presbyter and the Stated Clerk with strong adherence to confidentiality, timelines, and accuracy.
2. Maintain permanent Presbytery records in coordination with the Stated Clerk.
3. Maintain the membership database for the presbytery.
4. Support the work of the Presbytery Committees.
5. Serve as the point of contact for congregations.
6. Support the work of the Stated Clerk in setting up presbytery meetings.
7. Perform general office work.
8. Handle all financial deposits ensuring designations are reported. Process check requests and other financial information as needed.

The provisions of the Personnel Policies of the Presbytery shall apply as appropriate.

Note: The above statements are intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by individuals assigned this classification. This is not to be construed as an exhaustive list of all duties performed by personnel so classified. This job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and the employee, and is subject to change by the employer as the needs of the employer and the requirements of the job change.

Concluding Comments

Through the many discussions the Task Force had, and the discernment done, one concern kept coming up and that was accountability. There were a number of things included in the original joint staffing plan that were to be completed, but they were not specifically assigned to any individual or group and there was not a system of accountability put in place to ensure they were completed, which means they were never done. The Task Force strongly suggests that as each presbytery moves forward there be direct assignment of responsibilities and clear lines of accountability.

The Task Force recognizes that with the submission of this report to the Presbyteries' Councils, the responsibility for its potential adoption and implementation lies with the Councils. This report only lays the foundation for next steps, which means significant work still needs to be done by presbytery leadership councils and committees. As this work continues, each member of the Task Force is willing to serve as a resource to the Presbytery Councils and committees in their work. With that said, the Task Force envisions the following as initial next steps:

- Each council spends time in discernment with the goal of presenting a report and proposal to each Presbytery.
- The Presbytery of Des Moines has a scheduled meeting for Tuesday, May 20th and it is the hope of the Task Force that a proposal may be presented at this meeting to begin discussion among the entire presbytery. The hope is that the Presbyteries of North Central Iowa and Prospect Hill would hold called meetings in a similar time frame to do the same.
- If the dissolution of the Shared Staffing Model is approved, the worship service to mark its ending be held as part of the All Iowa Presbyterian Gathering at the end of August.

The focus for this Task Force was on the past, present, and future leadership structures of the presbyteries, including staff, committees, etc. It was not on the individuals occupying those positions. Therefore, it is beyond the scope of the work for this report to include any information or recommendations regarding compensation or severance for the positions that are ending. The Task Force believes that to be the work of the Shared Personnel Commission, the Presbyteries' Councils, and the Presbyteries themselves.

In all of the work, the Task Force was continually guided by "The Merton Prayer" for Discernment of God's Will, which was included on the front page of this report. We commend its use to the Councils and the Presbyteries that all may let go of fear, trust in God, and know that God is with us each and every day.

The Iowa Way Forward Task Force

Des Moines Presbytery	North Central Iowa Presbytery	Prospect Hill Presbytery
RE Margaret Blair	RE Scott Cose	RE Gwen Detlefsen
Rev. Jessica Paulsen	Rev. Sara Sutter	Rev. Dr. Jim Edwards