

CANDIDATES AND CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE
North Fort Myers Presbyterian Church
Tuesday, April 30, 2024

I. Examination of Mr. Greg Poland

- a. **MSP** to approve Mr. Poland's examination with regard to his acquaintance with experiential religion.
- b. **MSP** to approve Mr. Poland's examination in Bible content.
- c. **MSP** to approve Mr. Poland's examination in theology.
- d. **MSP** to approve Mr. Poland's examination in church history.
- e. **MSP** to approve Mr. Poland's examination in the history of the PCA.
- f. **MSP** to approve Mr. Poland's examination in the principles and rules of PCA government and discipline.
- g. **MSP** to approve Mr. Poland's theological paper.
- h. **MSP** to approve Mr. Poland's exegetical paper.
- i. **MSP** to approve Mr. Poland's written sermon.
- j. Mr. Poland's **Internship** was approved at the Stated Meeting of February 8, 2022.
- k. **MSP** to approve Mr. Poland's stated differences as more than semantic but "*not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine.*"

Minor Exception 1: Chapter 21.1

I absolutely agree to and subscribe to the final clause under paragraph 1: "...he may not be worshipped according to...or under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture." This is as it should be regarding prohibiting images for worship and liturgical uses. I do distinguish this from the practical use of images of Jesus for pedagogical purposes such as in children's Sunday School materials.

Minor Exception 2: Chapter 21.8

I absolutely agree that the Sabbath is to be "kept holy unto the Lord...do not only observe an holy rest, all the day, all the day, from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations...". Again, this is as it should be, but I do believe that recreation with family and congregants can be worshipful – particularly within the beauty and admiration of God's creation. I believe that Christ is the Lord of the Sabbath and that God rested and has commanded us to rest. I think he allows for works of mercy and necessity and I would not want to bind our conscience from any activity at all (Isa 58:13-14; Matt 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5). I believe there is freedom here for us as believers to honor and observe the Sabbath while also engaging in other activities. Recreation can be restorative and restful and fall within God's design of rest and worship. Nonetheless, I do affirm that the Lord's Day is to be set aside for the private and public worship of God so any recreation does need to fit within that larger purpose of the day.

Finally, as a physician, there are times when I must be available to my own or my colleagues' patients who require medical care – but consider this to be acceptable under “acts of mercy and necessity.”

Other than these minor exceptions, I wholeheartedly and without reservation fully endorse and seek to order my life and spiritual understanding and practice, as well as my teaching, in full compliance to the Standards.

- l. MSP** to approve the call from Bay Presbyterian Church to Mr. Greg Poland (Attachment #1)
- m. MSP** to recommend that the Presbytery make use of the extraordinary clause with ordaining Mr. Poland without having studied the original languages. **Rationale:** Mr. Poland has completed his internship with the Presbytery, showing exemplary ability in his preparation as a minister of the Gospel. As Mr. Poland has served a long career as a physician, his lack of study in the original languages should not be viewed as a hindrance to his being ordained as a Gospel minister.

II. Examination of Mr. Mike Vieira.

- a. MSP** to receive Mr. Vieira's previous licensure exam (February 5, 2024) as satisfying the requirements for ordination in his acquaintance with experiential religion, Bible content, theology, and the principles and rules of PCA government and discipline.
- b. MSP** to approve Mr. Vieira's exam in sacraments.
- c. MSP** to approve Mr. Vieira's exam in church history.
- d. MSP** to approve Mr. Vieira's exam in the history of the Presbyterian Church in America.
- e. MSP** to approve Mr. Vieira's seminary transcript in lieu of an examination in Greek and Hebrew.
- f. MSP** to approve Mr. Vieira's stated differences as more than semantic but “*not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine.*”

I would like to take a stated difference with WLC 109 where it states, “*The making any representation of God, of all or any of the three persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image of likeness of any creator whatsoever.*”

I believe the wording of “inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image of likeness,” goes further than the scriptures here. In my reading and understanding of the second commandment (Exodus 2:4), it is not primarily about the making of anything (images and representations made inwardly or outwardly), that is the concern, but how the images was (and are) to be used in accordance to Exodus 2:5 (bow down to them or serve them) that could be sinful. Especially, following right after the first command, “You shall have no other God before me.” (Exodus 2:3). While I believe there are times that the making of a representation of God may be permissible for educational purposes, like many

other things, great caution, discernment, and discretion must be had in the process as to not abuse or profane God in any way; or that may cause and lead people to worship that representation/image/depiction instead of God himself.

I would like to also take a stated difference with the WSC Question 60 where it states, *“The sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days.”*

- There is language of “recreation” that seems to go further than the scriptures. Though we must refrain from work, engaging in recreations can be great forms of rest, being rejuvenated and experiencing the joys and gifts God has given us in His creation. Recreations such as fellowshiping and breaking bread with immediate and church family after church, plopping a chair on Siesta Key and watching a sunset, or taking a walk down a trail while basking and being captivated at how nature testifies to the Glory of God can all be things that bless and restore us in beneficial ways. Intentionality and discretion must also be had here to make sure that what we do on the sabbath is not done with carelessness and idleness. If Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28), we must refrain from any activities/recreations that does not point or draw us to rest in Christ. Yet, at the same time, having the liberty to engage in activities/recreations that do point or draw us to rest in Christ. If we keep the mindset of the Sabbath primarily being for God’s worship and glory. As well as, for our good while we engage in such recreations, I believe we are thus honoring the sabbath and keeping it holy.

- g. MSP** to approve Mr. Vieira’s call as Assistant Pastor to Covenant Life Presbyterian Church (Attachment #2).
- h. MSP** to recommend that the Presbytery make use of the extraordinary clause with ordaining Mr. Vieira without having submitted an exegetical paper or theological paper. **Rationale:** Mr. Vieira had difficulty obtaining an exegetical and theological paper from his previous studies due to a computer crash. Mr. Vieira’s examination was exemplary, and having been previously ordained in another denomination, the committee was well-satisfied with his ability to do the work of exegesis and theology.
 - 1. NOTE:** The committee is divided on whether to propose this solution or not. I gave another possible solution to this problem. It is to present Mike for examination, noting that the committee did not receive the exegetical and theological papers. The committee would then ask the Presbytery to establish a commission to examine the papers, and if acceptable, then proceed to complete the examination and erect a commission to ordain/install Mike. I may have something different to send you on Monday.

III. Licensure examination of Mr. Taylor White.

- a. MSP** to approve Mr. White’s testimony of Christian experience and call to preach the gospel.
- b. MSP** to approve Mr. White’s examination with regard to biblical doctrine.

- c. **MSP** to approve Mr. White’s examination with regard to his practical knowledge of Bible content.
- d. **MSP** to approve Mr. White’s examination with regard to his basic knowledge of the government of the PCA.
- e. **MSP** to approve Mr. White’s written sermon as satisfying the requirement of *BCO* 19-2.d.
- f. **MSP** to approve Mr. White’s stated differences as more than semantic but “*not out of accord with any fundamental of our system of doctrine.*”

1. WCF 21.6 states that the Sabbath day is to be kept holy not only by preparation of heart, ordering common affairs beforehand, and observing “an holy rest all the day” from worldly engagements, but also by the day being “. . .taken up, the whole time, in the public and private exercises of His worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.”

I fully affirm that the Lord’s Day is to be set apart for the purpose of worship and rest. For the New Covenant community, the Sabbath has moved from the last day of the week to the first day since it is the day the Lord Jesus rose from the dead. Our observation of the Lord’s day should be focused on worship and rest, yet there are many activities that could be included in our observation of the sabbath that would fall under the category of rest that fall outside of “public and private worship.” A few examples would be spending time with our family and friends, spending time in God’s creation, or simply resting at home. I believe that activities like these would fall under an appropriate understanding of the sabbath. Both our worship of God and fellowship with other image bearers are to be regularly practiced in anticipation of the eschatological rest that awaits us.

2. WLC 109 prohibits “the making any representation of God, of all or of any of the three persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness of any creature whatsoever.”

While I quibble over certain portrayals of Jesus in media (The Chosen tv show for example), I do however I do not think that representations of the humanity of Christ in religious art, children’s Bibles or stained glass in a churches violate the second commandment in so far as they are understood to be representations and not actual depictions that are venerated or worshiped in any way.

Committee Members Present

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| TE Dann Cecil | North Fort Myers Presbyterian |
| TE Peter Stonecipher | Providence Church |
| TE Ryan Broadhurst | Westminster Presbyterian |

RE Mark Wardell

Westminster Presbyterian

RE Tom Lynch

Bay Presbyterian

BAY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
CALL OF DR. GREG POLAND
April 21, 2024

The Session of Bay Presbyterian Church, Bonita Springs, Florida, being on sufficient grounds well satisfied of the ministerial qualifications of you, **Greg Poland MD**, and having good hopes from our knowledge of your labors that your ministrations in the Gospel will be profitable to our spiritual interests, do earnestly call you to undertake the office of assistant pastor in said congregation, promising you, in the discharge of your duty, all proper support, encouragement and obedience in the Lord. Due to his unique circumstances, Dr. Poland requests to be allowed to serve on a voluntary basis without salary. The church will reimburse him for expenses up to \$10,000 annually upon submission of receipts and he will be provided such vacation and other leave time that he requires under the oversight of the Senior Pastor of Bay Presbyterian Church.

In testimony whereof we have respectfully subscribed our names this 21st day of April, A.D. 2024.

Attest: I, having moderated the session meeting which extended a call to Dr. Greg Poland for ministerial services, do certify that the call has been made in all respects according to the rules laid down in the *Book of Church Order*, and that the persons who signed the foregoing call were authorized to do so by vote of the Session.

Patrick J. Womack, Moderator of the Meeting



8 April 2024

Dear Mike—

The Session of Covenant Life Church (PCA) being on sufficient grounds well satisfied of the ministerial qualifications of you, Mike Vieira, and having good hopes from our knowledge of your labors that your ministrations in the Gospel will be profitable to our spiritual interests, do earnestly call you to undertake the pastoral office in said congregation, promising you, in the discharge of your duty, all proper support, encouragement and obedience in the Lord. That you may be free from worldly cares and avocations, we hereby promise and oblige ourselves to provide you with the following:

- **Salary:** We are pleased to offer you a salary of \$87,500 per year, reviewed annually for adjustment as part of our performance evaluation process. A portion of the salary can be designated as a housing allowance. Currently, Covenant Life Church pays on an every-other-Friday arrangement, so your pay will be split over 26 pays/year.
- **Medical, Dental, Life and LTD Insurance:** Major medical and dental insurance will be provided for you (and your family if desired). Further, we pay for long-term disability coverage and a base life insurance. Additional coverages are available at the employee's expense. Please see the attached Pastor Benefits Summary for more detail.
- **Retirement:** The church will contribute 11% of your gross salary to a retirement program in coordination with Geneva Benefits, the retirement and benefits agency of the PCA.
- **Paid Time Off (PTO):** Covenant Life Church offers a single bank of paid time off that is inclusive of vacation time, sick leave and holidays. PTO availability for the remainder of 2024 will be pro-rated based on your start date, with your full bank of 30 days (240 hours) renewing on January 1, 2025.
- **Professional Expenses:** Covenant Life Church will provide a pastoral expense account for books, meals, mileage, and other relevant expenses.

Further detail and clarification of the terms of employment are outlined in the Covenant Life Church employee handbook.

I, having moderated the Session meeting which extended a call as Assistant Pastor for Student Ministries to Mike Vieira, do certify that the call has been made in all respects according to the rules laid down in the Book of Church Order, and that the persons who signed the call were authorized to do so by vote of the Session.

Moderator of Session

Rev. Kenneth A. Aldrich
(Signature)

Rev. Kenneth A. Aldrich
(Print Name)

April 16, 2024
(Date)

Minister-Elect

Mike Vieira
(Signature)

Michael Vieira
(Print Name)

April 16, 2024
(Date)