

Executive Presbyter Search Committee

Report to Presbytery of Yukon

October 1, 2023

Members: Dennis Berry, Chair Tim Carrick
Doreen McNeill Mary Ellen Lucas
Joseph Reid Ida Olemaun
Matthew Hobbie Matt Schultz
Shari Monson (advisory role)

This Committee's initial task was to review the **Self-Assessment: Presbytery of Yukon** by Eliana Maxim and determine how the Executive Presbyter position should be configured. After reviewing several options, it was recommended it should be one person in the position, similar to how it had been handled in the past. The Committee was then asked to become the Search Committee for the new Executive Presbyter.

The Committee reached out to Shari Monson, the Interim Executive Presbyter for the Olympia Presbytery, who agreed to be a resource during our search. Shari has subsequently been selected as the Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk for the Olympia Presbytery.

One of the first things the Committee did was to visit every church in the Presbytery. The mission was to ask how they viewed the Presbytery and what they were looking for in an Executive Presbyter. Tim Carrick led us in this effort.

After that, the Committee prepared its Mission Information Form (MIF) to be used in the PC(USA) Church Leadership Connection (CLC). A copy of our MIF is attached.

Once our MIF was in the CLC system we requested matches in which the system compared our MIF to Personal Information Forms (PIFs) of people looking for positions. The system not only makes matches but allows those that see our MIF and are interested in our position to submit their PIF to us. In all, we received over 40 matches.

We reviewed each PIF and determined whether we were interested in an initial interview with the candidate. If we determined we wanted to have an initial interview, we reached out to them to confirm that they were interested in our position in Alaska. Each person indicates on their PIF where the candidate is interested in serving. In several instances, a candidate indicated that they were interested in serving anywhere, then realized that Alaska was too much of a stretch.

Our interview and evaluation process:

1. We did an initial interview with candidates. We asked a fixed set of questions that we provided to the interviewee prior to the interview.
2. We did a second interview if we decided we wanted to continue getting to know the interviewee. We did four second interviews.

3. The next step was an in-person interview. We had two in-person interviews. We asked all four of our second interviewees to come for a site visit, but two decided they needed to decline our invitations, mainly for family concerns where Alaska was just too far.

Our initial in-person interview included the interviewee and his family. After their visit, the interviewee decided that our position was not a good fit for family reasons.

At that point we were about to start over with a new set of initial interviews when someone reached out to us who was already in Alaska, and knew and loved the state. This is something we had hoped for from the beginning of our search. That person was Rev. Elizabeth Shultz who decided to throw her hat in the ring after much prayer and discussion with her husband, Rev. Matt Shultz. At this point Matt stepped back from the committee and we followed with the process we had developed with our other interviewees. It became clear that Elizabeth was a perfect fit as our Executive Presbyter, and we unanimously submitted her to the Leadership Team as our nominee.

Here is a summary of why we enthusiastically believe Elizabeth is the right person to be our EP:

1. Her desire to return to ministry
2. Her love and enthusiasm for Alaska
3. She is very connected with nonprofits, churches, and church leaders in Alaska
4. Her non-profit and government work in Alaska, which uniquely prepared her to serve as our Executive Presbyter
5. She knows Alaska, the people, and our problems
6. She has an enthusiasm to learn what is going on
7. She is willing to do her homework and puts a high value on listening and understanding, but comes with detailed ideas about what to focus on.
8. She easily adapts her plans and ideas based on what she learns from listening
9. She will have a lower learning curve than any candidate from outside Alaska
10. She spoke to our specific concerns, even before she was told we had those concerns

A copy of her biography is also available to you.

Prayerfully consider our nominee, Rev. Elizabeth Schultz. She will lead our Presbytery into the future. She understands, and is up to, the challenges in our future.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Yukon Presbytery Executive Presbyter Search Committee,

Dennis Berry
Chair

Church Leadership Connection
The Call System for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Mif #: 72590.AA0

Ministry General Information

Ministry Number	72590
Ministry Name	Presbytery of Yukon
Mailing Address	616 W 10th Avenue Anchorage, AK 99501
Phone	(907) 276-0914
Fax	
E-Mail	office@pbyukon.org
WWW Address	www.pbyukon.org
Ministry Size	N/A

Ethnic Composition	
	American Indian or Alaskan Native 18%
	Asian 6%
	Black or African American (African Native, Caribbean) 1%
	White 75%

Average Worship Attendance	0
Church School Attendance	0
Curriculum	N/A
Yoked	False
Presbytery	YUKON PRESBYTERY
Synod	SYNOD OF ALASKA-NORTHWEST
Community Type	N/A

Ten-year trend statistics of this church/organization [Show Statistics](#)

Information about the position

Position:	General Presbyter/Executive Presbyter/Presbytery Leader
Experience Required:	0 to 2 Years
Specific Title:	Executive Presbyter/Presbytery Shepherd
Employment Status:	Full-time

Language Requirements:	
	English

Other Language:	Inupiaq, St. Lawrence Island Yupik and Korean desired but not required
Statement of Faith Required:	True
Clergy Couples:	True

Training/Certificate Requirements:	
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Other Training:	Ordained Pastor desired but not required
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Brief Church Mission Statement:

The Presbytery of Yukon seeks to bear witness in the world to the saving and transforming grace of God by caring for and connecting local ministries in the service of the triune God and of all God's creation.
Adopted October 2017

What is the congregation's or organization's vision for ministry:

The Presbytery of Yukon's vision statement, spelled out in the acronym: FISHERS (See https://pbyukon.org/mission_statement.html), centers ideas of connection and possibility. This is appropriate for a place where fishing has always been a common ground as people navigate a constantly shifting cultural backdrop.

We are a presbytery of four main cultural and linguistic groups with histories both deep and recent: the Iñupiaq and Saint Lawrence Island Yupik, who have inhabited their regions for thousands of years, and the comparatively newly-arrived speakers of English and Korean.

Eight of our congregations are accessible only by air, and only one has a Minister of Word and Sacrament. Many members of those eight congregations support themselves through hunting, fishing, whaling, and gathering; all live with the scars of having had entire generations taken as children and relocated to boarding schools or adopted into white families in order to erase their languages and cultures.

Our fifteen "road system" congregations are of various sizes, both urban and rural. Most of those have Ministers of Word and Sacrament.

While travel is complicated and our hearts are burdened by the intergenerational trauma facing many, we believe we are entering into a new era of building bridges of understanding and support among all of our congregations – in no small part due to the gift of technology that allows us to be Christ's hands and feet throughout this presbytery.

How do you feel called to reach out to address the emerging needs of your community or constituency:

With twenty-one congregations, we are a presbytery small in numbers. Two of our four spoken languages are unknown to Google Translate. Our lifestyles vary from those of subsistence hunters and whalers to those of urban executives. Some of our ancestors have lived here since before the days of Abraham and Sarah; other ancestors came from different continents just a few generations ago. Some of us were raised primarily in oral cultures; some grew up surrounded by the written word. Some of us are adept at navigating the rules, methods, and governing ways of our Scottish Presbyterian heritage, while such ways can be mystifying to others of us. Many of us communicate better in story, while others may impatiently wait for the final point.

Approximately half of our congregations were created by the Presbyterian Board of National Missions. When our denomination chose to close the Board, these congregations became the responsibility of the presbytery with funding from the General Assembly that is now nonexistent. We all believe in God, are dedicated to following Christ, and know we are being led by the Holy Spirit. We have deep relationships between congregations, developed over multi-day presbytery meetings where we lodge, break bread, and worship together - a reunion of believers. Our calling is to travel the road of faith with each other, learn from each other, and support each other.

How will this position help you to reach your vision and mission goals:

The talented and creative people in our presbytery are walking examples of faith in God. Whether we live in rural or urban environments, our commitment to serving Christ is strong. But we also face numerous hurdles: distance, occasional cultural disconnects, not enough funding for the significant expenses that are a function of the geography of our presbytery. We look for an Executive Presbyter who will be a Shepherd helping us to find ways to overcome some of those hurdles, a bridge builder who can encourage those with gifts and talents to connect with those in need. A matchmaker connecting mentors with those hungry for the training and the confidence to be faith leaders in their communities. Someone who hears faith leaders who are lonely in their work and reaches out, consistently, to let them know they are not forgotten. Someone who can reassure our members and leaders alike that they are part of the larger faith family of the presbytery. We also need a strong administrator who understands the importance of structure while acknowledging the very different needs of our congregations. Occasionally, conflict arises between congregations and pastors - we want our Executive Presbyter to be a support both to the pastors and to the congregations. Even though we live far from the rest of the denomination, it is important for us to maintain our identity as a vital part of the PCUSA. A strong Executive Presbyter can be an important channel of connection with the global faith family.

Provide a description of the characteristics needed by the person who is open to being called to this congregation and or organization:

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We hope that the one called as our Executive Presbyter will be stable in heart, secure in faith, and at peace in their soul. A shepherd who will view the challenges of our presbytery with love, as befits our churches and their people, who belong to Christ the Lord. We have observed that, of the people who choose to move to Alaska, some come to escape while others come because they can think of no other place they want to live. Pastors of both types have come to our presbytery over the years. The former have failed. The latter have thrived. We pray for an Executive Presbyter who will relish the opportunities available to them among our people of faith, and who will thrive.

One third of our congregations can only be reached by airplane - most often by small airplanes that land on gravel airstrips. In some seasons of the year, travel seems more like an "extreme sport." Yet such travel will be necessary in order for the one we are calling to alleviate the isolation of some of our congregants. While we are grateful for the benefits of technology, we recognize that Zoom is different than being in the room.

We need a shepherd to support the many Elders and lay leaders who have devoted themselves to keeping their congregations alive, to navigate the occasionally interesting intersections of four distinct cultural and linguistic groups within the presbytery, and to love us.

What specific tasks, assignments, and program areas will this person have responsibility?

Our Executive Presbyter will serve as the Presbytery office's head of staff, facilitating staff support to the various committees, commissions, task forces, and other entities of the Presbytery. We expect them to serve as primary staff support to the Presbytery Leadership Team (General Council), to work in partnership with the Stated Clerk in being a resource to presbytery entities, and to assure that all presbytery entities are functioning in compliance with the Book of Order and the bylaws of the Presbytery of the Yukon.

There will be days (and possibly weeks) of traveling in order to connect with the far-flung congregations throughout the presbytery. Sometimes, unsafe weather condition can turn what should be a short trip into a very long trip. Patience can be a helpful virtue, as can a sense of humor.

As many of our congregations without pastors are led by Elders, appropriate educational programs are vital. The Executive Presbyter will not be expected to lead those programs alone, but they will be expected to initiate and manage such programs to fruition.

Race and Reconciliation issues are an important part of our presbytery's focus as we attempt to acknowledge and atone for the church's role in perpetuating generations of trauma that manifest to this day. Our Executive Presbyter will be a force for peace and justice as we continually engage in this process.

Optional Links:

Presbytery of Yukon (<https://pbyukon.org>)

Presbytery of Yukon Churches (<https://pbyukon.org/churches.html>)

Synod of Alaska-Northwest (<https://synodnw.org>)

Leadership Competencies:

Compassionate

Hopeful

Spiritual Maturity

Communicator

Technologically Savvy

Advisor

Culturally Proficient

Strategy and Vision

Collaboration

Bridge Builder

Compensation and Housing: Cost of Living Calculator

Minimum Effective Salary: \$90,000

Housing Type: Housing Allowance

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References:				
Name	Address	Phone Numbers	Relation	Email
Molly Pederson	PO Box 184, Barrow AK 99723	(907) 602-9776	Elder Utqiagvik Presbyterian Church	kakianaaqpederson@gmail.com
Shelley Wickstrom	1847 W Northern Lights Blvd, Anchorage AK 99517	(907) 272-8899	Bishop Alaska Synod of ELCA	Aksynodbishop@gmail.com
Leisa Carrick	713 S Denali, Palmer AK 99645	(907) 715-4944	Interim Executive Presbyter, Presbyter of Yukon	leisaupc@gmail.com

Has the Pastor Nominating Committee and Search committee affirmed its intention to follow the Form Of Government in this regard?

Yes

Version Track Info: This MIF was last updated on 12/14/2022

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