

# PRESBYTERY OF MISSOURI RIVER VALLEY

## Administrative Commission for the Dissolution of Lowe Avenue Presbyterian Church

### Final Report to Presbytery

**Appointment of the Commission:** The Presbytery appointed the Commission on March 21, 2009 to assist in carrying out the dissolution of Lowe Avenue Presbyterian Church. Members are Rev. Russell Palmer, Rev. Charles Bulger, Rev. Richard Sleyster, Elder Peggy Mago (Lowe Avenue), Elder Sylvia Lanham (Bellevue, First), Elder Wallace Stern (Presbyterian Church of the Cross), and Elder David Kellogg (Presbyterian Church of the Master). Rev. Kevin Keaton, Executive Presbyter served in an ex officio capacity. The initial meeting of the Commission was convened by Rev. Steven Plank, PMRV Stated Clerk. The Commission elected Rev. Charles Bulger as moderator and David Kellogg as clerk.

**Meetings of the Commission:** The Commission held seven meetings. The minutes of those meetings, together with attached correspondence and other documents, are included with this report as Attachment 1. The members also met with the Lowe Avenue Session on May 12, 2009. Areas of responsibility were delegated to the commission members, who met separately with officers of Lowe Avenue on many occasions.

**Final Worship and Celebration:** At the request of the Lowe Avenue Session, the final worship was held at the church building on July 5, 2009, with a reception following. The service was led by Rev. Palmer, and all the members of the commission took part. The congregation filled the sanctuary to overflowing. The reception was provided by the Buckingham family in the church basement. The bulletin for the service is Attachment 2.

**Life and History of the Congregation:** A display celebrating the life of the congregation and various historical milestones was shown at the reception. A written history of the church is Attachment 3.

**Session and Other Records:** Working with the Lowe Avenue Clerk of Session, the Commission collected the records of the congregation and prepared them for shipment to the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The records were transferred to Stated Clerk of Presbytery for review and shipment. A list of the records is Attachment 4.

**Members of the Congregation:** The Clerk of the Session provided a list of the 17 current members at the time of dissolution. Rev. Bulger wrote a letter to each of those members encouraging them to transfer membership to another congregation. At the time of this report, we are aware of three members who have joined other congregations, and four members who are planning to join another church soon. Several of the members are homebound or in nursing homes. The Commission requested that the Stated Clerk of Presbytery ask nearby congregations to assume pastoral care of members who have not transferred. The Membership List is Attachment 5 and the letter to members is Attachment 6.

**Church Building and Land:** The Commission worked with the Presbytery's attorney and the Lowe Avenue Session to transfer title in the building and land to Presbytery. That transfer is complete. The Commission hopes that a use will be found for the building that will continue Christian ministry in the Lowe Avenue neighborhood. Failing that, the Commission further hopes that a way will be found to preserve and use the stained glass windows in an appropriate ministry.

**Other Church Assets:** The Lowe Avenue Session worked hard to see that assets were used to good purpose. Items that had been given as memorials were in some cases offered to the families who had given them. Other items were given to persons who could best make use of them. A large list of available items was publicized to the other churches of Presbytery. Some of those who received items made donations to the church. The remaining cash balance of \$7,919.66 was transferred to Presbytery.

**Claims:** Under paragraph 7 of its appointment, the Commission has the power to assert the claim of Presbytery to any property of the Lowe Avenue Presbyterian Church not known at this time or which may come to the church in the future as the beneficiary of a will or trust not known at this time. After inquiry, we are unaware of any such property, but we hereby publicly assert Presbytery's claim to such property which may become known in the future.

**Documents of Dissolution:** At the request of the Lowe Avenue Session, the dissolution date was set as July 5, 2009. The Commission worked with the Presbytery's attorney and the Session to assure that the appropriate resolutions were passed by the Session, and that the appropriate notice was given to the Nebraska Secretary of State regarding dissolution of the corporation.

**Acknowledgments:** The Commission is grateful for all the pastors, officers, and members of Lowe Avenue Presbyterian Church who made such a difference in the neighborhood and beyond over the 122 years of its existence. Of course, churches and communities everywhere will continue to feel Lowe Avenue's influence through the lives of children and adults who were nurtured there. We are grateful to Rev. Russell Palmer, the supply pastor who guided Lowe Avenue through the difficulties and challenges associated with concluding the ministry of the congregation. We particularly want to thank the Session members who worked so hard through the dissolution process.

Respectfully submitted,

Lowe Avenue Administrative Commission

By Rev. Charles L. Bulger, Moderator

By David G. Kellogg, Clerk