

NLS Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

March 24, 2026

E. C. In Attendance:

Brian Comeno, Pastor G. Karl Gaston, Carolyn Witham, Jerry Gray, Karen Weires, Tom Kirk, Heidi Schneiter, Brian Schwarz

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Brian C.

Opening Prayer

Pastor G. Karl offered an opening prayer.

Approval of Secretary's Report

Minutes from the previous Executive Committee meeting were reviewed and approved as revised, with no objections.

Treasurer's Report

Jerry provided a summary of the Treasurer's report.

- Current registrations for 2026 AG total approximately 58, with additional payments expected in March.
- The cruise deposit has been paid.
- Net income remains positive at approximately \$5,900 after deposit expenses.
- Approximately \$95,000 remains available.
- A scholarship contribution was received.
- Ongoing discussion with North Texas regarding potential scholarship support.
- No questions were raised.

Action:

- Treasurer's report accepted as presented.

Communications & Website Updates – Karen Weires

Karen reported:

- The Palanca upload link on the website was repaired and is now functioning properly.
- Current status:
 - 36 Palanca letters uploaded
 - 4 awaiting approval
- Suggested clearer communication on how to submit Palanca letters and encouraged submission of updated letters.
- Recommendation to include step-by-step instructions in the Conexiones newsletter and via email.

Decision:

- Karen will prepare instructions for Palanca submission and an article encouraging updated letters.

Constant Contact & Data Updates-Karen Weires

Discussion focused on improving accuracy of contact information.

Decision:

- A Google Form will be developed to collect and update contact information.
- Form will allow users to identify updates vs. new entries.
- Goal: Conduct updates twice per year.
- The draft form will be shared for EC review prior to publication.

Newsletter (Conexiones)-Karen Weires

- Articles for the upcoming Conexiones newsletter are nearly complete.

Annual Gathering Updates-Carolyn Witham

Carolyn reported:

- Eastern North Carolina is seriously considering hosting the 2028 Annual Gathering.

Brian C reported:

- Tucson and Southern California are also exploring hosting for 2028 or 2029.
- This could potentially secure hosting for the next three years.

Discussion followed regarding the **cruise option** for a future gathering:

- Cruise model may simplify financial logistics, with payments handled directly through the cruise line.
- Further clarification needed regarding Secretariat involvement.
- A follow-up Zoom meeting will be scheduled with Carolyn, Tom, Cindy, and Janet to finalize details.
- Timing of public announcements and articles will be carefully managed to avoid premature influence.

Decisions:

- No formal announcement until closer to June.
- Video update to be prepared shortly before publication.
- Website “Upcoming Events” link will eventually direct viewers to the video.

Spiritual Director Report – Pastor G. Karl

- Recently facilitated a Spiritual Directors Round Table with participation from Washington, North Carolina, and Arizona.
- Discussion included perspectives on a potential cruise gathering, which were generally positive.
- Another round table is planned for late April or early May.
- Pastor G. Karl identified a potential candidate for National Spiritual Director and will forward contact information for consideration by the Nominating Committee.

Secretary Update – Heidi Schneiter

- All 2025 meeting minutes have been uploaded to the website.
- Dave Leverenz, NLS Historian, confirmed he has received all requested documents.
- No additional issues reported.

Regional Updates-Tom Kirk

- North Carolina and Lighthouse were reported as supportive of a cruise gathering.
- Indian River Via de Cristo expressed willingness to assist.
- Strong weekend participation reported:
 - Some areas reaching or exceeding capacity.
 - High enthusiasm and healthy candidate numbers.
- Indian River postponed a men's weekend due to low enrollment.
- RC Meeting scheduled for April.

Ongoing Florida Secretariat Transition

- Continued difficulty contacting former leadership regarding trailer documentation and transition.
- Brian C. plans to attempt in-person follow-up during upcoming Florida travel.

Merchandise & Store Update – Brian Schwarz

- Store operations are good and expected to return a dividend.
- Pilgrim Guides are now locally printed at reduced cost.
- Current pricing (\$2.00) remains sustainable.
- Cards continue to be printed locally, avoiding shipping expenses.
- No immediate need to raise prices despite inflation.
- Symbols is the distributor for crosses

Sings the Rooster-Brian Schwarz

- To submit article for Conexiones
- NLS would accept and appreciate donations from Sings the Rooster

Annual Gathering

- EC to make flight arrangements. Ask Jerry for card information if needed.
 - Plan to be in Seguin no later than 2:00 pm Wednesday July 22, 2026.
 - Plan return flights after 3:00 pm Sunday July 26, 2026.

Nominating Committee

- Brian C. to contact Bob Lewis regarding chairing the Nominating Committee
- Backup Kim
- Ballot Counters
 - Brian Schwarz
 - Tom Kirk
 - Heidi Schneiter

Grant Writing Company

- Discussion was held regarding the hiring/investment of an outside company to train 2 members of the EC to navigate grant processes and grant leads
- **Action**
 - Jerry motioned to approve the hiring of the outside company (Foundation Research)
 - \$5995 cost
 - Pr. G. Karl seconded the motion
 - Unanimously approved-motion passes
- **Action**
 - Pr. G. Karl motioned to accept Jerry Gray and Brian Schwarz as the leaders of this grant effort, and to start the training and correspondence no later than April 30, 2026.
 - Tom Kirk seconded the motion
 - Unanimously approved-motion passes

Action Item

- Submit articles to Conexiones
- Jerry to get costs from the last 2-3 AG for EC costs.
- Jerry to move forward with the hiring of Foundation Research
- EC to make travel arrangements for 2026 AG

Adjournment

The meeting concluded with prayer at 5:50 pm PST.