

PROPOSED DOCKET AND HANDBOOK

ONE HUNDRED AND FOURTEENTH STATED MEETING

NORTHEAST GEORGIA PRESBYTERY

AUGUST 20, 2022

**HOSTED BY
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
185 E. HANCOCK AVENUE
ATHENS, GA**



Dear Friends,

Grace to you and peace in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and on behalf of the members and friends of First Presbyterian Church, welcome to Athens! We've been looking forward to welcoming you since August 2020, and thanks be to God, it appears that the third time may in fact be the charm.

The First Presbyterian Church of Athens was chartered on Christmas Day 1820. Our organizing pastor was Dr. Moses Waddel, who at the time was also the president of Franklin College, now known as the University of Georgia. For the first 35 years of the congregation's life, the church met in a building a few blocks away on what is now North Campus of UGA. In 1855, the church moved into its present facility on Hancock Avenue, and the pews and pulpit are original to the sanctuary.

However, as the old song says, the church is not a building, the church is not a steeple, the church is not a resting place, the church is a people! The mission of the First Presbyterian Church of Athens is, in response to God's grace, to create a community where people seek the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ, rejoice in worship, and go forth sharing the love of Christ with Athens and the world. We are delighted to be partners with you, our siblings in Christ throughout Northeast Georgia Presbytery, as we enter our third century of mission and ministry.

Now for some practicalities:

Parking – The front door of the church is located at 185 E. Hancock Avenue, but the entrance to the church parking lot is at 170 E. Dougherty St. There are also spaces in the church garage at the corner of College Avenue and Dougherty Street. When our spaces are full, our friends at First Christian Church, 268 W. Dougherty, have offered the use of their parking lot free of charge. It's a walk of approximately six minutes to First Presbyterian Church. There is also metered street parking throughout downtown Athens, and a multi-story paid parking deck two blocks away at 289 College Avenue.

Accessibility – On the Hancock Avenue side of the church, there is a ramp adjacent to the steps leading to the sanctuary. On the Dougherty side of the building, there is an elevator near the doors marked Weekday School.

Lunch – Lunch reservations are due by Monday, August 15, and may be made online <https://tinyurl.com/FPCPresbyteryLunch2022> or by contacting Jennifer Sunderlin, frontdesk@firstpresathens.org, 706-543-4338. Tickets are \$15, and checks may be made payable to First Presbyterian Church of Athens.

Childcare – Childcare reservations are due by Tuesday, August 8 and may be made by contacting Natalie Bishop, natalie@firstpresathens.org, 706-543-4338.

Covid – At the time of this writing, Athens-Clarke County's indoor mask ordinance is in effect. However, Governor Kemp's latest executive order requires private entities to actively opt-in to any local mask ordinances, and at the time of this writing, the Session has not taken that step. We encourage you to continue to evaluate your own personal risk level and take whatever precautions you feel are prudent. The meeting will be livestreamed at <https://www.youtube.com/c/firstpresathensga>.

We are eagerly anticipating your arrival in Athens, and if we can answer any questions or be of service, please do not hesitate to write or call.

May the peace of Christ be with you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. J. Baer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

Dr. Ryan J. Baer

Senior Pastor

Northeast Georgia Presbytery

114th Stated Meeting

August 20, 2022 – 10:00 a.m.
at First Presbyterian Church, Athens, GA

Call to Order and Opening Prayer Ruling Elder Sylvia McDonald, Moderator

Welcome Rev. Dr. Ryan Baer
Senior Pastor, First Presbyterian Church of Athens

Seating of First-time Commissioners, Corresponding Members, Moderator McDonald
and Introduction of Visitors

Declaration of Quorum Rev. Ed Rees, Stated Clerk

Approval of Docket Moderator McDonald

Approval of Consent Agenda

Minutes of May 2022 Presbytery Meeting

Committee on Ministry:

Recommendation #1: Grant status of Honorable Retirement to Rev. Emily Cheney

Recommendation #2: Dismiss Rev. Mark Medina to Carlyle Presbytery

pp. 5-6

Stated Clerk's Report Rev. Rees

Call to Worship Rev. Dr. Ryan Baer

Cry out with joy to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness. Come into God's presence with singing!

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. **And also with you.**

Let us worship God.

*Hymn 464

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

HYMN TO JOY

*Confession and Pardon

Merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart and mind and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. In your mercy, forgive what we have been, help us amend what we are, and direct what we shall be, that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways to the glory of your holy name.

* Passing of the Peace

Word

Prayer for Illumination Rev. Dr. Victor Aloyo
President, Columbia Theological Seminary

Scripture Lesson:

Psalms 30

Luke 10:1-11

Sermon *The Struggle for Peace* Rev. Aloyo

*Hymn 415 *Come, Labor On* ORA LABORA

*Affirmation of Faith – The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by

the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Offering

This morning's offering will go to support the Presbyterian Student Center @ UGA Next80 Campaign for building renovations.

Please make checks payable to Northeast Georgia Presbytery



Prayers of Thanksgiving and The Lord's Prayer

Sending

***Hymn 371**

Lift High the Cross

CRUCIFER

*Blessing and Charge

Special Remarks

Rev. Joyce Lieberman

Synod Executive/Stated Clerk, Synod of South Atlantic

pp. 7-8 Presbyterian Campus Ministry Report

Rev. Will Norman

pp. 9-13 Committee on Ministry Report

Rev. Tom Buchanan

Examination of Rev. Whitney Booth Lockard

Examination of Rev. Sharon Caldwell

Recognition of Honorably Retired Rev. Emily Cheney

pg. 14 Committee on Preparation for Ministry

Rev. Nadine Ellsworth-Moran

Presentation of Inquirer Thaddeus Dixon

pg. 15 Black Presbyterian Caucus Report

Rev. Otis A. Smith

pp. 16-39 General Assembly Commissioners' Reports

Elder Betty Jean Jordan and

Rev. Dr. Melvin Lowry

pg. 40 Carnesville/Hopewell Administrative Commission

Rev. Alex Stevens

First reading of Final Report and Time for questions

pg. 41 Congregational Connections Committee Report

Elder Betty Jean Jordan

Personnel Action Team Report

Rev. Paul Evans

12:30 PM – ORDER OF THE DAY: BLESSING AND LUNCH in Fellowship Hall

Alumni and friends of Columbia Theological Seminary are invited to a special seating area for lunch and fellowship with Rev. Dr. Victor Aloyo.

Announcements *(Please submit requests in advance to the Stated Clerk)*

Prayer and Adjournment

NEXT STATED MEETING:

Tuesday, October 25 at Monticello Presbyterian Church

Special thanks to those leading in worship: Rev. Dr. Victor Aloyo, President, Columbia Theological Seminary

Rev. Dr. Ryan Baer, Senior Pastor, First Presbyterian Church of Athens

Dr. John Coble, Director of Music, First Presbyterian Church of Athens

Stated Clerk's Report
Rev. Ed Rees

Many thanks to all the hard-working Clerks of Session who completed their record reviews this summer; I know this can seem like a mundane task, but maintaining timely and accurate records is essential for carrying out our work in a transparent and orderly manner.

As you know, each year we update the Parity Report to achieve the appropriate balance between Ruling Elders and Teaching Elders for service as Commissioners to Presbytery meetings. The Parity Report shows how many Commissioners each church may send, and the link to that report is found here: <http://www.negapby.org/s/Parity-2022-2023.pdf>.

We had hoped to present a final report on the status of the Ficklen Church and its property; however, the anticipated sale of that property did not materialize. The Administrative Commission for the Ficklen Church will continue to work toward the appropriate disposition of the property.

We have received the minutes of the Installation Commission for Rev. Dr. Brandi Casto-Waters as Senior Pastor of Reid Memorial Presbyterian Church (minutes follow this report). We thank the Commission for their work, which is now concluded, and celebrate with her and with that congregation as this new season of ministry begins.

On a personal note, let me express my deep gratitude to all for your patience and support this summer as I have strived to serve as both your Stated Clerk and Acting General Presbyterian. This has been a challenging but rewarding time, and I am very grateful for the spirit of collegial fellowship and constructive cooperation that prevails in our Presbytery.

**POLICY REGARDING
TIME LIMIT FOR PERSONS SPEAKING (Debate) AT PRESBYTERY MEETINGS**

(Approved by Presbytery October 23, 2007)

(Note: Presbytery can set aside such a rule when it deems necessary.)

When speaking at a Presbytery meeting:

1. Individuals are limited to speaking once and for no more than three minutes during discussion of a matter.
2. A bell may be used to signal when the speaker is near and at the end of his/her time.
3. Moderator alternates between "pro" and "con".
4. No one may speak more than once until every person who wishes to speak has had a opportunity to do so.
5. Presbytery may set a maximum time for debating an issue.

**Meeting of the Installation Commission
for Rev. Dr. Brandi Casto-Waters
Reid Memorial Presbyterian Church
August 7, 2022 @ 10:00am**

In attendance: Members and Guests of the Installation Commission of NEGA Presbytery

Elder Sherwood (Woody) Belangia, Reid Memorial Presbyterian Church
Rev. Andy Casto-Waters, Minister NEGA Presbytery
Elder Joslyn Fields, Covenant Presbyterian Church
Elder Mark Galvin, Oconee Presbyterian Church
Rev. Nadine Ellsworth-Moran, Reid Memorial Presbyterian Church, **commission moderator**
Dr. Pete Peery, Minister, Presbytery of Western NC
Dr. Buz Wilcoxon, Chaplain and Dean of Spiritual Life, Presbyterian College
Rev. Rindy Trudeau, honorably retired, NEGA Presbytery, excused absence

Guests of the Commission: Dr. Linda Hall and Dr. Walker Buckalew, Greer, SC

Meeting called to order and opened with prayer by Rev. Ellsworth-Moran who then stated that the purpose of this commission is to proceed as the representatives of Northeast Georgia Presbytery to install Rev. Dr. Brandi Casto-Waters as the Head of Staff/Senior Pastor of Reid Memorial Presbyterian Church in Augusta, GA.

The commission has before it two motions:

A motion was made by Marc Galvin that the benediction of the worship will also serve as the closing prayer for the meeting of this commission. Seconded by Joslyn Fields. Unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Sherwood Belangia that upon the filing of the meeting minutes with the NEGA Presbytery's Stated Clerk, this installation commission is dismissed. Seconded by Andy Casto-Waters. Unanimously approved.

No further discussion or actions were taken and the installation commission moved to the sanctuary to proceed with the installation service.

Respectfully submitted August 8, 2022.

Rev. Nadine Ellsworth-Moran, commission moderator



Presbyterian Campus Ministry, Inc
Report to NEGA Presbytery
August 20, 2022

An update on the progress of PCM's capital campaign and renovation of the Presbyterian Student Center (PSC) at 1250 S Lumpkin Street, Athens, GA 30605:

OVERVIEW

As of July 30, 2022, PCM has received gifts and pledges totaling \$190,000 (updated amount to be announced in spoken report) toward the renovation of the PSC. The estimated total cost of this renovation is \$1,000,000.

FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

HVAC and electrical is scheduled to be replaced by Superior Air Management of Athens between Thanksgiving 2022 and Jan 9, 2023, for a total expense of **\$217,800**.

A \$47,600 down payment has already been paid, and the remainder (\$170,200) needs to be secured as a loan, which PCM would begin to pay back in Feb. 2023.

Because the property belongs to the NEGA Presbytery, the securing of a loan by PCM requires Presbytery approval.

- **Loaning Entity:** likely will be Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program
- **Terms of Loan:** Creation Care interest rate = est. 2%, to be paid back over 5 years.
- **Total Remaining Cost + Interest = should not exceed \$185,000**

Our Presbytery's procedure calls for the Church Property Commission to review loan applications, and make recommendations to Presbytery regarding any approvals and guarantees. Since the loan application is still in process, it is anticipated that any recommendations from the Church Property Commission will come to the October Stated Meeting.

AN APPEAL TO THE PRESBYTERY

With gratitude for the decades of support from this presbytery, I am happy to report that the NEXT80 campaign is intentionally seeking—and has already received—financial support from beyond the NEGA Presbytery. It is fair and right that congregations whose members participate in and benefit from this ministry are invited to contribute to its thriving. It is also true that organizationally speaking, PCM exists within the care of this presbytery, and is not able to complete this campaign without the continuing investment of our own presbytery, its congregations and members in addition to those beyond its bounds.

With this in mind, we humbly ask the following:

- **Presbytery** - to consider a gift of 2.5% - 5% of the renovation cost, or between \$25K & \$50K over the next five years.
- **Congregations** - Sessions are invited to consider contributing between 0.5% and 1% of annual operating budget for the next 3 - 5 years (on top of whatever annual budget support is already contributed).
- **Members** - Individuals and families are invited to participate at any level, with the main thrust of the campaign seeking **100 Faithful Folks/Families** to contribute \$1,000/yr for the next 5 years (or \$5,000 at fewer installments, if you prefer).

*If **Presbytery + 15 congregations** (of NEGA's 48) w/ avg. annual budget of \$250,000 + **50 new folks/families** all give **at the minimum ask** noted above that would yield a contribution of **\$331,250**, or 1/3 the cost of renovation, and would put us within the range required to solicit foundation grants to complete the project.

REMAINDER OF THE CAMPAIGN PLAN

- Replacement of original storefront (exterior doors and windows) - est. **\$250,000**

- Rebuild Restrooms as single occupancy, gender neutral facilities - est. **\$150,000** including a wheelchair accessible / family restroom & shower.
- Kitchen Renovation to accommodate multiple food service - est. **\$75,000** ministries, and events (catering kitchen, not full commercial kitchen)
- Handicap accessible entryways - est. **\$50,000**
- New furniture, flooring, A/V, and lighting - est. **\$150,000**
- Design & Architecture Expense (\$25K already paid) - est. **\$75,000**
- Additional borrowing interest to be paid - est. **\$20,000**
- Misc./Incidentals (5%) - est. **\$50,000**
- **A Tithe:** If we can raise the funds: - **\$117,000**
to support other PCUSA Campus Ministries in GA

EST. TOTAL REMAINING: \$ 937,000.00

EST. COMPREHENSIVE TOTAL: \$1,170,100.00

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Will Norman
Executive Campus Minister
Presbyterian Student Center
@ The University of Georgia
<https://pscuga.org/next80>

Note: The Coordinating Team of Northeast Georgia Presbytery approved an offering at the Stated Meeting in support of the Presbyterian Student Center's Next80 Campaign. Please make checks payable to Northeast Georgia Presbytery, or donate online at:



Committee on Ministry
Rev. Tom Buchanan, Chair

Meetings: June 9, 2022; July 14, 2022; August 11, 2022

For Information:

1. Continuing to lift up prayers for the family of our beloved brother and colleague in ministry, the Rev. Jon Van Deventer, and for the congregation of Monticello Presbyterian Church.
2. Heard liaison reports from the following churches: Belle Terrace, Athens First, Oconee, Pleasant Hill, Jefferson, Dahlonga, Hebron, Westminster, Monticello, Clarkesville, Clayton, Mountain, Madison, Christ, Clifford Memorial, Reid Memorial, and Covenant Athens.
3. Added the Rev. Julie Ferguson, RE Linda Williams (MA-CE, Presbyterian School of Christian Education), and Jenn Wilson (ThM, Columbia Theological Seminary) to the Pulpit Supply List.
4. Acknowledged the resignation of the Rev. Stu Ritter from the COM, along with our gratitude for his faithful work with the Committee and Presbytery.
5. The COM's Manual of Operations has been extensively revised and approved, with the addition of an Appendix on "Ministers from Other Denominations."

Actions:

1. Approved the formation of an Associate Pastor Nominating Committee at Athens First.
2. Appointed the Rev. Tom Buchanan to serve as Moderator of Session at Oconee until August 31, 2022.
3. Approved the contract renewal between Pleasant Hill and the Rev. Craig Topple.
4. Appointed the Rev. Jacob Douylliez as Moderator of Session and Pulpit Supply at Monticello until an Interim Pastor begins service
5. Granted permission to Monticello to proceed with the formation of a Pastoral Nominating Committee.
6. Cleared the way for a 12-month Covenant Pastor contract to be drawn up between Belle Terrace and the Rev. Sharon Caldwell, contingent upon her reception as a Temporary Member by Northeast Georgia Presbytery.
7. Approve the contract, if the way be clear, between the Rev. Leigh Bonner and Athens First to serve as Interim Associate Pastor, effective September 1, 2022, and for Rev. Bonner (who is a member of Presbytery of Greater Atlanta) to labor within our bounds.

Recommendations:

1. Grant the status of Honorably Retired to the Rev. Emily Cheney, effective August 15, 2022.*
2. Dismiss the Rev. Mark Medina from Northeast Georgia Presbytery, effective August 20, 2022, in order to transfer to Carlyle Presbytery.*
3. Receive the Rev. Whitney Booth Lockard, transferring from Greater Atlanta Presbytery, into the membership of Northeast Georgia Presbytery, and approve her position as Associate Pastor at Commerce First United Methodist Church as a Validated Ministry.
4. Receive the Rev. Sharon Caldwell, on ordained minister in the AME Zion Church, as a Temporary Member of Northeast Georgia Presbytery (membership would be for the duration of her contract with Belle Terrace, thereby allowing her to serve the sacraments and moderate the Session), contingent upon (a) her pursuit of an approved course of study in Reformed Theology and Presbyterian Polity, and (b) ongoing mentoring from a Teaching Elder member of Northeast Presbytery.

* Recommendations #1 and #2 are included in the consent agenda.

Respectfully Submitted,
Tom Buchanan
Chair

Statement of Faith Journey

Whitney Booth Lockard

I was raised in the church, quite literally, as my mom worked in the office of our small Presbyterian church in Commerce, GA— doing everything short of preaching and playing the organ. My family was heavily invested in our community of faith and our lives were enriched and sustained by these relationships and this work. I was comfortable and felt safe in the church and stepped naturally into roles of leadership in our congregation and Presbytery throughout my childhood and teenage years. When I was in 9th grade, I attended a Christian retreat for high school students outside Charleston, SC. Before that, I felt solid in my faith but was wanting something more that I couldn't quite articulate yet. We were invited to participate in a silent retreat out on the beach and in the deliberate quietness and solitude of that exercise, I began to uncover that there was opportunity to have a personal relationship with God and that the door was open for me.

I had a difficult time reconciling my new-found spirituality with the church experience of my upbringing. I wanted to worship in new ways and sing different songs; I wanted to have deeper, more emotional and vulnerable conversations about faith like I had shared with my new friends on the retreat. My parents helped me remain connected with the community in Charleston, driving me back and forth for meetings and subsequent retreats – and taking along carloads of my friends from home so that they could share in this wonderful thing I had found. I was also an active member of the NEGA Presbytery Youth Council, so I grew up with a deep appreciation for our connectional church and the opportunities for leadership I was given as a young person. I loved serving in leadership on these retreats and felt my gifts were affirmed and celebrated which, along with the support of my home church, gave me some initial wonderings that ministry might be worth exploring in the future.

As I began college at Vanderbilt University, I hadn't thought too much about whether I would attend a church or put any energy toward my faith, but I found myself drawn to UKirk after I spotted a Montreat t-shirt in a crowd at freshman orientation and made my first college friend. I was deeply involved for most of my time at Vanderbilt and developed relationships with so many of the people who are still my closest friends and mentors.

Attending seminary didn't feel like a huge surprise to me or anyone else, as church and faith were threads running throughout my story thus far, but I didn't see ordained ministry in my future. During and after my time at Vanderbilt Divinity School, I worked for The Upper Room, assembling content for spiritual formation resources and eventually moving into a marketing role. I started working in youth ministry at Westminster Presbyterian (Nashville) on a short-term, part-time basis and 6 ½ years later in 2019, I left a full-time version of that job for my first ordained call as the Chaplain at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, GA. I loved serving such a religiously diverse campus community and felt my own sense of God broaden in that work.

I'm humbled and grateful that God speaks to me in this way, calling me in and out of seasons in a way that I could hear it and say "yes" – or, in some cases, "uh, okay." My spirituality has grown and changed so much over the last 20 years, yet I can look back and see how the Holy Spirit has guided and nudged me in each step to this place. Practices of discernment have always been natural connections points for me to remember what God has done and what God is doing in my life, which helps me to find center and listen for the still, small voice to guide my steps today and tomorrow as I seek to share the love of Christ.

Statement of Faith

Whitney Booth Lockard

I believe in God, our Creator who gives us life and invites us into loving relationship that continues to transform us as we work together to usher in the kingdom of God on earth. I believe that God's work as Creator is far from finished and, instead, loves us into new life with every breath, a reminder of God's unending grace. I believe the Holy Trinity shows us what it means to live in relationship and signifies the expansiveness of God to meet us where we are. God's expresses God's love for us in the sending of Christ to live in solidarity with us, experience the pain and joy of humanity, and show us how to love one another by loving us first. Just as Jesus washed the disciples' feet, never calling them to do something he wasn't also willing to do, we are called to respond in gratitude by living in celebrated relationship with God and with each other, washing the feet of the strangers and neighbors in our midst. The Holy Spirit is with us always, moving in, through, and among us in the love that we share with each other in the body of Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we may open ourselves to experience God and know God's love deeply and believe with confidence that God is here with us. It is in the stories of scripture, which I affirm as the "unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ", that God reveals God's self to us and invites us to read and study these texts in community so that we might continue to understand who God is and what God is doing in our midst.

I believe God calls us to be the church, created for relationship with God, with Creation, and with one another. As people of God, we are not alone in our efforts to love like Christ did because God is moving among us as the Spirit is present in every relationship we share. Loving God and loving others are inseparable; loving one another requires us to stand up for justice and practice peace in our communities. This means welcoming all of our siblings, giving them a place to belong and to know that they are God's beloved, in spite of what the world may have told them. Loving like this, opening our doors and our hearts, requires a vulnerability to sit with others in places that are not always comfortable or convenient, taking care of our neighbors with the radical hospitality that Christ demonstrated. I believe the church is thriving beyond the walls where we expect to find it and I am grateful to recognize the people of God at work both inside and outside our local congregations: making room at the table, clothing the naked, and sitting with the lonely, and standing up against oppressive forces. The table of our God is bountiful with more than enough seats for all to gather and share in the goodness of God's love.

I experience God with every breath, in every sight and scent of nature, in the stories of scripture, and in the love of this scattered human race that tries and tries again in our brokenness to love back. In the waters of baptism, God claims and marks us as beloved children. God forgives us and washes us clean, over and over, with sufficient grace—and invites us to celebrate that grace and reconciliation with one another in the breaking of bread at the Lord's Supper. God liberates us to live in Creation, to attempt to model the outrageous love of Jesus in community as the Holy Spirit lives and moves and breathes life into us every new day. I thank God for those who have shown me God's love and continue to help my tired eyes open to those flickers of light that shine through the darkness. The divine and holy one is here with us in community, in the silence, in the joy of dancing, in the places of deepest despair, and in the places we have yet to know. I believe we are called to respond in the utmost gratitude to a God whose love stretches beyond our wildest imagination.

Statement of Faith Journey

Sharon Childs Caldwell

"He touched me, oh, He touched me; And oh, the joy that floods my soul.
Something happened and now I know, He touched me and made me whole."

- Song by Bill and Gloria Gaither

That most precious moment finally arrived. What a relief, because after years of denial, doubt, depression, tears and restlessness... at last I totally surrendered. It had been a most personal and arduous journey. However, once I submitted to God's divine call upon my life more than 25 years ago, my life's trajectory was reset – forever!

Growing up I just considered myself a "good church girl." As a young wife and mother, I was always drafted to teach Sunday school, direct youth ministries and vacation Bible school. As I matured in the faith, I served gladly in several of my church's departments: Christian education, lay council, women's ministry, along with supporting home and overseas missions. In those early years, I never imagined myself beyond that of a typical lay church worker. Except... deep within the very core of my spirit, I have always acknowledged that stirring... the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit. Then, however, I just attributed it all to being that faithful "church girl."

Then, of course, life happened...

"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." Ecclesiastes 3:1
Between home, family, church and career, my life surged full steam ahead. The more trials, triumphs, and tragedies I experienced, the more I learned to rely on my Christian faith and my personal relationship with the Lord. Thusly, I grew bolder and stronger in Christ as I experienced His protection in bringing me safely through the storms of life. Ironically, I deliberately declined many opportunities God had placed before me. While it was my heart's desire to tell others of His lovingkindness and tender mercies, I still grappled with many personal insecurities.

Yet, I knew the Lord had a special work just for me. For He has blessed me generously with gifts to encourage and to comfort, to teach and even to lead. But *preach*? And the closer I came to the realization of His calling me to proclaim His Word... well, just like old Jonah, I ran in the opposite direction! Oh, did I mention I RAN? For years! And during that season, it seemed I was constantly beset with admonishment for suppressing my "God-given gifts."

Alas, I surrendered to God's will. It was sweet but it was not simple! Under the initial tutelage of my pastor and denominational leaders, I enrolled and completed my theological studies at ITC (Atlanta, GA); as well as completed the required four-year Conference Studies curriculum of the AME Zion Church.

To God be the glory for the things HE has done!

Statement of Faith
Sharon Childs Caldwell

All glory, honor, praise, and thanksgiving unto our God!

My five siblings and I were blessed with parents equipped with the faith, firmness and fortitude to introduce and guide us in Christian faith from the very beginning of our lives.

Therefore, I adhere to the solid belief of the Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent Triune God, who is our Heavenly Father Almighty. I believe He is the Maker of heaven and earth, and all that dwells within. I know our God is loving, benevolent, and sovereign.

I believe in Jesus, the Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, and in the power and the presence of His Holy Spirit. It is through faith in Christ, and His sacrifice on that dreadful cross at Calvary, where He suffered, bled, and died that humankind, through the confession of our many sins are redeemed and saved from all the sins of the world!

Oh, what Good News that is ours to proclaim!

I believe in the infallible authority of the Bible as God's Holy Word. I believe as Christ followers, we are to continue, by His command until His coming again, to receive the consecrated elements of Holy Communion. I believe, as well, we are to receive baptism by water and the Holy Spirit. Until He returns, we are to continue to worship God in spirit and in truth, to encourage and build up the believers, and extend our Christian faith to all those with ears... let them hear and thus believe!

[RETURN TO DOCKET](#)

Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)

Rev. Nadine Ellsworth-Moran, Chair

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry met on July 11 at First Presbyterian Church, Greensboro. Thaddeus Dixon met with the committee as a potential Inquirer. After interviewing Mr. Dixon and reviewing his application to become an Inquirer, he was unanimously approved by the committee.

The Committee also reports that two of its members, Rev. Colin Pettigrew and Rev. Dallas Thompson, have asked to step down from the committee for individual reasons. We thank them for their service and wish them well in the season ahead.

[RETURN TO DOCKET](#)

REPORT OF THE NEGA CHAPTER
NATIONAL BLACK PRESBYTERY CAUCUS

The Southeast Region of the Nation Black Presbyterian Caucus, Presbyterian Church (USA) met July 14-15, 2022 at the Crown Plaza Airport Hotel, Jacksonville, FL.

There were Elder Representatives from 7 Presbyteries of the Synod of the South of South Atlantic. The following Elders attended from the Northeast Georgia Presbytery:

1. Elder Earline Smith
2. Elder Robert Patten
3. Rev. Otis A. Smith

This year's theme is” **Reflecting on the past, changing the present to make a better future**”.

The Mission of the Nation Black Presbyterian Caucus is to serve Jesus Christ, and enrich the Black Presbyterian congregations and their communities, through our commitment to congregational enhancement advocacy, social and racial justice; and challenging the Presbyterian Church (USA) when it fails to take seriously the needs of the poor, oppressed and disenfranchised.

The National President, Rev. Dr. Charles C. Heyward, Sr. (Retired) shared his vision: **“To promote Church growth and congregational enhancement through shared ministry of Sessions with their context”**.

We hope to use President Heyward's vision statement to revitalize the caucus activities in NEGA.

There were many workshops and discussions, but the one that was most interesting to me was the one shared by Dr. Carlton D. Johnson of the Office of Theology Formation and Evangelism. In his workshop on “Vital Congregations Initiative” he stated that there are seven (7) Marks of congregational Vitality. They are as follows:

1. Authentic Intentional Evangelism
2. Lifelong Discipleship
3. Intentional, Incarnation Focus
4. Empowering Servant Leadership
5. Spiritual -inspired Worship
6. Caring Relationships
7. Ecclesial Health

We are prepared to discuss these Marks with any and all the Sessions of the NEGA Presbytery.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Northeast Georgia Presbytery invite Rev. Dr. Diane Moffett, President and Executive of the Presbyterian Mission Agency as Guest Speaker for Presbytery's Celebration of Black History in February 2023

MEMBERSHIP IN THE NBPC IS OPEN TO ALL WHO SUPPORT ITS MISSION



Report from the 225th General Assembly

I'm excited to bring you good news from General Assembly! Last fall I was asked to be Northeast Georgia Presbytery's ruling elder commissioner to this year's General Assembly. I agreed because I figured I might never have another chance, and my instincts (the Holy Spirit?) told me that I should do it. I didn't know exactly what I was getting myself into, but my instincts were right. It has been a great blessing.

General Assembly meets biennially (i.e., every other year). The last General Assembly in 2020 was hastily converted into an all-virtual format because of COVID. Because the 2020 General Assembly was virtual, some of its work had to be deferred until this year's General Assembly. This year's General Assembly is also historic because it is the first to be held in a hybrid format. General Assembly work is done through committees as well as plenaries. (Plenary is a fancy word that means everyone together.) The first plenaries were held in a hybrid format on June 18, followed by a wonderful and meaningful Juneteenth worship service the next day. After that, to reduce COVID risk, four groups of commissioners met on a staggered schedule for in-person committee meetings. I served on the Moving Forward/Vision 2020 Committee, which was part of the fourth and last in-person group that met June 30 – July 2. The following week, July 5 – 9, plenaries met virtually to vote on all committee recommendations.

I especially want to commend the Young Adult Advisory Delegates (YAADs) at this 225th General Assembly. YAADs have voice and vote within committees and voice with an advisory vote in the entire General Assembly body. There were three in my committee, whom we lovingly referred to as our trinity of YAADs. They brought us great wisdom, leadership, and humor in committee, and I was also so proud of one in particular who spoke in the full General Assembly.

Each committee receives items of business to consider. Often these are recommendations from commissions, special committees, or task forces who have done detailed and difficult work between the biennial meetings of General Assembly. Committees make recommendations to the entire General Assembly on each item of business (e.g., approve, approve with amendment, approve with comment, refer, or disapprove). The General Assembly then has the final vote.

Particularly in the full General Assembly, it could get tedious as we worked through all the items of business, sometimes with amendments, amendments to amendments, substitute motions, rescinding of a previous vote, etc., etc. Everything was done according to Robert's Rules of Order. Incidentally, the process reminded me very much of model UN in high school. Believe it or not, all this structure actually helped because it allowed us to address an enormous amount of business in the available time while making room at the table for all voices to be heard. Our PC(USA) emphasizes the importance of all voices being heard, especially those of marginalized people. How empowering to witness this firsthand.

So how is all this structure good news for Northeast Georgia Presbytery? It means we are not flapping in the wind by ourselves. We are part of a connectional church. We have brothers and sisters in our congregations, presbytery, synod, and the entire General Assembly who share in our struggles and joys. This also gives us a lot of resources as we seek to live out God's call to us. Let me share with you some specifics from the Moving Forward/Vision 2020 Committee, which I served on, that can invigorate, even revitalize, Northeast Georgia Presbytery.

First, are you aware of the PC(USA)'s Matthew 25 initiative? Our Presbyterian Mission Agency, which directs the mission programs of our denomination, developed the Matthew 25 initiative. Remember that Matthew 25 talks about Jesus gathering the nations to himself and proclaiming that what we did or didn't do for the least of these, we did or didn't do for him. A Matthew 25 group commits to embracing one or more of the following focuses:

- **Building congregational vitality** by challenging people and congregations to deepen their faith and get actively and joyfully engaged with their community and the world.
- **Dismantling structural racism** by advocating and acting to break down the systems, practices and thinking that underlie discrimination, bias, prejudice and oppression of people of color.
- **Eradicating systemic poverty** by working to change laws, policies, plans and structures in our society that perpetuate economic exploitation of people who are poor.

These focuses are biblical because they seek justice and address the needs of the poor and other marginalized groups, which is what Jesus did. Several churches in our presbytery are already Matthew 25 congregations. I encourage all of our churches as well as Northeast Georgia Presbytery itself to become a Matthew 25 group.

My sense is that my church and the others in our presbytery are completely on board with building congregational vitality. Especially after going to General Assembly, I believe that the way we can build our congregational vitality is by working on the other two focuses, dismantling structural racism and eradicating systemic poverty. However, we are more hesitant, even resistant to these latter two focuses.

Let me speak specifically to dismantling structural racism. It is *not* about pointing fingers or accusing anyone of being a racist. Instead, it is about becoming aware of and addressing systems that disadvantage people of color. Usually, we have been born into these systems. We are not being accused of creating these systems, but we have a God-given responsibility to dismantle them to promote justice. These systems exist in our larger society and, God forgive us, even within the church itself. I will give you two specific examples to illustrate structural racism.

- 1) Cash bail – When someone is accused of a crime, they have to pay bail. If cash is required and they don't have it, they get put in jail – before their guilt or innocence has even been determined. It's a modern form of debtor's prison that disproportionately affects people of color and poor people. Often these are misdemeanor crimes. Furthermore, if the accused can't pay bail, they might face further complications such as job loss or family separation because they can't care for their children. At General Assembly we learned about The Bail Project, an organization that pays bail for people who can't afford it. They restore the presumption of innocence, reunite families, and challenge a system that criminalizes race and poverty. The Bail Project seeks to end cash bail and create a more just, equitable, and humane pretrial system.
- 2) 80% of black churches within the PC(USA) do not have an installed pastor. The National Black Presbyterian Caucus conducted a study to determine the root cause of this. It is because they cannot afford to pay pension dues and medical plan premiums required by the PC(USA) for pastors.

Our churches and Northeast Georgia Presbytery do not exist for our own good. We exist to show the love of God to the world. God is calling us to something new. Matthew 25 gives us vision to take part joyfully in God's work in the world. It's time to roll up our sleeves and truly engage with the world – with people who don't look like us, have the same life experiences we do, or believe like us. That's what loving God and loving our neighbor as ourselves is all about. As our PC(USA) Stated Clerk Rev. J. Herbert Nelson II puts it, we have to get off our blessed assurance.

That brings me to the Guiding Statement that came from my General Assembly committee, Moving Forward/Vision 2020. Matthew 25 is our missional action, what we are supposed to do. The Guiding Statement is how we are to be as we pursue our missional action.

The Guiding Statement is included as an attachment to this report. Please take the time to read it. You may notice that the first letter of the main points of the Guiding Statement spell PC(USA). The special

committee that developed the Guiding Statement said they didn't set out to make that acrostic and were afraid people would think it's gimmicky, but they said that's how the Holy Spirit led them. I think it's really cool.

The Presbyterian Publishing Corporation of the PC(USA) will be developing curricula for the Guiding Statement, but several resources are already available. One is an engagement tool to start exploring the Guiding Statement, which is also included as an attachment to this report. Your session, a Sunday school class, a presbytery committee, or other group might want to use this engagement tool. The other resource is a beautiful hymn entitled "This Is Who We Are." The words are included as an attachment to this report. An mp3 file is also available for listening.

And so, God calls the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be: **Prayerful, Courageous, United, Serving Alive.**

Thanks be to God.

Betty Jean Jordan
Ruling Elder Commissioner
Monticello Presbyterian Church

3 Attachments: Vision 2020 Guiding Statement
Vision 2020 Engagement Tool
"This Is Who We Are" Sheet Music



The Guiding Statement

Our Reformed heritage understands the power of words and we humbly offer this Guiding Statement as speaking truth and declaring life.

The 2020 Vision Team was mandated by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and charged with developing a guiding statement for the denomination as it moves into the future.

In the faithful desire to discern the will of God we listened throughout the denomination and beyond, hearing hope and frustration, expectation and anxiety. Along our journey even when it is hard to see the way forward, God has spoken and continues to speak to us in these times and places.

Therefore, with renewed energy, we believe God calls the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be:

Prayerful

- Confessing our sin to God and those we have wronged, we accept our responsibility for the brokenness in the world and in ourselves. In Christ we are assured of forgiveness and freed to forgive others.
- We ask the Holy Spirit to direct and guide us as we actively listen to Scripture and fully engage in the joys and challenges of life in this present world.
- By grace and love Christ binds us together, cleanses us in the waters of baptism, nourishes us at the Lord's table, and sends us out to share the Good News.

Courageous

- Reformed and always being reformed, we follow the Holy Spirit in new and imaginative ways to places we have not yet been.
- We foster the hope of reconciliation in Christ who transforms the world through healing individuals, communities, and creation.
- We work for God's justice and peace for all people in every land, walking with the vulnerable, the marginalized, the oppressed, and the abused.

United

- As members of the Church universal, we are Christ's disciples, called by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit.
- Against forces that seek to divide, Christ compels us to bear witness to a love that connects communities across great differences.
- We approach others in a spirit of openness and trust as we follow Jesus Christ in respecting the freedom of other religions, worldviews, and traditions.

Serving

- Gratefully following the One who washed his disciples' feet, we listen to our neighbors, working to meet their practical needs.
- We partner with others to become the hands and feet of God in the world, showing compassion and generosity to all creation.
- The Holy Spirit pushes us beyond the familiar, meeting people where they are as we share Christ's transformative love.

Alive

- We are people of the resurrection: though death surrounds us, we are not afraid because we follow the One who was raised from the tomb.
- The Holy Spirit gives us courage to trust each other and build a community that reflects the fullness of God's image in humanity: beautifully diverse in age, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexuality, physical and mental ability, geography, theological conviction, and viewpoints.
- In the sure and certain hope of resurrection, we joyfully testify that the Church and its members are called to follow Christ's model by risking all, even life itself, for the sake of the Gospel.

And so, God calls the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be: **Prayerful, Courageous, United, Serving, Alive.**

Thanks be to God.

The Presbyterian Church (USA)



VISION
2020

Invitation to Engage with the
Guiding Statement

Invitation to Engage with the Guiding Statement (PCUSA)

Introduction

What is Vision 2020?

- The Assembly Committee on the Way Forward recommended to the 222nd General Assembly (2016) that the Co-Moderators name a “2020 Vision Team” of fifteen people **to develop a GUIDING STATEMENT for the denomination and make a plan for its implementation with all deliberate speed.** The process of developing such a guiding statement will help us to name and claim our denominational identity as we seek to follow the Spirit into the future.
- Using scripture passages for our opening exercises, the 2020 Vision team held listening sessions with presbyteries, congregations, synod leaders, groups at the Big Tent, the Association of Presbyterian Christian Educators, Seminaries, and with Campus Ministries over a period of fourteen months.
- Some of the questions used in listening sessions are listed below. They are in this exercise as a way to invite you (your group) into vision work. Take a minute to complete.
 - Who are we? What makes us unique as _____[Presbyterians]?
(your church/organization/ministry)
 - What breaks God’s heart in your community?
 - Where do you encounter God’s joy, love and grace in your community?
 - How is _____[the Presbyterian Church (USA)] relevant?
(your church/organization/ministry)
 - What do we, _____ or the PCUSA need to let go of?
(your church/organization/ministry)
 - What do we, _____ or the PCUSA need to hold on to?
(your church/organization/ministry)
 - Who or what is missing “at the table” as we ask ourselves these questions?

Opening: Engaging the Word¹

As indicated above, each time the Vision 2020 Team met, we began by centering in scripture. You invited to choose either passage (see attached):

- Habakkuk: 1:1 – 2:3 (*with specific attention to verses 2: 2 – 3*)
- Luke 10: 1-11
- Ask someone to read it out loud while you or the group just listens.
- Ask someone to read the passage a second time.

¹ Other texts to engage: Matthew 25, 1 Sam. 3, Proverbs 19:21, Matt. 26: 1-13. If using w/ group, divide into groups & assign each a text. This exercise is an adaptation of Lectio Divina.

- During the second reading², grab pencil or pen. As you listen to the passage the second time:
 - Listen for God’s action or voice.
 - Look for words or phrases that “pop-out.” Make note by underlining, circling or drawing.
 - Make note of questions and the way this reading informs your understanding of God.
 - How does this passage enlighten your understanding of God’s Vision?

Engaging the Guiding Statement (attached)

- With a copy of the Guiding Statement in front of you, read³ it out loud.
- Pause, take some time to look at each section.
 - Look for words or phrases that “pop-out.” Make note by underlining, circling or drawing within that section.⁴
 - Listen for God’s action or voice.
 - How does this vision invite _____ to participate in God’s grace-filled community⁵?
(you, your church/organization/ministry)
 - Make note of questions and the way this reading informs your understanding of God.
 - How does this passage enlighten your understanding of how the Guiding Statement can inform and understanding of _____ or the PCUSA’s Vision?
(you, your church/organization/ministry)

Closing (two options)

1. **Musical Reflection:** If available, listen to Tracy Keenan’s song, *This is Who we Are*.

2. **Vision 2020 Guiding Statement Prayer**

- We **pray** the Holy Spirit continues moving in life-affirming and healing ways.
- We pray we have the **courage** to speak, to engage, to hear, and to follow.
- We pray that we can be **united** in our diversity that we can find our commonality in our core – the risen Christ, who alone redeems the world!
- We pray that we will **serve** boldly and in a way, that heals the wounds of the world and ushers in “Thy Kingdom, Thy Kindom Come.”
- We pray that we would be **alive** with vivaciousness and a strength that is birthed only through knowing that death will never have the final say, that death becomes a necessary new birth for all who follow Christ.
- We pray that God, who alone breathes life, and makes hearts soft would speak with clarity through the Holy Spirit to each who are gathered and to the fullness of the church not present (today) allowing these simple (and simply challenging) words to become the guiding statement of what it means for us to be faithful people of God, faithful followers of Christ, and faithful to the voice of the Holy Spirit who dwells within, allowing us to indeed live into the fullness of what it means to be part of the Presbyterian Church (USA) **Prayerful, Courageous, United, Serving, Alive!**⁶

² If more than one person in the room, invite another voice to read the second time through.

³ If more than one person in the room, invite different voices to read each section.

⁴ Digging Deeper:

- What biblical narrative(s) come up in your mind as you listen to the guiding statement?
- Where or How does the Guiding Statement confront or convict you?

Further notes about the 2020 Vision Team's Process

- After listening sessions across the country (2017), the team met for three face-to-face gatherings to assimilate information, pray and listen for God's guidance and direction.
- The team was acutely aware of the time constraints and the deadline of producing information for the 2018 General Assembly. They recognized that the challenge was similar in many ways to what congregations, presbyteries, synods, GA committees, school boards, non-profit leaders, and a variety of other groups face during their own vision process.
- The words from Habakkuk, "wait for it," provided an adaptive centering. The team confesses to the pressure of our work, the time constraints, and the ever-present temptation to default to quick "fix-it" it answers.
- As we wrestled, we prayed, paused to listen, and reflected on our task
 - Read and listen to the words from Ecclesiastes 3: 1-4 and Psalm 130: 5-6.⁷
 - Reflect on a selection from Kathleen Norris's devotion on Time.⁸

Gradually my [our] perspective on time changed.

*In our culture, time can seem like an enemy:
it chews us up and spits us out with appalling ease.
But the monastic perspective welcome time as a gift from God,
and seeks to put it to good use
rather than allowing us to be used up by it...
Liturgical time is essentially poetic time,
oriented toward process rather than productivity,
willing to wait attentively
in stillness, rather than always pushing
to "get the job done."*

- Right as we were finishing our last face-to-face meeting (2017) the waiting provided reward. Each section of the Statement came together, and we left knowing we faithfully listened to the Holy Spirit's guidance, captured the essence of what we heard, and sent our draft Guiding Statement to GA 2018.
- The 223 General Assembly (2018) received the draft Guiding Statement, gave thanks to the Vision 2020 for their work, and in preparation for GA 2020, asked us to listen to some of their critique, make edits and come back to GA with our final recommendation.

As you reflect, respond and are informed by the Guiding Statement, we invite you to **TRY** it (in your ministry setting). Experiment with ways to make the spirit of the Statement "come alive!" Let us hear about how God showed up in the process of your work.

Share your story:

Engage with #PCUSA2020, or pcusa2020@gmail.com to share your Story.

⁷ Additional suggested passages: Genesis 32: 22-32.

Engaging the Word

Habakkuk 1 – 2: 3

The oracle that the prophet Habakkuk saw.

The Prophet's Complaint

² O Lord, how long shall I cry for help,
and you will not listen?

Or cry to you "Violence!"
and you will not save?

³ Why do you make me see wrongdoing
and look at trouble?

Destruction and violence are before me;
strife and contention arise.

⁴ So the law becomes slack
and justice never prevails.

The wicked surround the righteous—
therefore judgment comes forth perverted.

⁵ Look at the nations, and see!
Be astonished! Be astounded!

For a work is being done in your days
that you would not believe if you were told.

¹² Are you not from of old,
O Lord my God, my Holy One?
You^[b] shall not die.

**I will stand at my watchpost,
and station myself on the rampart;
I will keep watch to see what he will say to
me,
and what he^[a] will answer concerning my
complaint.**

² **Then the Lord answered me and said:
Write the vision;**

**make it plain on tablets,
so that a runner may read it.**

³ **For there is still a vision for the appointed
time;**

it speaks of the end, and does not lie.

**If it seems to tarry, wait for it;
it will surely come, it will not delay.**

Luke 10:1-12

After this the Lord appointed seventy^[a] others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. ² He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. ³ Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. ⁴ Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. ⁵ Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' ⁶ And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. ⁷ Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. ⁸ Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; ⁹ cure the sick who are there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'^[b] ¹⁰ But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, ¹¹ 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.'

This is Who We Are

Music by Tracy Keenan and Aisha Brooks-Lytle

Words by Tracy Keenan

C/E D/F# G Cadd2 Cadd2/A D7sus D7 G/B Csus2

We are peop-le of prayer, peop-le of cour-age, and peop-le who dare,

5 C/E D/F# G C9 Am7 Am7/D

We are peop-le un-it-ed to serve, — be-cause we're peop-le who care, and we're a-

9 Em11 F9add6 FM7 C/A D7 G/B Csus2

live and ris-ing, stir-ring and stirred — by the life-breath-ing Word,

13 EbM7 F6add2 Gsus G EbM7 F6add2 Gsus G

This is Who We Are — This is Who We Are —

VERSE 2

God gives grace upon grace
To recognize Jesus in each neighbor's face
And God lives, coaxing us into the new
With Spirit ageless and brave

CHORUS

VERSE 3

Jesus, life's very Bread
Burst through the grave to give life to the dead
And Jesus calls us to live into love,
Because the time is at hand

CHORUS AFTER VERSE 3

*To be alive and rising
Stirring and stirred
By the life-breathing Word
This is who we are.*

REPEAT VERSE 1 and CHORUS

**225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH USA
THEME: FROM LAMENT TO HOPE
HEBREW 11:1**

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT: MELVIN GORE LOWRY, HONORABLY RETIRED TEACHING ELDER

INTRODUCTION

FIRST, GIVING HONOR TO GOD WHO IS MY ALL IN ALL, I ALSO GIVE THANKS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE NORTHEAST GEORGIA PRESBYTERY FOR BESTOWING UPON ME THE HONOR OF REPRESENTING YOU AT THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH USA.

MY TASK, IN THE NEXT FEW PAGES, IS TO CONDENSE THE WORK OF HUNDREDS OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY STAFF, WORKERS, RULING ELDERS, TEACHING ELDERS, THEOLOGICAL ADVISORY DELEGATES, ECUMENICAL ADVISORY DELEGATES, AND MISSIONARY ADVISORY DELEGATES (OF WHICH OUR OWN REVEREND CHERYL BARNES WAS A REPRESENTATIVE) FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD INTO A SUCCINCT REPORT.

I WILL BEGIN WITH A BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF HEBREW 11:1 AND HOW THE SPIRIT OF THAT PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE GUIDING OUR WORK FROM START TO FINISH. ***"NOW FAITH IS THE ASSURANCE (SUBSTANCE) OF THINGS HOPED FOR, THE CONFIDENCE (EVIDENCE) OF THINGS NOT SEEN."*** THE AUTHOR GOES ON TO SAY, ***"INDEED, BY FAITH OUR ANCESTORS RECEIVED APPROVAL. BY FAITH WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE WORLDS WERE PREPARED BY THE WORD OF GOD, SO THAT WHAT IS SEEN WAS MADE FROM THINGS THAT ARE NOT VISIBLE."*** (NRSV)

THE AUTHOR GOES ON TO "CALL THE ROLL" OF HEROES AND HEROINES OF THE FAITH WHO ANSWERED THE CALL TO SERVE AND TO MAKE WITNESS TO THE GLORY OF THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB IN THE TIME IN WHICH THEY LIVED. FURTHERMORE, THE AUTHOR STATES IN THE BEGINNING OF CHAPTER 12, ***"THEREFORE, SINCE WE ARE SURROUNDED BY SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES, LET US ALSO LAY ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT, AND THE SIN THAT CLINGS SO CLOSELY, AND LET US RUN WITH PERSEVERANCE THE RACE THAT IS SET BEFORE US, LOOKING TO JESUS THE PIONEER AND PERFECTER OF OUR FAITH, WHO FOR THE SAKE OF THE JOY THAT WAS SET BEFORE HIM ENDURED THE CROSS, DISREGARDING ITS SHAME, AND HAS TAKEN HIS SEAT AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE THRONE OF GOD."***

SUMMARY: I BELIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT MOVED IN SUCH A WAY THAT THOSE OF US WHO ASSEMBLED IN LOUISVILLE AND THOSE WHO ASSEMBLED VIRTUALLY, AT HOME OR OFFICE, TO DO THE WORK OF THE CHURCH, FELT THE ABIDING PRESENCE OF THOSE "HEROES AND SHEROES" CALLING US TO THE WORK OF FAITH THAT WAS BEFORE US. WORK THAT CAN ONLY BE JUDGED BY THOSE GENERATIONS WHO WILL FOLLOW US. WORK, THAT IS MY HOPE, AND SURELY, THE HOPE OF ALL YOU SERVED AT THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY, WOULD BE CONSIDERED WORTHY OF THAT FOR WHICH WE HAD BEEN COMMISSIONED.

WORSHIPFUL WORK: PART 1

I DON'T RECALL WHERE I FIRST ENCOUNTERED THE PHRASE, "WORSHIPFUL WORK" HOWEVER THE PHRASE CAN BE DEFINED AND ILLUSTRATED BY WHAT THE COMMISSIONER'S WERE CALLED TO DO AT THE ASSEMBLY. A QUICK DEFINITION OF WORSHIPFUL WORK MIGHT BE ***TO LITERALLY TURN ONES WORK INTO WORSHIP AND ONES WORSHIP INTO WORK.*** WITH THAT DEFINITION, OUR WORSHIPFUL WORK BEGAN (AFTER SUCH THINGS AS ARRIVING AT OUR DESTINATION, CHECKING INTO THE HOTEL AND WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY STAFF, AND

GETTING ORIENTED OR RE-ORIENTED TO OUR SURROUNDINGS) WITH AN OPENING WORSHIP SERVICE AT THE PRESBYTERIAN CENTER ON SATURDAY, JUNE 18, 2022. BEING SURROUNDED BY SUCH A CLOUD OF WITNESSES MADE THE EXPERIENCE SURREAL. IT WAS LIKE THE DAY OF PENTECOST, PRESBYTERIAN STYLE.

BRIEFLY, I'D LIKE TO CONCENTRATE ON THE SCRIPTURE, SERMON TOPIC, AND CLOSING HYMN FOR THAT SERVICE. CO-MODERATOR OF THE 224TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY, THE REVEREND GREGORY BENTLEY, WAS THE PREACHER AND READ FROM MICAH 6:6-8. ***"WITH WHAT SHALL I COME BEFORE THE LORD, AND BOW MYSELF BEFORE GOD ON HIGH? SHALL I COME BEFORE HIM WITH BURNT OFFERINGS, WITH CALVES A YEAR OLD? WILL THE LORD BE PLEASED WITH THOUSANDS OF RAMS, WITH TEN THOUSANDS OF RIVERS OF OIL? SHALL I GIVE MY FIRSTBORN FOR MY TRANSGRESSION, THE FRUIT OF MY BODY FOR THE SIN OF MY SOUL? HE HAS TOLD YOU, O MORTAL, WHAT IS GOOD, AND WHAT DOES THE LORD REQUIRE OF YOU BUT TO DO JUSTICE, AND TO LOVE KINDNESS, AND THE WALK HUMBLY WITH YOUR GOD?"***

THE SERMON TOPIC WAS, ***"FROM RELIGIOSITY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS."*** REV. BENTLEY EXPOUNDED ON THE CONTROVERSY GOD HAD WITH GOD'S PEOPLE AS RELATED TO THE TEXT. REV. BENTLEY ALSO MENTIONED THE CONTROVERSY GOD HAS WITH GOD'S PEOPLE IN OUR DAY AND TIME. HE EXPOUNDED ON THE CONTROVERSY GOD HAS WITH US AS IT RELATES TO THE ISSUE OF CLIMATE CHANGE; HE EXPOUNDED ON THE CONTROVERSY GOD HAS WITH US AS IT RELATES TO THE ISSUE OF PREDOMINANTLY OLD WHITE MEN DECIDING WHAT IS RIGHT FOR A WOMAN TO DO WITH HER OWN BODY (ROE VS WADE); HE EXPOUNDED UPON THE ISSUE OF THE RISE OF RACISM AND WHITE SUPREMACY THAT WAS ONCE THOUGHT TO BE DEAD, BUT IS RISING AGAIN IN THE LAND; HE EXPOUNDED ON THE CHURCH'S (CATHOLIC) SEEMING LACK OF INFLUENCE IN AND ON THE ISSUES OF OUR DAY OR OUR COMPLIANCE IN THOSE ISSUES.

THEN REV. BENTLEY URGED THE CHURCH (THE ASSEMBLY) TO NOT ONLY CONCENTRATE ON THE WORDS GOD TOLD MICAH TO SAY TO THE PEOPLE BUT TO MAKE THOSE WORDS OUR CALL TO ACTION. FOR GOD HAS TOLD US WHAT IS GOOD AND WHAT GOD REQUIRES. "DO JUSTICE." HOW DOES JUSTICE LOOK WHEN WE DO IT? "LOVE KINDNESS." HOW DOES KINDNESS LOOK WHEN WE EMBODY IT? "WALK HUMBLY WITH OUR GOD." HOW DOES HUMILITY LOOK WHEN WE PRACTICE IT?

ALTHOUGH THE ANTHEM AFTER THE SERMON WAS, ***"MY HOPE IS BUILT,"*** IT IS MY HOPE THAT WE CAN LEARN AND SING THE FINAL HYMN OF THE SERVICE, ***"COME BEAR WITNESS."*** THE WORDS OF THIS SONG, SUNG AT THE ASSEMBLY IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES, WAS ONCE AGAIN A TESTAMENT OF HOW THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS AT WORK ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST AND IS AT WORK WHEN THE PEOPLE OF GOD GET TOGETHER ON ONE ACCORD.

Come Bear Witness

Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky, 2022

This song of witness is inspired by Kentucky folk music, as well as spirituals and protest songs. A leader may suggest alternate words for "bear witness" as the song is repeated, adapting it for a variety of contexts in worship and beyond. At the heart of the song is a deep silence—a space for listening to God, hearing the prayers of people who are oppressed, opening our hearts in confession and lament, and joining the intercession of the Spirit in sighs too deep for words.

WORSHIPFUL WORK: PART 2

THE SECOND DAY OF THE ASSEMBLY FOUND US AT WORSHIP ONCE AGAIN. THE OCASSION WAS JUNETEENTH 2022 AND THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND THE CITY OF LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY HELD A JOINT WORSHIPFUL CELEBRATION. THE MAYOR OF LOUISVILLE SPOKE VIRTUALLY WELCOMING THE COMMISSIONERS TO LOUISVILLE AND SHARED SOME OF THE HISTORY OF THE PCUSA'S JOURNEY THAT MADE THE CITY THE HUB OF OUR OPERATIONS. THE REVEREND DOCTOR J. HERBERT NELSON II, STATED CLERK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND SEMINARY CLASSMATE OF YOURS TRULY, WAS THE PREACHER OF THE HOUR.

REVEREND NELSON USED THE TEXTS FROM ISAIAH 6:1-8, **"IN THE YEAR THAT KING UZZIAH DIED, I SAW THE LORD, HIGH AND LIFTED UP AND THE HEM OF HIS ROBE FILLED THE TEMPLE. SERAPHS WERE IN ATTENDANCE ABOVE HIM; EACH HAD SIX WINGS; WITH TWO THEY COVERED THEIR FACES, AND WITH TWO THEY COVERED THEIR FEET, AND WITH TWO THEY**

28

FLEW. AND ONE CALLED TO ANOTHER AND SAID: 'HOLY, HOLY, HOLY IS THE LORD OF HOSTS; THE WHOLE EARTH IS FULL OF HIS GLORY.' THE PIVOTS ON THE THRESHOLDS SHOOK AT THE VOICE OF THOSE WHO CALLED, AND THE HOUSE FILLED WITH SMOKE. AND I SAID: 'WOE IS ME! I AM LOST, FOR I AM A MAN OF UNCLEAN LIPS, AND I LIVE AMONG A PEOPLE OF UNCLEAN LIPS; YET MY EYES HAVE SEEN THE KING, THE LORD OF HOSTS!' THEN ONE OF THE SERAPHS FLEW TO ME, HOLDING A LIVE COAL THAT HAD BEEN TAKEN FROM THE ALTAR WITH A PAIR OF TONGS. THE SERAPH TOUCHED MY MOUTH WITH IT AND SAID: 'NOW THAT THIS HAS TOUCHED YOUR LIPS, YOUR GUILT HAS DEPARTED AND YOUR SIN IS BLOTTED OUT.' THEN I HEARD THE VOICE OF THE LORD SAYING, 'WHOM SHALL I SEND, AND WHO WILL GO FOR US?' AND I SAID, 'HERE AM I; SEND ME!'"

THE TOPIC OF REVEREND NELSON'S SERMON AS IT APPEARED IN THE PROGRAM WAS SIMPLY **"JUNETEENTH."** THE GIST OF HIS MESSAGE AS I INTERPRETED IT WAS THAT A PARALLEL COULD BE DRAWN FROM THE SETTING IN LIFE (SITZ EN LABEN) IN WHICH ISAIAH FOUND HIMSELF AND THE SETTING IN LIFE IN WHICH THE SLAVES OF AFRICAN DESCENT FOUND THEMSELVES IN AMERICA, AS WELL AS THE SETTING IN LIFE IN WHICH WE FIND OURSELVES TODAY IN AMERICA. LIKE ISAIAH, WHO HAD A TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE IN THE YEAR THAT KING UZZIAH DIED, THE AFRICAN SLAVE HAD MANY TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES FROM THE TIME THEY WERE CAPTURED, ENSLAVED, FORCED TO ENDURE THE TRIALS OF THE MIDDLE PASSAGE AND THE TREATMENT AS PROPERTY THAT WAS LESS THAN HUMAN. FORCED TO LIVE IN THE JIM CROW SOUTH, FORCED TO ATTEND SEPARATE BUT NOT EQUAL SCHOOLS, FORCED TO SIT ON THE BACK OF THE BUS, AND FORCED TO DRINK FROM WHITE AND COLORED ONLY WATER FOUNTAINS, JUST TO NAME A FEW THINGS.

HOWEVER, IN THE YEAR THAT KING UZZIAH DIED, GOD SHOWED ISAIAH ANOTHER PURPOSE FOR WHICH HE WAS CALLED. IN A THEOPHANIC EXPERIENCE, ISAIAH SAW THE LORD HIGH AND LIFTED UP. HE SAW HEAVENLY BEINGS ATTENDING THE LORD AND PREPARING ISAIAH FOR THE CALL WHICH WAS TO COME. AFTER ISAIAH'S "GUILT HAD DEPARTED AND HIS SIN BLOTTED OUT", ISAIAH HEARD THE VOICE OF THE LORD SAY, "WHOM SHALL I SEND, AND WHO WILL GO FOR US?" AT THAT MOMENT, I BELIEVE ISAIAH HAD BEEN PREPARED TO MAKE THE RESPONSE THAT HE DID WHEN HE SAID, "HERE AM I SEND ME."

IN SIMILAR FASHION, JUNETEENTH REMINDS OF THE SINS OF OUR FOREBEARS AND THE SINS THAT STILL BESET US. THE SIN OF OMISSION AS MANY OF OUR "SIBLINGS" ARE MARGINALIZED AND MADE TO FEEL LESS THAN A HUMAN. THE SIN OF COMMISSION AS THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE HAS BEEN TAKEN AWAY FROM MANY OF OUR SIBLINGS. THE SIN OF MARGINALIZATION AS MANY OF OUR SIBLINGS ESPECIALLY IN THE LBGTQIA+ COMMUNITY STRUGGLE TO HAVE THEIR VOICES HEARD AND TO FIND A PLACE AROUND THE WELCOMING TABLE IN THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY.

JUNETEENTH IS A REMINDER THAT IN EVERY AGE AND STAGE OF LIFE, THE PEOPLE OF GOD ARE CALLED TO RESPOND TO THE QUESTION, "WHOM SHALL I SEND, AND WHO WILL GO FOR US?" THE HOPE IN OUR THEME, "FROM LAMENT TO HOPE" IS THAT AT THE MOMENT OF THE CALL WE WILL BE PREPARED TO SAY, "HERE AM I SEND ME," FOR WHERE YOU LEAD, I WILL FOLLOW.

THE SENDING SONG AFTER THE SERMON WAS, "LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING," WHICH I COMMEND TO YOU TODAY, TO SING IT, HEREAFTER, IN A WAY THAT IS A PERSONAL CALL TO ACTION AND TO RESPOND TO INJUSTICE AND TYRANNY ANYWHERE YOU FIND IT.

WORSHIPFUL WORK: PART 3

ON DAY 3 OF THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (TRAVEL DAY INCLUDED) THE COMMITTEES OF BILLS & OVERTURES, MID COUNCILS, POLITY (OF WHICH YOURS TRULY SERVED), THEOLOGY, WORSHIP, AND EDUCATION, AND RULES OF DISCIPLINE WERE CALLED TO CONTINUE THEIR WORSHIPFUL WORK IN THE NEWLY RENOVATED SPACES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CENTER, SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO HOST LARGE GATHERINGS FOR THE CHURCH AND CIVIC GROUPS.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, IT WOULD BE ILLOGICAL FOR ME TO ATTEMPT TO REPORT ON EVERY ASPECT OF EVERY COMMITTEE'S WORK. THEREFORE, IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES, I WILL CHOOSE A FEW OF THE ISSUES BROUGHT TO THE ASSEMBLY THROUGH THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEES FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND DISCERNMENT. I ENCOURAGE ANYONE WHO IS INTERESTED IN TAKING A DEEPER DIVE INTO THE WORSHIPFUL WORK OF THE ASSEMBLY TO LOG INTO THE PCUSA WEBSITE.

ONE OF THE TASKS ASSIGNED TO THE COMMISSIONERS WAS THE ELECTION OF THE NEW CO-MODERATORS FOR THE ASSEMBLY.



THE REV. RUTH SANTANA-GRACE AND REV. SHAVON STARLING-LOUIS WERE ELECTED CO-MODERATORS OF THE 225TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY. THE ASSEMBLY CONFIRMED REV. DR. DIANE MOFFETT'S RE-ELECTION TO A SECOND TERM AS PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY. THE ASSEMBLY CONFIRMED THE RE-ELECTION OF THE REV. DR. TOM TAYLOR AS PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE PRESBYTERIAN FOUNDATION, HIS FOURTH TERM. THE ASSEMBLY ALSO CONFIRMED THE 2021 ELECTION OF REV. DR. ASA LEE, PRESIDENT OF PITTSBURGH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

WORSHIPFUL WORK: PART 4

THE FOLLOWING IS A SAMPLE OF THE WORK PRESENTED BY THE COMMITTEES FOR APPROVAL OR ADOPTION BY THE ASSEMBLY. AGAIN, THIS IS ONLY A SAMPLE. PERSONAL NOTE: AS A MEMBER OF THE POLITY COMMITTEE, THE LESSON MOST OBVIOUSLY LEARNED BY YOURS TRULY WAS, ***THE NEW FORM OF GOVERNMENT WAS INTENDED TO BE PERMISSION-GIVING, WITH ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS MOVED TO MANUALS OF ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS (G-3.0106).***

I FOUND MYSELF QUOTING THIS NOTE, ALMOST AS A MANTRA, AS A LOT OF THE OVERTURES BROUGHT BEFORE THE COMMITTEES AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, DID NOT REQUIRE A CHANGE IN THE BOOK OF ORDER BUT A CLEARER UNDERSTANDING OF HOW TO ACHIEVE THE DESIRED RESULTS WITHIN THE PRESENT STRUCTURE. I ASK YOU TO RECALL THE MANTRA AS YOU ENGAGE THE ACTIONS TAKEN BELOW.

[POL-04] On Amending G-2.1002 Regarding Ordaining a Commissioned Ruling Elder as Minister of the Word and Sacrament

Assembly Action:

Disapprove with Comment

We note with interest that Mid-Council Committee has recommended MC-10 "On Establishing a Task Force to Explore the Theology and Practice of Ordination to Ordered Ministry for Ruling Elders" which provides a resolution for the problem that POL-04 seeks to address.

Final text:

DISAPPROVED:

The Presbytery of Northern New England overtures the 225th General Assembly (2022) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

(Text to be added is *[in brackets and italics]*.)

Shall G-2.1002 be amended as follows:

"A ruling elder who seeks to serve under the terms of G-2.1001 shall receive such preparation and instruction as determined by the presbytery to be appropriate to the particular commission. The ruling elder shall be examined by the presbytery as to personal faith, motives for seeking the commission, and the areas of instruction determined by presbytery. A ruling elder who has been commissioned and later ceases to serve in the specified ministry may continue to be listed as available to serve but is not authorized to perform the functions specified in G-2.1001 until commissioned again to a congregation or ministry by the presbytery. *[After a commissioned ruling elder has served in a ministry commissioned by the presbytery for six years, that presbytery may choose to ordain a commissioned ruling elder as a minister of Word and Sacrament as defined in G-2.0501.]*"

[POL-07] On Amending G-2.0503 to Change the Designation Honorably Retired to Retired

Assembly Action

Approve as Amended

Final text:

Direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

(Text to be deleted is ~~struck through~~; text to be added is [in brackets and underlined].)

Shall G-2.0503 be amended as follows:

"A minister of the Word and Sacrament is a member of a presbytery and shall be engaged in a ministry validated by that presbytery, a member-at-large as determined by the presbytery, or ~~honorably retired~~."

Shall G-2.0503c be amended as follows:

"c. ~~Honorably Retired~~

Upon request of a member of presbytery, the presbytery may designate the member ~~honorably retired because of age, or physical or mental disability~~."

[POL-08] On Amending G-2.0301 to Allow Congregations to Elect Members as Ruling Elders for Service to the Larger Church

Assembly Action

Disapprove

Final text:

DISAPPROVED:

The Synod of the Northeast overtures the 225th General Assembly (2022) to direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative vote:

(Text to be inserted is *[in brackets and italics]*.)

Shall G-2.0301 be amended as follows:

“As there were in Old Testament times elders for the government of the people, so the New Testament church provided persons with particular gifts to share in discernment of God’s Spirit and governance of God’s people. Accordingly, congregations should elect persons of wisdom and maturity of faith, having demonstrated skills in leadership and being compassionate in spirit. Ruling elders are so named not because they ‘lord it over’ the congregation (Matt. 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life. Ruling elders, together with ministers of the Word and Sacrament, exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation as well as the whole church, including ecumenical relationships. When elected by the congregation, they shall *[ordinarily]* serve faithfully as members of the session. *[Congregations may also elect members as ruling elders to exercise spiritual leadership in a broader sense, in other specific capacities including service in higher councils, without the requirement that they first serve a term on the session.]* When elected as commissioners to higher councils, ruling elders participate and vote with the same authority as ministers of the Word and Sacrament, and they are eligible for any office.”

[POL-12] On Amending G-2.0504 Regarding Parish Associates

Assembly Action

Disapprove

Final text:

DISAPPROVED:

The Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky overtures the 225th General Assembly (2022) to amend G-2.0504 in the *Book of Order* by adding the following text:

(Text to be added is *[in italics and brackets]*.)

"[G-2.0504 d. *Parish Associates*

[A parish associate is a minister who serves in some validated ministry other than the local parish, or is a member-at-large, or is retired, but who wishes to maintain a relationship with a particular church or churches in keeping with ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacrament. Such persons, already qualified as continuing members of presbytery, may serve as parish associates. The relationship shall be established upon nomination by the pastor, between the parish associate, the session, and the presbytery. The parish associate shall be responsible to the pastor, as head of staff, on an “as needed, as available” basis and with or without remuneration. A parish associate may not be called to be the next installed pastor or associate pastor of a church served as parish associate, unless at least six months have elapsed since the end of the parish associate relationship. No formal call shall be involved. The agreement between the session and the parish associate shall be terminated whenever a pulpit becomes vacant.]"

The Advisory Committee on the Constitution advises the 225th General Assembly (2022) to **disapprove** POL-12.

The new Form of Government was intended to be permission-giving, with administrative details moved to Manuals of Administrative Operations (G-3.0106).

[POL-15] A Resolution on Receiving Immigrant Pastors as Members of the Presbytery—From the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee

Assembly Action

Approve as Amended

Final text:

Direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

(Text to be deleted is ~~struck through~~; text to be added is [in brackets and underlined].):

Shall G-2.0505a(1) be amended as follows:

“(1) In the case of ministers for immigrant fellowships and congregations, a presbytery may, if it determines that its strategy for mission with that group requires it, [and in consultation and partnership with that community,] recognize the ordination and receive as a member of presbytery a new immigrant minister who furnishes evidence of good standing in a denomination, ~~even though~~ [. If] at the time of enrollment that minister lacks the educational history required of candidates, and [the presbytery should] provide such educational opportunities as seem necessary and prudent for that minister’s successful ministry in the presbytery.”

[RGJ-08] On Offering an Apology to African Americans for the Sin of Slavery and Its Legacy

Assembly Action

Approved as Amended

Final text: Show Amended Text

That the 225th General Assembly (2022) offer an apology to African Americans for the sin of slavery and its legacy and to approve the following statements:

1. That the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its members, in the spirit of the Confession of Belhar (1986) as a framework for considering matters of truth, unity, and reconciliation, acknowledge that:

a. White supremacy is a conscious, calculated effort to perpetuate and institutionalize white supremacy and privilege through legal systems as well as economic and physical intimidation. After the Civil War, white Americans controlled economic and political systems that resulted in lynching, Jim Crow laws, Black Codes, white citizens’ councils, slavery through incarceration, poverty, racial profiling, the school-to-prison pipeline, and mass incarceration, all intended to harm or further enslave African Americans. Even today, we continue to prolong racial inequality through codifying white supremacy. As a denomination with a majority white membership and historically Eurocentric institutions we apologize for being complicit for the last 400 years in perpetuating these injustices.

b. We, as a people of faith, recognize that the only appropriate path to healing and reconciliation is to acknowledge the wrongs that we, the Presbyterian Church, as part of the institutional church structure, were and are complicit in perpetuating. This was done through interpretation of selected scriptures and rationalization to justify human bondage and perpetuate white supremacy and privilege. We apologize for this transgression.

c. Black lives have been devalued beginning with slavery, and their human dignity continues to be circumvented through the economic and legal systems that are racist as institutions. We apologize for benefiting from and continuing to be part of this social, economic, and legal construct. We recognize that the presence and persistence of racism in ourselves and our institutions is the result of the sin of slavery.

d. We recognize the necessity of building a trusting relationship between white Americans and African Americans. A first step to healing and reconciliation can only be done by acknowledging that slavery, and the justification of and financial benefit thereof, is inseparable from the economic, artistic, and religious foundations on which this country is built.

e. The PC(USA) apologizes to African Americans both in the church and outside of the church for all the wrongs that have been done throughout our history and those that are ongoing.

2. That the PC(USA), in the spirit of Christ in John 13:35, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another,” and 1 John 4:12, “No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us,” adopt and use:

A LITANY OF REPENTANCE

As white Christians we repent of our complicity in the belief in white supremacy: the belief that people of European descent are superior in intelligence, skills, imagination, and perseverance. We acknowledge that this belief in white supremacy has been the foundation of, and an excuse for, atrocities against people of African descent in the United States and in the world.

We repent of our failure to recognize and take responsibility for the legacy of slavery.

We repent of the injustice, pain, humiliation, and suffering imposed on African Americans by our ancestors and ourselves through actions and inaction. We repent of our complicity in failing to act in mutual loving relationship.

We repent of closing our eyes to the degradation and injustice forced upon African Americans who were enslaved, segregated, terrorized, and imprisoned.

We repent of covering our ears to the crying of families torn apart, to the sound of human flesh being struck, while songs of freedom and heavenly grace flow from our lips.

We repent that we have failed as an institution and as individuals to use our voices to abhor and end lynching, segregation, and racial profiling. We regret our generations of silence on these issues so that we could maintain a comfortable life in our churches, homes, and communities.

We repent of shutting our hearts to the experiences of fellow humans whose stories of pain, suffering, hardship, struggle, love, and joy mirror our own life journeys, yet are deprived of privilege and marred by racism. We have turned our backs and walked away pretending not to see, yet we saw, pretending not to know, yet we knew, and convincing ourselves that we were not complicit, yet we are.

We now know that we as white Christians have benefitted directly and indirectly from these injustices. We name ourselves as complicit and repent.

Finally, we repent of our violent actions to suppress Black agency. African Americans, since the time of slavery, have actively pursued their freedom ... built this country ... laid foundational structures ... and demonstrated their capacity to fully participate in the construction of this American society in spite of white supremacy.

As repentance means turning and going the other way, with Christ's help we seek to do so. At the same time, we commit ourselves to walking with people of African descent toward the goal of healing, reconciliation, and eliminating racism as we seek to dismantle white privilege.

3. Direct the Office of the General Assembly of the PC(USA) to share this apology with all of the congregations and mid councils of the PC(USA) on behalf of the denomination. The means of sharing this apology shall be coordinated with the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee (REAC).

4. Therefore, we recommend that the PC(USA) act on the following concerns:

a. Direct the PC(USA) and the Office of Public Witness to refute arguments and new laws that prohibit the teaching of a fully inclusive history of the United States. God commanded the people to remember the difficult times in their history, the mistakes they would rather forget: “Tell your

children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation” (Joel 1:3).

b. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the General Assembly to develop curriculum about slavery and its legacy—for children, youth, and adults to foster repentance that leads to metanoia (“a transformative change of heart”)—with the assistance of a qualified consultant, and to designate appropriate budget resources. The purpose of this curriculum is spiritual change that leads to apology, reconciliation, and acts of restorative justice, including reparations. In this way, the PC(USA) might further the growth of “beloved community” in our midst.

c. Encourage congregations, presbyteries, and synods to prepare a history of their community to facilitate and deepen their study and understanding of these issues and to share the resources they find helpful in that preparation with the larger church.

d. Commit the PC(USA) to restorative justice/reparations and direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Office of the Stated Clerk to provide tools and budget resources for congregations, presbyteries, and synods to enact restorative justice measures in their communities that will close gaps in economics, health, education, environmental well-being, and the criminal justice system created out of the legacy of slavery and white supremacy. These gaps have existed since our development as a country and still exist today.

5. Direct the Office of the General Assembly to share this apology with the National Council of Churches.

6. Direct the General Assembly to commend this apology to the entire PC(USA) in all its expressions for their use in the work of reconciliation among all peoples.

[RGJ-13] Report from the Disparities Experienced by Black Women and Girls Task Force

Assembly Action

Approved as Amended

Final text: [Show Amended Text](#)

That the 225th General Assembly (2022):

1. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) to create educational resources for congregations to identify and interrupt practices and policies that perpetuate the adultification of Black girls and criminalization of adolescent behavior, seeking the advice and input of the Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns (ACWC).

2. Direct the PMA, Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Foundation, Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, and urge the Board of Pensions to identify and invest in antiracist and gender justice trainings and/or to hire facilitators that center Black women and girls in diversity and inclusion training and that provide a geographically accessible and affordable network for congregations and mid councils.

3. Direct the PMA to:

a. Engage in the work of eradicating systemic violence against Black women and girls in its work throughout all ministry areas.

b. Create educational opportunities at denominational gatherings centered on systemic violence as it relates to Black women and girls, seeking the advice and input of ACWC.

c. Create opportunities for LGBTQIA+ identified Black clergy to come together for fellowship, education, and mutual support for the work of ministry with a specific focus on trans Black church leadership, recognizing that the PC(USA) does not currently have an ordained or installed openly Black trans minister of Word and Sacrament.

- d. Offer support and grants for congregations working with Black queer/trans organizations and engaging in work/programming directly addressing the needs of the LGBTQIA+ community.
- e. Provide resources for making gendered groups safe, spirit-filled places for Black queer and trans women.
- f. Direct the PMA to join with nonprofit organizations, such as [Sister Reach](#), to:
 - i. Provide grants for a core group of Presbyterians from different congregations in various regions in the church to receive sex education and curriculum and inclusive reproductive justice training in order to share information with their local congregations.
 - ii. Support legislation that actively protects Black queer and trans women/girls and speak out against legislation that harms this community.
- 4. Direct the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation to:
 - a. Develop theology and worship resources for educating congregations in Rites of Passage and a primer/introduction to Black women and other women of color, including biblical and theological studies for lay people.
 - b. Become proactive in finding Black women writers to develop theology, worship, and homiletics books and resources.
 - c. Provide resources for awareness and sensitivity around intersections of race/gender/sexual orientation.
- 5. Direct Research Services in the PC(USA) to conduct a survey of Presbyterian Black women, including Black clergywomen, about their experiences within the denomination and hold regional focus groups with Black clergywomen conducted by trusted, notable, Black women facilitators, consulting with gender and racial justice staff in the PMA.
- 6. Urge the Board of Pensions to create opportunities for Black clergywomen to come together for fellowship, education, and mutual support, potentially in its CREDO program.
- 7. Direct the PMA to continue and to increase its mission engagement efforts and appeals for Presbyterians to:
 - a. Support the Dr. Katie Geneva Cannon Scholarship Fund for the purpose of scholarships specifically for women of color to pursue educational studies, including doctoral studies.
 - b. Increase support for the Legal Defense Fund in the Office of Gender & Racial Justice for the purpose of supporting Black women in achieving racial justice and legal defense.
- 8. Direct the PMA to continue providing scholarships and financial aid for master of divinity students and start providing scholarships for doctor of philosophy and theology students to increase Black Presbyterian women scholars.
- 9. Direct the PMA to increase budget support and equity for the Racial Equity and Women's Ministries area in the PMA.
- 10. Support legislation efforts to end cash bail.

[FIN-10] Align in Mission, Purpose, and the Use of Resources: Report of the Special Committee on Per-Capita Based Funding and National Church Financial Sustainability

Assembly Action

Approved as Amended

On Recommendation (Recommendation 1), the General Assembly acted as follows:

Final text: Show Amended Text

1. Form a commission to oversee and facilitate the unification of the Office of the General Assembly (OGA) and the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) into a single agency, revise the Organization for Mission to reflect this change, and work to align the entities, boards, committees, and constituent bodies of the General Assembly toward long-term faithfulness and financial sustainability of its mission within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

a. The commission shall establish missional and ecclesial coordination and determine the strategies and priorities, across all entities, committees, and constituent bodies of the General Assembly where all available dollars, responsibilities, and charges are evaluated and unified to provide the best accomplishment of General Assembly goals.

b. The commission shall provide governance for and have the authority to assume all governance functions of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB) and the Committee on the General Assembly (COGA) as the commission deems necessary.

c. The commission will consult with representatives from OGA, PMA, and all other agencies, committees, staff, and PC(USA) entities and their boards, including the advocacy and advisory committees, and mid councils. Additionally, the executive leadership of PMA and OGA shall participate as requested.

d. The commission will have the authority to review, adapt, align as necessary, and organize the role(s) and relationships of those committees of the General Assembly, entities, boards, committees and constituent bodies that are not explicitly established in the Book of Order toward long-term faithfulness, financial sustainability, and a unified new structure.

e. This commission shall have the power to combine, unify, eliminate, and/or create any necessary organizational structure, including personnel and budget, to accomplish these missional strategies and priorities.

f. The commission shall review, address, and align the financial agreements including per capita, restricted, and unrestricted funds, among the Foundation, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Office of the General Assembly, and the Presbyterian Church (USA), A Corporation (A Corp) to support the new Organization for Mission so that each area of mission has adequate funds to sustain its mission long-term.

g. This commission shall not have the power to change the boards or bylaws of the Board of Pensions (BOP), the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation (PPC), the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc. (PILP), the Presbyterian Foundation (PF), or the Presbyterian Church (USA), A Corp, but may make recommendations to these agencies in an effort to better align the mission goals and priorities of the General Assembly.

h. The commission recommendation for participation shall include:

i. One member each from the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA), the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB), and the Board of Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation.

ii. Two members from the Per Capita and Financial Sustainability Committee (PCFSC).

iii. A member of the Moving Forward Implementation Commission (MFIC) or its successor.

iv. Two commissioners from the 225th General Assembly (2022).

v. Two members-at-large from the larger church, including persons with expertise in strategic planning, visioning, experience on administrative commissions, and/or institutional reorganization.

- vi. To ensure representation, COGA, PMAB, MFIC, A Corp, and PCFSC will submit the names of four possible members to serve on the commission.
- vii. The Moderator or Moderators of the 225th General Assembly (2022), after consultation with the General Assembly Nominating Committee (GANC) and the General Assembly Committee on Representation (GACOR), will name the commission.
- viii. Staff from the Office of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Mission Agency, and the Administrative Services Group (ASG) of A Corp will provide support to the work of the commission.
- ix. Two Young Adult Advisory Delegates (YAAD) from the 225th General Assembly (2022).
- x. In forming the commission, attention will be paid to best practices of representation to ensure that in addition to representation from agencies, there is diversity in identities, particularly including race, age, sexuality, and gender.
- i. Once unification is finalized, the commission shall determine the structure moving forward and present the new Organization for Mission to the 227th General Assembly (2026).

On Recommendation (Recommendation 2), the General Assembly acted as follows:

Approve as Amended

Final text: Show Amended Text

2. Direct the General Assembly Moderator(s) to appoint a Funding Model Development team to develop, recruit, implement, and provide oversight of possible funding model experiments. (See appendixes.)

a. Funding Model Development Team to be made up as follows:

- i. Two members of the Per Capita and Financial Sustainability Committee;
- ii. Two commissioners from the 225th General Assembly (2022);
- iii. Three mid council leaders;
- iv. Two Young Adult Advisory Delegates (YAAD) from the 225th General Assembly (2022).
- v. One member each from:
 - a) The Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (PMAB);
 - b) The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly (COGA); and
 - c) The Presbyterian Church (USA), A Corporation (A Corp)

vi. One representative from either REAC or ACSWP so that the core values of these committees will be included]

b. The Funding Model Development Team shall receive support from staff of the OGA, PMA, ASG, and the Presbyterian Foundation (PF) and collaborate with other General Assembly entities as needed or requested.

c. The Funding Model Development Team will develop and implement experiments that will fund councils of the church, above the session, that will be consistent with the identified values and adaptive challenges of the mid councils. (See Appendix A: Hand-off Handbook, and Appendix B: Adaptive and Technical Challenges.)

d. The Funding Model Development Team will provide oversight of possible funding model experiments. (See Appendix A: Hand-off Handbook.)

e. The Funding Model Development Team will report back to the 226th General Assembly (2024) their progress and any recommendations for moving forward and report on their prospects for finishing their work and final report to the 227th General Assembly (2026).

WORSHIPFUL WORK: PART 4 THE END OF THE MATTER

THE ROMERO PRAYER

IT HELPS, NOW AND THEN, TO STEP BACK AND TAKE THE LONG VIEW.

THE KINGDOM IS NOT ONLY BEYOND OUR EFFORTS; IT IS BEYOND OUR VISION.

WE ACCOMPLISH IN OUR LIFETIME ONLY A FRACTION OF THE MAGNIFICENT ENTERPRISE
THAT IS GODS WORK.

NOTHING WE DO IS COMPLETE, WHICH IS ANOTHER WAY OF SAYING THAT THE KINGDOM
ALWAYS LIES BEYOND US.

NO STATEMENT SAY ALL THAT COULD BE SAID. NO PRAYER FULLY EXPRESSES OUR FAITH.
NO CONFESSION BRINGS PERFECTION. NO PASTORAL VISIT BRINGS WHOLENESS. NO
PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHES THE CHURCH'S MISSION. NO SET OF GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
INCLUDES EVERYTHING.

THIS IS WHAT WE ARE ABOUT.

WE PLANT THE SEEDS THAT ONE DAY WILL GROW. WE WATER THE SEEDS ALREADY
PLANTED, KNOWING THAT THEY HOLD FUTURE PROMISE. WE LAY FOUNDATIONS THAT WILL
NEED FURTHER DEVELOPMENT. WE PROVIDE YEAST THAT PRODUCEDS EFFECTS FAR
BEYOND OUR CAPABILITIES.

WE CANNOT DO EVERYTHING AND THERE IS A SENSE OF LIBERATION IN REALIZING THAT.
THIS ENABLES US TO DO SOMETHING AND TO DO IT WELL. ITT MAY BE INCOMPLETE, BUT IT IS
A BEGINNING, A STEP ALONG THE WAY, AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE LORD'S GRACE TO ENTER
AND DO THE REST. WE MAY NEVER SEE THE END RESULTS, BUT THAT IS THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN THE MASTER BUILDER AND THE WORKER.

WE ARE WORKERS, NOT MASTER BUILDERS, MINISTERS, NOT MESSIAHS.

WE ARE PROPHETS OF A FUTURE NOT OUR OWN.

THIS PRAYER WAS COMPOSED BY THE LATE BISHOP KEN UNTENER OF SAGINAW DRAFTED FOR
A HOMILY BY CARDINAL JOHN DEARDEN IN NOVEMBER 1979 FOR A CELEBRATION OF
DEPARTED PRIESTS. OUR MODERATOR, REVEREND RUTH SANTANA-GRACE ASKED US TO
MEDITATE ON THESE WORDS AS WE WENT ABOUT THE TASK OF CONDUCTING WORSHIPFUL
WORKS.

RETURN TO DOCKET

Carnesville/Hopewell Administrative Commission
Statement of Justification for Transfer of Hopewell Church Property
7/17/2022

On March 18, 2020, the Administrative Commission for Carnesville and Hopewell Churches sent a letter to the Trustees of the Hopewell Presbyterian Church presenting for the Trustees' approval an AC-approved finalized draft of a Quitclaim Deed that would transfer ownership of the Church property to the unaffiliated congregation currently meeting on the property and calling itself Hopewell Presbyterian Church. The Quitclaim Deed specified a) an amount to be paid by the Hopewell Trustees to Northeast Georgia Presbytery, "...the sum of Ten dollars (\$10.00) and other valuable considerations in hand paid at and before the sealing and delivery of these presents..."; b) use restrictions, "that this Deed of Gift is made so that the property may continue to be used as a house of God and place for education and worship of God and/or public use"; and c) a reversionary clause, "that if, within five years of the date of this conveyance, the property ceases to be used for such purposes, the property ...shall automatically revert to Northeast Georgia Presbytery."

The Quitclaim Deed prepared for Hopewell Church was patterned after that which transferred the property of the Lincolnton Presbyterian Church to the Trustees of the Blessed Hope Bible Church in September 2018, for the sum of one dollar (\$1.00), with the same use restriction, but without a revisionary clause, a copy of which was provided to the Trustees of Hopewell Presbyterian Church in June 2019 for use as a template, with a cover letter indicating that "The AC intends to make the Hopewell property a gift to the congregation of Hopewell Presbyterian Church, and, should the congregation decide to do so, would be very grateful for any corresponding monetary gift from the congregation to the Northeast Georgia Presbytery."

The AC, having begun discussion and negotiation with the Trustees of Hopewell Church in April 2019, expected that the March 2020 version of the Quitclaim Deed would be the version that would ultimately be approved by Northeast Georgia Presbytery and executed.

Immediately following the issuance of the letter of March 18, 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic shut down operations of most congregations, the Administrative Commission, and much of the other work of the Northeast Georgia Presbytery. The Administrative Commission did not revisit the status of Hopewell Church until April of 2022.

In consideration of the advanced stage of negotiations between the parties in early 2020, and the obvious precedent of the transfer of the property of the Lincolnton Presbyterian Church in 2018, the Administrative Commission for the Carnesville and Hopewell Churches now believes that it is in the best interests of Northeast Georgia Presbytery to honor the intent of the 2020 agreement: to transfer the Hopewell Church property to the unaffiliated congregation currently meeting there and keeping up the property, including its cemetery a) for a nominal amount of money; b) with the same or similar use restrictions; and c) with the reversionary clause previously agreed to.

Therefore, we propose a two-stage process, the first stage being dissolution of the congregation calling itself Hopewell Presbyterian Church, which has been a member congregation of the Presbyterian Church, USA, and of the Northeast Georgia Presbytery. The second stage is the disposition of the property of that congregation, one building on 2.41 acres valued at \$56,500 for tax purposes, to the Trustees of the unaffiliated congregation currently meeting at and keeping up that property, which also calls itself Hopewell Presbyterian Church.

Respectfully submitted by:
Teresa Franklin, Secretary



Congregational Connexions Committee

Betty Jean Jordan, Chair

The Congregational Connexions Committee met on August 1, 2022 via Zoom. They took the following actions and are making the following recommendations to presbytery:

For Information:

1. The Presbyterian Mission Agency (PMA) has developed the Matthew 25 initiative to describe our missional action as a denomination. Churches, mid-councils, and other PC(USA) organizations may become Matthew 25 groups by embracing one or more of the following focuses:
 - **Building congregational vitality** by challenging people and congregations to deepen their faith and get actively and joyfully engaged with their community and the world.
 - **Dismantling structural racism** by advocating and acting to break down the systems, practices and thinking that underlie discrimination, bias, prejudice and oppression of people of color.
 - **Eradicating systemic poverty** by working to change laws, policies, plans and structures in our society that perpetuate economic exploitation of people who are poor.
2. For a presbytery to be a Matthew 25 mid-council, it pledges to encourage 20% or more its congregations to become Matthew 25 churches. Northeast Georgia Presbytery has 48 churches according to the list on its website. Twenty percent would be 10 churches. Nine of the congregations in our presbytery as well as the Presbyterian Student Center at the University of Georgia are already Matthew 25 organizations.

Actions:

1. The Congregational Connexions Committee voted to recommend to Northeast Georgia Presbytery that we become a Matthew 25 mid-council.

Recommendations:

1. The Congregational Connexions Committee recommends to Northeast Georgia Presbytery that our presbytery become a Matthew 25 mid-council. If this recommendation is approved, the Congregational Connexions Committee will notify the PMA through its website that Northeast Georgia Presbytery commits to become a Matthew 25 group.

RETURN TO DOCKET

Report of the Coordinating Team

Mari Turner, Acting Chair

The Coordinating Team (CT) met on July 28, 2022 via Zoom. They took the following actions and are making the following recommendations to presbytery:

For Information:

1. Heard a report from the Personnel Action Team regarding the evaluation process for presbytery staff
2. Heard a report from the Budget/Finance Initiative Team
3. Heard a report and recommendations from the Internal Audit Report Task Force
4. Heard a report from Will Norman regarding a capital campaign for the Presbyterian Student Center building
5. Heard a report from the Stated Clerk that included a proposed docket for the August Presbytery Meeting, discussion regarding future dates and locations of Presbytery meetings, and updates on the work of two Administrative Commissions
6. Heard updates from Committee on Preparation for Ministry, Congregational Connections Committee, Black Presbyterian Caucus, and Presbyterian Women

Actions:

1. Approved the minutes of the April 19, 2022 meeting
2. Approved a \$500 grant from the Justice & Peacemaking Fund for the event *Take up the Cause: A Christian Response to Systemic Poverty*, to be held on September 10 and hosted by Covenant PC Augusta, Christ PC, and GAP Ministries
3. Approved a \$200 honorarium for Rev. Dr. Victor Aloyo as guest speaker at the August Stated Meeting of Presbytery
4. Approved an offering at the August Presbytery meeting on behalf of the Presbyterian Student Center @ UGA Capital Campaign for building renovations.

Recommendation:

1. None

**NORTHEAST GEORGIA PRESBYTERY
GENERAL OPERATING BUDGET
JULY 2022**

	JAN-JULY 2022	BUDGET	OVER (UNDER) BUDGET	% OF BUDGET
INCOME				
SHARED MISSION - CURRENT YEAR	134,266.34	242,850	-108,583.66	55.29%
PER CAPITA	71,485.03	121,206	-49,720.97	58.98%
INVESTMENT INCOME	810.63	1,700	-889.37	47.68%
OTHER INCOME	93.38	0	93.38	100.0%
TRANSFER FROM UNDESIGNATED RESERVES		32,334		0.0%
TOTAL INCOME	206,655.38	398,090	-191,434.62	51.91%
EXPENSES				
BACKYARD MINISTRY	1,500.00	1,500	0.00	100.0%
BILLS & OVERTURES		0	0.00	0.0%
CAMPUS MINISTRY AT UGA - Annual Support	11,666.41	20,000	-8,333.59	58.33%
Campus Ministry - Montreat College Conference		2,600	-2,600.00	0.0%
CLERGY CARE	6,072.74	12,000	-5,927.26	50.61%
COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY	1,294.50	2,050	-755.50	63.15%
COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY	1,074.95	8,030	-6,955.05	13.39%
COMMITTEE ON REPRESENTATION		100	-100.00	0.0%
CONGREGATIONAL CONNECTIONS	86.00	5,000	-4,914.00	1.72%
COORDINATING TEAM	15,763.83	29,375	-13,611.17	53.66%
GENERAL ASSEMBLY PER CAPITA APPORTIONMENT	33,593.49	57,589	-23,995.51	58.33%
GENERAL ASSEMBLY SHARED MISSION	3,791.69	6,500	-2,708.31	58.33%
GEORGIA LODGE AT MONTREAT	100.00	100	0.00	100.0%
MISSIONARY - CHERYL BARNES	1,000.00	2,000	-1,000.00	50.0%
PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION		1,400	-1,400.00	0.0%
NOMINATING COMMITTEE		325	-325.00	0.0%
PROPERTY COMMISSION		100	-100.00	0.0%
SEXUAL MISCONDUCT PASTORAL RESPONSE		1,000	-1,000.00	0.0%
STAFF SALARIES	135,973.86	234,801	-98,827.14	57.91%
SYNOD PER CAPITA APPORTIONMENT	5,611.41	9,620	-4,008.59	58.33%
SYNOD SHARED MISSION	2,333.31	4,000	-1,666.69	58.33%
TOTAL PRESBYTERY EXPENSES	219,862.19	398,090	-178,227.81	55.23%
BALANCE	-13,206.81	0	-13,206.81	

NORTHEAST GEORGIA PRESBYTERY
CLERGY CARE
July 2022

	Jan-July 2022	Budget	Over (Under) Budget	% of Budget
Pby Support, \$500 per participant	6,000.00	10,000	(4,000.00)	60.0%
Scholarships - cohort participants		1,500	(1,500.00)	0.0%
Supplies & miscellaneous	72.74	500	(427.26)	14.55%
TOTAL EXPENSES	6,072.74	12,000	(5,927.26)	50.61%

COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY
July 2022

	Jan-July 2022	Budget	Over (Under) Budget	% of Budget
Background Checks	94.50	300	(205.50)	31.5%
Committee Meeting Expense		1,550	(1,550.00)	0.0%
A/C & Other Expense	1,200.00	200	1,000.00	600.0%
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,294.50	2,050	(755.50)	63.15%

COMMITTEE ON PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY
July 2022

	Jan-July 2022	Budget	Over (Under) Budget	% of Budget
Aid to Candidates	625.00	6,000	(5,375.00)	10.42%
Career Assessment	330.00	1,280	(950.00)	25.78%
Committee Meeting Expense	119.95	750	(630.05)	15.99%
TOTAL EXPENSES	1,074.95	8,030	(6,955.05)	13.39%

CONGREGATIONAL CONNECTIONS COMMITTEE
July 2022

	Jan-July 2022	Budget	Over (Under) Budget	% of Budget
Technology/Training	86.00	2,000	(1,914.00)	4.30%
Triennium		3,000	(3,000.00)	0.00%
TOTAL EXPENSES	86.00	5,000	(4,914.00)	1.72%

Northeast Georgia Presbytery
Coordinating Team
July 2022

	Jan-July 2022	Budget	Over/(Under) Budget	% of Budget
Banking Expenses		100	-100.00	0.00%
Committee Meeting Expenses	135.61	1,200	-1,064.39	11.30%
Copier Support	325.82	625	-299.18	52.13%
Financial Review (CPA)	6,390.00	7,000	-610.00	91.29%
GA/Synod Commissioners' Expense	139.58	1,200	-1,060.42	11.63%
GP Discretionary Fund		1,000	-1,000.00	0.00%
Insurance	2,782.25	3,400	-617.75	81.83%
IT Support/Software	1,931.71	4,200	-2,268.29	45.99%
Miscellaneous	437.81	500	-62.19	87.56%
Moderator Expenses	50.00	1,000	-950.00	5.00%
Office Equipment	959.09	2,500	-1,540.91	38.36%
Office Supplies	388.03	1,000	-611.97	38.80%
Postage	189.82	275	-85.18	69.03%
Presbytery Meeting Expenses	200.00	1,000	-800.00	20.00%
Recording Clerk Stipend		900	-900.00	0.00%
Recording Clerk Expense		300	-300.00	0.00%
Telephone	950.11	2,050	-1,099.89	46.35%
Workers' Compensation Insurance	884.00	1,125	-241.00	78.58%
TOTAL EXPENSES	15,763.83	29,375	-13,611.17	53.66%

Staff Salaries				
	Jan-July 2022	Budget	Over/(Under) Budget	% of Budget
Medicare-Employer Portion	372.56	615	-242.44	60.58%
Social Security-Employer Portion	1,593.00	2,617	-1,024.00	60.87%
Stated Clerk				
Travel/Professional Expenses	271.89	1,400	-1,128.11	19.42%
Continuing Education		650	-650.00	0.0%
Salary	17,679.32	28,593	-10,913.68	61.83%
Total Stated Clerk	17,951.21	30,643	-12,691.79	58.58%
General Presbyter				
Travel/Professional Expenses	2,671.83	5,500	-2,828.17	48.58%
Pension, Health, D&D	19,301.73	33,089	-13,787.27	58.33%
Continuing Education	511.00	1,500	-989.00	34.07%
Social Security & Medicare	3,995.32	6,849	-2,853.68	58.33%
Salary	34,666.94	59,429	-24,762.06	58.33%
Housing Allowance	17,500.00	30,000	-12,500.00	58.33%
Total General Presbyter	78,646.82	136,367	-57,720.18	57.67%
Business Administrator				
Travel/Professional Expenses	911.13	1,875	-963.87	48.59%
Continuing Education	100.00	1,000	-900.00	10.0%
Pension, Health, D&D	8,043.14	13,788	-5,744.86	58.33%
Matching Contribution to RSP	1,000.00	1,000	0.00	100.0%
Gross Wages	27,356.00	46,896	-19,540.00	58.33%
Total Business Administrator	37,410.27	64,559	-27,148.73	57.95%
TOTAL EXPENSES	135,973.86	234,801	-98,827.14	57.91%

Northeast Georgia Presbytery

Balance Sheet

As of July 31, 2022

ASSETS

Current Assets

Cash-Synovus Checking	138,055.18
First American Money Market Checking	250,572.27
New Covenant Balanced Income Fund	121,352.14
Notes Receivable - Short Term (GDMS)	<u>627.93</u>

Total Current Assets 510,607.52

Fixed Assets

Land (1250 Lumpkin St.)	71,492.66
Student Center Building	191,199.41
Computer Equipment	9,440.76
Other Fixed Assets	3,868.61
Accumulated Depreciation	<u>-68,228.99</u>

Total Fixed Assets 207,772.45

Other Assets

Notes Receivable - Long Term (GDMS)	5,838.79
Carnesville Church Property	25,000.00
Ficklen Church Property	<u>25,000.00</u>

Total Other Assets 55,838.79

TOTAL ASSETS 774,218.76

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable	-13.00
Credit Cards	6.99
Payroll Liabilities	<u>522.86</u>

Total Current Liabilities 516.85

Other Liabilities

Property Held in Trust	<u>50,000.00</u>
------------------------	------------------

Total Other Liabilities 50,000.00

Total Liabilities 50,516.85

Equity

Temporarily Restricted Net Assets

Assistance Superfund	20,827.69
Beth Duncan Fund (PW)	46,037.06
Clergy Care Fund	33,397.46
Connectional Events Superfund	15,336.07
Georgia Domestic Missionary Society Fund	89,929.38
Justice & Peacemaking Fund	5,454.14
Property Protection & Defense Fund	<u>83,565.38</u>

Total Temporarily Restricted Net Assets 294,547.18

Unrestricted Net Assets

Undesignated Reserves	188,921.95
Other Unrestricted Net Assets	<u>271,430.80</u>

Total Unrestricted Net Assets 460,352.75

Net Ordinary Income -13,206.81

Unrealized Gains/Losses -17,991.21

Total Equity 723,701.91

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY 774,218.76

NORTHEAST GEORGIA PRESBYTERY
CHURCH GIVING
JULY 2022

CHURCH	MEMBERS 12/31/2020	SHARED MISSION COMMITMENT	SHARED MISSION RECEIPTS	REMAINING BALANCE	GENERAL ASSEMBLY BENEVOLENCES	PER CAPITA ASSESSMENT	PER CAPITA RECEIPTS	REMAINING BALANCE	TOTAL RECEIPTS
ATHENS FIRST	962	73,000.00	18,250.00	\$ 54,750.00	\$ 7,210.42	\$ 18,181.80	\$ 9,090.90	\$ 9,090.90	\$ 34,551.32
ATHENS KOREAN	80			\$ -		1,512.00		\$ 1,512.00	\$ -
AUGUSTA KOREAN	60		966.00	\$ (966.00)		1,134.00	1,134.00	\$ -	\$ 2,100.00
BATH	44			\$ -	859.00	831.60	831.60	\$ -	\$ 1,690.60
BELLE TERRACE	94	1,500.00	1,500.40	\$ (0.40)		1,776.60	1,776.60	\$ -	\$ 3,277.00
CALVARY	24	1,750.00	790.50	\$ 959.50		453.60	453.60	\$ -	\$ 1,244.10
CARNESVILLE	9			\$ -		170.10		\$ 170.10	\$ -
CHRIST	30	1,350.00	843.75	\$ 506.25		567.00	354.37	\$ 212.63	\$ 1,198.12
CLARKESVILLE FIRST	126			\$ -		2,381.40	1,190.70	\$ 1,190.70	\$ 1,190.70
CLAYTON	43	500.00		\$ 500.00		812.70		\$ 812.70	\$ -
CLEVELAND FIRST	94	1,776.00	1,184.40	\$ 591.60		1,776.60	1,184.40	\$ 592.20	\$ 2,368.80
CLIFFORD MEMORIAL	40			\$ -		756.00		\$ 756.00	\$ -
COMMERCE	65	1,100.00	857.25	\$ 242.75		1,228.50	614.50	\$ 614.00	\$ 1,471.75
CORNELIA FIRST	145	0.00		\$ -		2,740.50	1,370.26	\$ 1,370.24	\$ 1,370.26
COVENANT, ATHENS	341	38,000.00	25,333.32	\$ 12,666.68	3,975.00	6,444.90	3,478.16	\$ 2,966.74	\$ 32,786.48
COVENANT, AUGUSTA	252	15,000.00	8,750.00	\$ 6,250.00	2,093.00	4,762.80	2,778.30	\$ 1,984.50	\$ 13,621.30
DAHLONEGA	33			\$ -		623.70	623.70	\$ -	\$ 623.70
EATONTON	47	0.00		\$ -	1,088.00	888.30	888.30	\$ -	\$ 1,976.30
ELBERTON FIRST	11	600.00	300.00	\$ 300.00	286.00	207.90	207.90	\$ -	\$ 793.90
FICKLEN	2			\$ -		37.80	37.80	\$ -	\$ 37.80
FRIENDSHIP	82	1,800.00	1,050.00	\$ 750.00		1,549.80	1,549.80	\$ -	\$ 2,599.80
GAINESVILLE FIRST	773	21,112.00	12,477.71	\$ 8,634.29		14,609.70	8,522.35	\$ 6,087.35	\$ 21,000.06
GREENSBORO FIRST	54	1,000.00	1,000.00	\$ -	1,204.00	1,020.60	1,020.60	\$ -	\$ 3,224.60
HARTWELL FIRST	36			\$ -		680.40	472.50	\$ 207.90	\$ 472.50
HEBRON	17			\$ -		321.30		\$ 321.30	\$ -
HELEN	40	500.00	500.00	\$ -		756.00	756.00	\$ -	\$ 1,256.00
HOMER	32	529.20	529.20	\$ -		604.80	604.80	\$ -	\$ 1,134.00
HOPEWELL	13			\$ -		245.70		\$ 245.70	\$ -
JEFFERSON	46	0.00		\$ -		869.40		\$ 869.40	\$ -
LAVONIA	16	400.00	400.00	\$ -		302.40	302.40	\$ -	\$ 702.40
MADISON	350	3,000.00	1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00	160.00	6,615.00	3,307.50	\$ 3,307.50	\$ 4,967.50
MILLEDGEVILLE FIRST	143	4,000.00	2,294.30	\$ 1,705.70	1,550.00	2,702.70	2,702.70	\$ -	\$ 6,547.00
MONTICELLO	218	15,000.00	7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00	753.00	4,120.20	4,120.20	\$ -	\$ 12,373.20
MOUNT HERMON	62		3,826.71	\$ (3,826.71)	690.00	1,171.80	1,171.80	\$ -	\$ 5,688.51
MOUNTAIN	45	1,200.00	1,200.00	\$ -	3,703.00	850.50	850.50	\$ -	\$ 5,753.50

NORTHEAST GEORGIA PRESBYTERY
CHURCH GIVING
JULY 2022

CHURCH	MEMBERS 12/31/2020	SHARED MISSION COMMITMENT	SHARED MISSION RECEIPTS	REMAINING BALANCE	GENERAL ASSEMBLY BENEVOLENCES	PER CAPITA ASSESSMENT	PER CAPITA RECEIPTS	REMAINING BALANCE	TOTAL RECEIPTS
NACOOCHEE	271	17,000.00	9,919.00	\$ 7,081.00	657.91	5,121.90	2,987.81	\$ 2,134.09	\$ 13,564.72
NEW HOPE	20			\$ -		378.00		\$ 378.00	\$ -
OCONEE	262	2,200.00	1,650.00	\$ 550.00		4,951.80	3,720.00	\$ 1,231.80	\$ 5,370.00
PLEASANT HILL	30	1,000.00	500.00	\$ 500.00		567.00	567.00	\$ -	\$ 1,067.00
RABUN GAP	206			\$ -		3,893.40	1,751.00	\$ 2,142.40	\$ 1,751.00
REID MEMORIAL	721	47,779.00	27,927.19	\$ 19,851.81	2,333.31	13,626.90	7,947.81	\$ 5,679.09	\$ 38,208.31
SAINT ANDREW	118	2,000.00	1,166.61	\$ 833.39		2,230.20	1,300.89	\$ 929.31	\$ 2,467.50
SARDIS	102	300.00		\$ 300.00		1,927.80		\$ 1,927.80	\$ -
TIMPSON	22			\$ -		415.80		\$ 415.80	\$ -
TRINITY	28	0.00		\$ -		529.20	529.20	\$ -	\$ 529.20
UNION POINT FIRST	26	3,000.00	1,750.00	\$ 1,250.00	360.00	491.40	491.40	\$ -	\$ 2,601.40
WESTMINSTER	42	1,000.00	300.00	\$ 700.00	450.00	793.80		\$ 793.80	\$ 750.00
WESTSIDE	45			\$ -		850.50		\$ 850.50	\$ -
WILEY	36			\$ -		680.40	680.40	\$ -	\$ 680.40
WINDER FIRST	55			\$ -		1,039.50		\$ 1,039.50	\$ -
TOTAL:	6,413	257,396.20	\$ 134,266.34	\$ 123,129.86	\$ 27,372.64	\$ 121,205.70	\$ 71,371.75	\$ 49,833.95	\$ 233,010.73

Presbyterian Women Northeast Georgia Presbytery

August 20, 2022

Elaine Wiegert, Moderator

The Presbyterian of Northeast Georgia will be hosting a spiritual retreat at the Presbyterian Village Athens (PVA) on August 27, 2022. The retreat, *Staying God-Centered in a Chaotic Era*, will be led by Rev. Nadine Ellsworth-Moran of Reid Memorial Presbyterian Church in Augusta. There is no fee for the workshop, however an offering will be collected to benefit Caring Hands, an outreach program of Presbyterian Homes that benefits retired ministers and their spouses who are residents of a Presbyterian Homes facility. A tour of PVA will be available to any interested participant at 9:00 AM. The retreat will begin at 10:00 AM and conclude at 2:00 PM. Lunch will be included. Any woman in our Presbytery may register to attend the retreat by contacting Judy Winski at pwnegareistrar@gmail.com. Please include name and church affiliation in the e-mail.

Information and registration materials for the 12th Triennial Gathering of Presbyterian Women Synod of South Atlantic, PW in PC(USA), Inc, October 21-23, 2022, at Epworth by the Sea have been distributed. The theme of the gathering is *Plug-In and Recharge*. Rev. Cecelia (CeCe) Armstrong, formerly a Deacon and Elder at Belle Terrace Presbyterian Church and currently Associate Pastor of St. James Presbyterian Church on James Island, Charleston, SC, will be provide the Keynote Address. Rev. Dr. Carol M. Bechtel, author of the 2022-2023 Horizons Bible Study and currently Professor of Old Testament at Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Michigan, will be the Bible Study Leader. More information about The Gathering can be found on the PW NEGA Facebook page and also on the PW SOSA Facebook page. The PW NEGA voted to offer \$300 scholarships to women who attend the conference. Participants will be reimbursed after The Gathering.

In addition to in-person meetings, Presbyterian Women in NEGA continued to stay connected using teleconference, Zoom, Livestreaming, and electronic newsletters. We will continue to use these tools as appropriate in the future.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elaine Wiegert

THE MINUTES OF THE SYNOD OF SOUTH ATLANTIC 36th STATED MEETING

***NALLS AUDITORIUM
Epworth-by-the-Sea
St. Simons Island, Georgia***

**Thursday, April 28, 2022, 3:00 pm to
Friday, April 29, 2022, noon**

WELCOME

The Rev. Dr. David Shelor, Synod Moderator, welcomed first-time and returning Commissioners and Presbytery Leaders, Corresponding Members, Staff and Guests, who were gathered at St. Simons Island, Georgia, to conduct the business of the Synod on April 28-29, 2022.

CALL TO ORDER AND OPENING PRAYER

The 36th Stated Meeting of the Synod of South Atlantic was called to order and opened with prayer at 3:03 pm by Moderator Shelor.

DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

(ATTACHMENT A)

Moderator Shelor declared a quorum was present, with 12 Teaching Elders and 14 Ruling Elders, representing 15 presbyteries.

In addition, two Consultants for Racial Ethnic Ministries, seven Presbytery Leaders, five Stated Clerks, the Moderator of the Synod Presbyterian Women, and three Synod Staff were also present.

THE ROLL OF COMMISSIONERS (*voice and vote*)

<u>Presbytery</u>	<u>Present (P) or Absent (A)</u> <u>Teaching Elder (TE) or Ruling Elder (RE)</u>
CENTRAL FLORIDA PRESBYTERY	(TE) Christina Greenawalt (P) (RE) Mary Bell Streetman (P)
CHARLESTON-ATLANTIC PRESBYTERY	(TE) Brian Henderson (A) (RE) Robert “Bobby” Byrd (A)
CHEROKEE PRESBYTERY	(TE) Jennifer Lee Walker (A) (TE) David Grove, <i>Alternate</i> (P) (RE) William “Bill” Byars (P)

FLINT RIVER PRESBYTERY	(TE) Don West (P) (RE) Andy Moye (P)
FLORIDA PRESBYTERY	(TE) Brad Clayton (P) (RE) Don Mowat (P)
FOOTHILLS PRESBYTERY	(TE) Beth Hoskins (P) (RE) James “Jimmy” Cheeks (P)
GREATER ATLANTA PRESBYTERY	(TE) Jeanne Simpson (P) (RE) Ken Whitehurst (P)
NEW HARMONY PRESBYTERY	(TE) Ashley L. Cheek (P) (RE) Jackie Rembert (P)
NORTHEAST GEORGIA PRESBYTERY	(TE) Travis Adams (A) (RE) Jan Lewis (P)
PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY	(TE) Andy Casto-Waters (P) (RE) Charmaine Ponkratz (P)
PROVIDENCE PRESBYTERY	(TE) Steve Austin (A) (RE) Timothy Cureton (P)
SAINT AUGUSTINE PRESBYTERY	(TE) Jessi Higginbotham (A) (RE) Hansler Bealyer (P)
SAVANNAH PRESBYTERY	(TE) Kathi Parchem (P) (RE) Margaret Brooks (P)
TAMPA BAY PRESBYTERY	(TE) David Shelor (P) (RE) Janice Barge Clarke (P)
TRINITY PRESBYTERY	(TE) Croskeys Royall (P) (RE) Ray Bell (P)
TROPICAL FLORIDA PRESBYTERY	(TE) Greg Rapier (P) (RE) Maria Sit (P)

THE ROLL OF CORRESPONDING MEMBERS (*voice, no vote*)

SYNOD OF SOUTH ATLANTIC STAFF

Synod Executive and Stated Clerk	(TE) Joyce Lieberman
Treasurer	(RE) Jodi Dodge
Administrator	Lisa Lovelady

PRESBYTERY LEADERS

Central Florida, <i>Executive Presbyter and Stated Clerk</i>	(TE) Dan Williams
Cherokee, <i>General Presbyter</i>	(TE) Wilson Kennedy
Florida, <i>General Presbyter</i>	(TE) Roy Martin
Foothills, <i>Presbytery Leader and Stated Clerk</i>	(TE) Deborah Foster
New Harmony, <i>Transitional Executive Presbyter</i>	(TE) Gavin Meek
Northeast Georgia, <i>Stated Clerk</i>	(TE) Ed Rees
Trinity, <i>General Presbyter</i>	(TE) Danny Murphy
Trinity, <i>Acting Stated Clerk</i>	(RE) Jim Rowell
Tropical Florida, <i>General Presbyter and Stated Clerk</i>	(TE) Daris Bultena

CONSULTANTS FOR RACIAL ETHNIC MINISTRIES

<i>Consultant for Hispanic Ministries, Central Florida</i>	(RE) Luis “Tony” Boada Davila
<i>Consultant for Korean-American Ministries, Northeast Georgia</i>	(TE) Joo Hoon Kim

SOSA PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN REPRESENTATIVE

<i>Synod Presbyterian Women Moderator, Trinity</i>	(RE) Shelagh Wirth
--	--------------------

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA) STAFF ASSIGNED TO SYNOD

Board of Pensions, <i>Church Consultant</i>	Clark Simmons
Presbyterian Foundation, <i>Development Program Associate</i>	Cherith Foster
Presbyterian Foundation, <i>Ministry Relations Officer</i>	Robert Hay
Presbyterian Mission Agency, <i>Mission Engagement Advisor</i>	Sy Hughes

VOICE TO CORRESPONDING MEMBERS

*Ashley Cheek moved and was seconded to accept the corresponding members as named by Synod Executive Joyce Lieberman. **Approved by unanimous consent.***

ADOPTION OF THE PROPOSED DOCKET

(ATTACHMENT B)

*Ken Whitehurst moved and was seconded to accept the Synod proposed docket. **Approved by unanimous consent.***

Synod meeting attendees gathered for fellowship for a short time before discussing the business of the Synod.

WELCOME TO FIRST-TIME COMMISSIONERS AND PRESBYTERY LEADERS

Moderator Shelor announced the following changes:

New commissioners:

Ray Bell, *ruling elder*, Trinity
Christina Greenawalt, *teaching elder*, Central Florida
Jan Lewis, *ruling elder*, Northeast Georgia
Croskeys Royall, *teaching elder*, Trinity
Jennifer Lee Walker, *teaching elder*, Cherokee

New Consultant for Racial Ethnic Ministries:

Joo Hoon Kim, *teaching elder*, *Korean-American Consultant*, Northeast Georgia

New Presbytery Leaders:

Don Esa, *teaching elder*, Stated Clerk, Cherokee
Wilson Kennedy, *teaching elder*, General Presbyter, Cherokee
Ed Rees, *teaching elder*, Stated Clerk, Northeast Georgia
Jim Rowell, *ruling elder*, Acting Stated Clerk, Trinity

FAREWELL TO RETIRING SYNOD LEADERS

Consultants for Racial Ethnic Ministries:

Dong Yung Kim, *teaching elder*, *Korean-American Consultant*, Trinity
Andrew Stephens, *teaching elder*, *African-American Consultant*, Greater Atlanta

Covenant Partner Leaders:

Camille Gaffron, Executive Director, *Villa International*
Elliot Smith, President, *Thornwell*

SYNOD EXECUTIVE AND STATED CLERK'S REPORT

(ATTACHMENT C)

In addition to her written report, Joyce further highlighted a few items. She reported that there are a number of lawsuits being filed against churches and denominations relating to the Boy

Scouts of America (BSA) abuse allegations from 1994-2003, and since the date that the BSA filed for bankruptcy. Our insurance records of coverage during those years is incomplete.

*Joyce presented a motion to approve the 2020 Presbytery minutes as presented. **Approved by unanimous consent.***

The South Atlantic Puerto Rico Region of the Association of Partners of Christian Education (SOAP APCE) is planning an event November 1-5, 2022 and requests permission to serve communion.

- **Motion:** *Jeanne Simpson moved and was seconded to approve the serving of communion at the South Atlantic Puerto Rico Region of the Association of Partners of Christian Education (SOAP APCE) event, Playology, November 1-5, 2022 at Epworth-by-the-Sea, St. Simons Island, Georgia.*

Action: *Motion carried*

The remedial case, *Tolley v. Tropical Florida Presbytery* was dismissed by the Synod's Permanent Judicial Commission (SPJC), and the matter was appealed to the General Assembly PJC.

Joyce noted also that the Synod will meet every other year, opposite years of the General Assembly. We are meeting this year because we have not met in three years. Our next Stated Meeting will be February 23, 2023 and the odd year schedule will follow after that.

In regard to Synod business, she attended more Presbytery meetings because of ZOOM and working at home. Physical separation from one another continues to be a challenge, but she is pleased to see how well churches have survived and thrived during COVID. The Synod webinars have been well received. In 2021, the Synod office moved from First Presbyterian Church in downtown Jacksonville to the Presbytery offices of St. Augustine.

Joyce expressed her joy at being able to meet again and strengthen bonds that may have thinned and weakened due to the pandemic, but that we will continue to live into the post-pandemic way of ministry for some time. She announced her retirement in the fall, with October 1st as the target date. Because of that, her contract as Stated Clerk will need to be extended through the end of September. She has loved her five years here at the Synod where there are wonderful ministries and energetic and imaginative church and presbytery leaders in the forefront.

- **Motion:** *Jimmy Cheeks moved and was seconded to extend the contract for the Rev. Joyce Lieberman, Stated Clerk, through the end of September 2022.*

Action: *Motion carried*

REPORTS

BOARD OF PENSIONS (BOP)

(ATTACHMENT D)

Clark Simmons, Senior Consultant for the Board of Pensions (BOP) reported that the pension plan has been affected by investment performance; retiree and pension credits increased by 4.5%.

The medical has shifted to Quantum Health care to manage all areas, as a sort of concierge, but BOP is still working with Express Scripts and Highmark. Health care costs have increased due to inflations, deferred visits due to Covid, and Covid long-term care, among other reasons. This will affect the plan in the future.

PRESBYTERIAN FOUNDATION (PF)

Robert Hay, Jr., Ministry relations officer, reported that the Presbyterian Foundation is the oldest faith based organization in the US since its inception in 1799. The goal is to acquire and attract investments, good stewardship and endowments. PF manages \$2.5 billion in assets with the New Covenant Mutual Funds returning 11% interest at the end of 2021. Online giving through Vanco was important for many churches during the pandemic. Through PF, Vanco was the least expensive online giving platform, and giving more than doubled during the pandemic period. PF has many resources: the Stewardship navigator online, the church financial leadership academy, Ted talk style videos, as well as the annual conference, *Stewardship Kaleidoscope*. He introduced Cherith Foster, the new Program Development Associate who now assists him in his work.

PRESBYTERIAN MISSION AGENCY (PMA)

(ATTACHMENT E)

Mission Engagement Advisor, Sy Hughes reported that the PMA moved to one fund for mission coworkers around globe so all workers could receive an even support. *The Quarterly Resource Preview* is a snapshot of what is happening in PMA. Commissioners can meet with him, and you can be added to the mailing list for the Quarterly Resource. The PMA is in process of reorganization and there are many proposals. The Synod of South Atlantic now has seven Presbyteries who have become Matthew 25 presbyteries, with 50 congregations participating.

SYNOD OF SOUTH ATLANTIC PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN (SOSA PW) **(ATTACHMENT F)**

Shelagh Wirth, SOSA PW Moderator, brought greetings from the Presbyterian Women. Their coordinating team will meet directly following the Synod meeting, here at Epworth. The PW Synod-wide gathering is October 21-23, 2022 at Epworth-by-the-Sea, with registration set at only \$100; see <https://sosa.org> to register. She corrected her report noting that the Rev. CeCe Armstrong is at St. James Presbyterian Church, not James Island Presbyterian Church.

HISPANIC-LATINO MINISTRY

(ATTACHMENT G)

Tony Boada Davila, Consultant for the Hispanic-Latino Ministry reported that during the pandemic, the various chapters began hosting drives to raise funds. After the Atlanta caucus, they began meeting again and helping one another. New worship groups began also with two new worshipping congregations. This year's pastor/leaders retreat topic will be "Taking Care of Yourself." The Hispanic Presbyterian Women will meet in October 2022, which will be a ZOOM/in-person hybrid, their third one with one church hosting and then livestreaming to the other churches within the Synod. They were excited to come together again as a family.

KOREAN AMERICAN MINISTRY

(ATTACHMENT H)

The Rev. Joo Hoon Kim, Consultant for the Korean-American ministry reported on meetings for the past year, such as the meeting with the Living Waters Alabama Presbytery and the continuing education event for pastors in February 2022. The July youth and family retreat will take place the week of July 4th at the Ridgecrest Conference Center in Black Mountain, North Carolina. The retreat was held during the pandemic with good attendance, around 600. The adults speak only Korean at the events, but the youth speak English. Youth are 6th grade to college, with many returning as counselors.

After the reports, committees recessed to their respective meetings and the body met again for a closing prayer for dinner, with worship following.

WORSHIP SERVICE

(ATTACHMENT I)

The Synod welcomed the Rev. Joyce Lieberman, Synod Executive and Stated Clerk, as our guest preacher. Her sermon, *Chasing After Bread*, contrasted the focus upon our daily physical bread to seeking Jesus, the eternal bread. Commissioners and Presbytery leaders assisted with music, liturgy and prayer. Communion was served.

FRIDAY, APRIL 29TH

Moderator Shelor opened the meeting with prayer at 9:06 am.

SYNOD REPORTS

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP TASK FORCE

(ATTACHMENT J)

David Shelor, facilitator, reported that the Transformational Leadership Task Force has been working through online opportunities during the pandemic. The cohort group, formed after the April 2021 webinar, *Leading the Church into the Post-Covid World*, is finishing up. The January 2022 webinar, *Together is Better: How Small Membership Churches Fulfill Their Missional Call Through Partnership*, was for smaller churches. The group is looking toward the future to think about next year's Synod meeting, which is Thursday, February 23 to Saturday, February 25, 2023 at Epworth-by-the-Sea, St. Simons Island, Georgia. Tentative plans are to offer leadership development opportunities with a Keynote speaker and workshops.

EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION (EAC)

(ATTACHMENT K)

Moderator-Elect David Shelor referred to the written report of the EAC decisions made since the Stated Meeting of November 2021. He also reported that the EAC is meeting at conclusion of

this meeting to discuss formation of search committee for the Synod Executive/Stated Clerk position.

COMMITTEE ON REPRESENTATION (COR)

(ATTACHMENT L)

Brad Clayton, COR Chair, reported that all of our presbyteries are represented by commissioners. New ones will need to be elected when terms end in December 2022; a letter will go out to the Stated Clerks. He referred to the Synod ID role form and asked that all present would fill out, as this information helps them to do their work as a committee.

BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE (BFC)

(ATTACHMENT M)

Charmaine Ponkratz, BFC Chair, reported the Synod's investment performance was 13% last year, but there will likely be a soft year. She reminded us that the money is invested for the long haul with confidence in the PCUSA and Vanguard to perform solidly over this time. The BFC clarified the Gainesville Distribution formula with the following: *Payouts from the Gainesville Campus Ministry Fund be calculated as the greater of \$81,000 or 4% of the fund balance averaged over the past 36 months.* This change moves us in concert with the other funds while maintaining a minimum of \$81,000 distribution to the Campus ministry. The Synod performs a five-year review of the Gainesville Campus Ministry, which falls on this year, so we will meet in the summer. At our last gathering, there was a question about the details of all of the available funds. She referred to the Overview of Funds attachment that details and identifies the purpose and distribution of all of the funds. We have received a clean review of our 2021 audit report, the Synod does not depreciate assets since we do not have significant equipment/assets. We are reporting with a modified cash basis.

TREASURER

(ATTACHMENT N)

Synod Treasurer, Jodi Dodge, noted that her report is summarized on page 114. There are two errors; the per capita and mission giving percentages should be 84% and 48% for 2021, which puts us right in line with the 2020 results. Beginning on pages 115 and 116, is the Synod's balance sheet which is basically part one of the financial statement. It shows a snapshot of what balances in our accounts and restricted funds are as of December 31, 2021. Because it is a snapshot, those amounts can change on a daily basis as checks clear or as contributions are received. Pages 117 and 118, is the Synod's income statement. This is a review over time of what comes in and out of our accounts. This particular report shows not only what occurred during the month of December, but also takes a look at the entire year of 2021 and compares that to the budget as well as to the year 2020. The top section shows what came in, as in per capita and mission giving from each Presbytery. The bottom section shows what went out, like operational expenses. The two section are netted out and hopefully we end up with a positive amount, "in the black," as we did in 2021. Page 119 shows a more detailed view of the restricted funds that are managed by the Synod. These were reviewed in the BFC report, pages 94-96. Page 120, shows details of each presbytery's contributions for per capita and mission giving. This report added in the contributions that we received through March 2022 and it shows the correct

percentages. She expressed her thanks to all of our presbyteries for their continued support, but called out a special thanks to those nine presbyteries who reached 100% of their per capita, and the five presbyteries who reached 100% of their mission giving goals. She challenged all of the presbyteries to reach 100% in 2022, which will keep the financials ending in positive amounts.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RELATIONSHIPS COMMITTEE (ARC) (ATTACHMENT O)

Bill Byars, ARC Chair, reported that the Administrative and Relationships Committee (ARC) is responsible for covenant relationships with nine ministry partners. He reported that the Synod's support of Villa International during Covid was appreciated as it supports the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). In the past, the Synod supported ministry partners with funds as long as there was a covenant relationship with written bylaws and Presbyterian presence on the boards. This is no longer true. This became apparent about four years ago with the covenant renewal effort for Eckerd College. Eckerd was concerned about meeting the requirements, so the covenant was tabled. The Committee discussion revolved around the question: *Are covenants effective and necessary to be in partnership with our agencies?* Discussion centered on how to have a relationship with them and that we should not if we can't fulfill all of the promises. Do we need to change the way we represent Synod to and with our ministry partners? Bill reminded us that there are three things to remember – change will happen, change is good, and God is present.

MINISTRY SUPPORT COMMITTEE (MSC) (ATTACHMENT P)

Ken Whitehurst, MSC Chair, reported that they met in December to determine grant awards. The St. James Presbyterian Church, Charleston-Atlantic Presbytery's excellent Peacemaking application, "A+ Mentoring program" was approved for \$2,000. The Church of the Reconciler, Tampa Bay Presbytery, needed assistance for roof repair, and requested a larger amount than available, but were awarded all of the funds remaining in the Udertiz Fund (for Florida church repair), \$3,420. He encouraged all to go to the Synod website and share grant information with others so they may apply. There is an upcoming deadline of July 1, 2022 for the Hawkins Theological Grant fund. The MSC approved changes in supporting work of *Consultants for Racial Ethnic Ministries* and the *Association of Smaller Congregations* (ASC). Members of committee have taken on roles as liaisons and working on ways to serve them. Addendum reports in the packet include one for the African American group and the ASC.

THE FUTURE OF THE SYNOD

The Rev. Debbie Foster, Presbytery Leader and Stated Clerk, Foothills Presbytery, facilitated rotating table discussions regarding the Synod's future. After each group answered their particular questions, they regathered to look for themes and any missing questions or thoughts.

Group 1A focused upon identity and purpose related issues; in particular, the Synod rediscovering its identity and purpose. Three items connected to this is a focus on presbyteries; to assist, support and resource presbyteries and presbytery leaders by connecting and

encouraging, and sharing experiences and resources. Identify areas of ministry that Synod can do collectively. Moving from diversity to inclusion. Do we know the difference?

Group 2A, in response to qualities of a future Synod leader, the group focused upon relationships, adaptability, the vision to see, a dream of where we are headed, communication so we can hear, and having a finger on the pulse of the denomination. Presbyterian leaders need pastoral care, so needs to have pastoral care ability.

Group 1B answered the question, *How do you envision the Synod moving forward in the next one to five years?* The group emphasized virtual gatherings, and asked the question, “What is necessary to bring people to Christ?” The Synod should serve as a central clearinghouse for best practices. If we cannot help our churches and presbyteries grow, the Synod will not be here. Smaller presbyteries need to be consolidated, but there is the issue of size and resource differences.

Group 2B responded to the question, *What characteristics and qualities do you want to see in your next Synod leader?* Suggestions ranged from someone who has relationships as a priority and boldness with that, to being widely and deeply flexible and adaptable, to someone understands our polity and the meaning of being Presbyterian in our culture and context.

Group 3A and 3B answered the question, *What have you appreciated about our past five years of the Synod leadership with Joyce?* Rating from highest.

- Her constitutional knowledge
- Her experience
- Her humble leadership
- Her collegiality – her ability to connect, her availability, knowledge of the Book of Order
- Her pastoral care of Presbytery leaders and spouses
- Joyce chose engagement, offered humble leadership, and was a polity resource.
- Other comments noted Joyce’s genuine and honest manner, her good sense of humor and her constant calm under pressure.

Group 4A discussed the question, *Are we going to be an administrative or a programmatic Synod?* We need to be heavier on the programmatic side of ministry on the Synod as well as the Presbytery level. The mission and vision, in Christ, informs and makes it inclusive. Is the leader to be focused in polity and resourcing the Synod Permanent Judicial Commission (SPJC) or is the primary focus to create opportunities to live into opportunities? There needs to be a serious look at consolidating expenses. There needs to be inclusive relationships across racial boundaries.

The “What else table” was asked to consider items not mentioned in regard to the Synod’s role or to a new Synod leader, from the highest rated:

- Being the connectional church – General Assembly to Synod to Presbytery to Churches
- Relationships across boundaries - racial, ethnic, gender, geography, theology
- Be “out and about”
- Mission/Christ centered theology informs polity

- Share Presbytery experience and resources (consolidation)
- Create clear expectations
- Pray for person/process

Joyce noted that there needs to be clear expectations of the time resources of the person coming in, and that an office is not really necessary. Prayer is needed by the Synod body, and we need to ask churches to pray also during this transition.

Ideals for the Synod's future, from the highest rated:

- What can the Synod do better/best that the Presbytery cannot do alone?
- Define why the Synod matters – its purpose
- Diversity to inclusion, what is the difference?
- Assist and resource Presbytery leaders
- Be a central resource hub
- Continue virtual connections
- Invite people to experience Christ
- Share Presbytery structure, stewardship . . . merge?

Ideals of a future Synod Leader, from the highest rated:

- Someone with a priority focus on relationships
- Adaptable and flexible
- Someone who understands our polity/culture/context
- Practical pastoral care for Presbytery leaders
- Have a vision to dream for today and tomorrow and articulate
- Connect to the PCUSA
- Fun/humorous

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Moderator Shelor called the body back together for announcements. The ZOOM fall Stated Meeting will be Thursday, November 3, 2022 at 10:00 am eastern.

- **Motion** *Ashley Cheek moved and was seconded to have the ZOOM fall Stated Meeting on Thursday, November 3, 2022 at 10:00 am eastern.*

Action: *Motion carried*

David reminded all of the confirmed Stated Meeting dates:

2023 Synod dates:

- *In-person*, winter Stated Meeting, **February 23-25, 2023**, Epworth-by-the-Sea, St. Simons Island, Georgia. To include a Keynote and possible Saturday workshops.
- *ZOOM* fall Stated Meeting, **Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at 10:00 eastern.**

ADJOURNMENT

Moderator-Elect Shelor offered a special prayer for Joyce as she heads into retirement. He then closed the meeting in prayer at 11:50 pm.

Submitted by:

The Rev. Joyce Lieberman
Synod Executive/Stated Clerk

TAKE UP THE CAUSE

A Christian Response to Systemic Poverty

Sponsored by Christ Presbyterian Church, Covenant Presbyterian Church, and GAP Ministries.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2022
10:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Greene St. Mission Center • 1235 Greene St. • Augusta, Ga.

Opening Worship at 10:00 with
CSRA Musicians & Directors Guild

Beginning at 10:30, there will be educational opportunities
and resources to respond to poverty in the CSRA.

“Walking Bag” lunches will be served beginning at 11:00.

For more information, contact Covenant Presbyterian at 706-733-0513.

*Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed.
Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.
Isaiah 1:17*