

# The 8<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting of The Presbytery of the Highlands of NJ

January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023

*(to be approved at the 11<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting of  
The Presbytery of the Highlands of NJ)*

## **The Body of Christ, A Call to Gather**

The Presbytery of Highlands of NJ of the Presbyterian Church (USA) held its 8<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting on January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, on the ZOOM platform.

The Moderator, Rev. Tom Brown, called the meeting to order at 10:00 am and led the opening prayer.

Introduction to Zoom Voting – *Rev. Tom Brown, Moderator*

## **FORMATION OF THE ROLL**

The roll was formed as Commissioners signed the registration forms. Resource Staff/Stated Clerk, Rev. Dr. Steve H. Shussett, certified that a quorum was present.

## **REPORT OF THE ATTENDANCE CLERK**

~ *Sonja Gaertner, Attendance Clerk – The Presbytery of the Highlands of NJ*

<b><u>Congregation</u></b>	<b><u>Teaching Elder</u></b>		<b><u>Ruling Elder</u></b>	
<b>Allamuchy, Panther Valley</b>	Vacant	V		A
<b>Alpha</b>	Rev. Scott DeCaro	P		A
<b>Andover</b>	Melanie Williams, Student Pastor	A	Sandra Wozniak	P
<b>Basking Ridge (3)</b>	Rev. Dennis Jones Rev. Dr. Maureen Paterson	P A	Roger Greenway Elaine Tetreault	P P A
<b>Bedminster, Lamington (2)</b>	Rev. Caroline Jinkins	P		A A
<b>Belvidere</b>	Rev. Dr. Pamela Szurek	A		A
<b>Blairstown</b>	Rev. David Harvey	P	Deborah Albrecht	P
<b>Boonton</b>	Rev. Jennifer Van Zandt	A		A
<b>Bound Brook (3)</b>	Rev. Linda Owens	E	Jamie Breeding Kathy Hobbs	P P A
<b>Branchville (2)</b>	Rev. Dr. Jefferson Hatch	P	Kathleen Katzenstein	P A
<b>Califon, Fairmount</b>	Vacant	V		A
<b>Califon, Lower Valley</b>	Rev. Chad Rodgers	P		A
<b>Cedar Knolls, Hildale Park</b>	Rev. Ross Lang	A		A
<b>Chatham Township (2)</b>	Rev. Dr. Ellen Clemot Rev. Thomas Brown	P P	Doug Zehner	P A
<b>Chatham, Ogden Memorial</b>	Rev. Kathi Heath	E		A

<b>Chester</b>	Rev. Christopher Scrivens	P	Jeanne Perry	P
<b>Clinton</b>	Rev. Tracey Henry	P		A
<b>Delaware</b>	Vacant	V		A
<b>Delaware, 1<sup>st</sup> Oxford</b>	Vacant	V		A
<b>Denville, Union Hill</b>	Rev. Timothy Clarkson	P		A
<b>Dover, First Memorial</b>	Rev. Alan Schaefer (HR)	E		A
<b>East Hanover</b>	Vacant	V		A
<b>East Hanover, Kitchell</b>	Rev. Hannah Allred	P		A
<b>Flanders (2)</b>	Rev. Cliff Acklam	P	Sue Preston Lois Steward	P P
<b>Flemington (3)</b>	Rev. Amy Lincoln	P	Andrew Black Bart Fellin Ed Harris	P P P
<b>Florham Park, Calvary</b>	Rev. Ronald de Groot	A		A
<b>Franklin</b>	Rev. Julie Raffety	E	Beth Westerfield	P
<b>Frenchtown</b>	Rev. Merideth Mueller-Bolton	P		A
<b>Gillette, Meyersville</b>	Rev. Barbara Aspinall	P	Doug Smith	P
<b>Hackettstown (2)</b>	Rev. Erin Hayes-Cook	A		A A
<b>Hampton, Musconetcong Valley</b>	Stephanie Farley, CRE	A		A
<b>Lambertville</b>	Vacant	V		A
<b>Lambertville, 2<sup>nd</sup> English</b>	Rev. H. Bradford Morgan	A		A
<b>Long Valley</b>	Rev. Ryan Irmer	P		A
<b>Long Valley, Highlands</b>	Rev. Robin Ray	E		A
<b>Madison (2)</b>	Rev. Jacquelyn Van Vliet	P	Becky Moody	P
<b>Mendham (2)</b>	Rev. Scot McCachren	P		A A
<b>Milford</b>	Rev. Dr. Linda Erkert-Bullock	A		A
<b>Milford, Alexandria</b>	Rev. Nicholas Hatch	A		A
<b>Milford, Holland Bible</b>	Rev. Geoff Stanley	A	Virginia Derbyshire	P
<b>Mine Hill</b>	Rev. Carie Morgan	P	Debbie Hooper	P
<b>Morris Plains (2)</b>	Rev. Donald Brown	P	Alec Jain Susan Vigilante	P P
<b>Morristown (3)</b>	Rev. Daniel Vigilante Rev. Audrey Webber	E P	Craig Barth	P A A
<b>New Vernon</b>	Rev. William Stone	A		A
<b>Newton (2)</b>	Vacant	V		A
<b>Newton, Yellow Frame</b>	Rev. Michael Nelms	A		A
<b>Oak Ridge</b>	Rev. Dr. Christopher Doyle	P		A
<b>Ogdensburg</b>	Rev. Alden Johnson	A		A
<b>Parsippany</b>	Rev. Donald Bragg	A		A
<b>Phillipsburg, Harmony</b>	Rev. Scott Bohr	A		A
<b>Phillipsburg, Pilgrim (2)</b>	Rev. Richard Gelson	P		A A

<b>Phillipsburg, Westminster</b>	Rev. Scott DeCaro	P		A
<b>Pittstown, Bethlehem</b>	Rev. Linda Gaden	P	Dorothy Youngs	P
<b>Pluckemin</b>	Rev. Ian Rankine	A		A
<b>Port Murray, Rockport</b>	Rev. Robert “Bronc” Radak	P		A
<b>Ringoes, 1<sup>st</sup> Amwell</b>	Vacant	V		A
<b>Ringoes, Kirkpatrick</b>	Rev. Marie Branigan	P		A
<b>Ringwood (2)</b>	Rev. Fred Milligan	A	Sue Cail	P A
<b>Rockaway (2)</b>	Rev. Ryon Herin	P	Laurie Morse Donna Van Duyne	P P
<b>Somerset</b>	Rev. Nancy Nalepa-Skibo	A	Tom Hauck	P
<b>Sparta</b>	Rev. Dr. Patrick Sileo	A		A
<b>Stanhope</b>	Rev. Peter Magnan	P		A
<b>Stewartsville</b>	Rev. Stephen Choi	A	Denise DeMasi	P
<b>Stewartsville, Old Greenwich (2)</b>	Rev. Mary Beth Mardis-Lecroy	P	Lisa Kolterjahn	P A
<b>Stirling</b>	Rev. Barbara Aspinall	P		A
<b>Stockton</b>	Vacant	V		A
<b>Succasunna</b>	Rev. Carie Morgan	P	Kathy Ritchey	P
<b>Sussex</b>	Rev. Katherine Scott-Kirschner	P	Charles Bates	P
<b>Taiwanese/American</b>	Rev. Chia Chun (Annie Kakun Tsai)	A		A
<b>Titusville</b>	Vacant	V	Kristine Schmidt	P
<b>Wantage, Beemerville</b>	Rev. Barry Young	P	Sharon Bove	P
<b>Warren, Trinity United</b>	Rev. Amy Sandlin	P		A
<b>Washington (2)</b>	Rev. James Scovell	A		A
<b>West Milford</b>	Vacant	V		A
<b>Wharton</b>	Rev. Sarah Green	A		A
<b>Wharton, Berkshire Valley</b>	Rev. Dr. Christopher Doyle	P	Gerald Bates	P
<b>Wharton, Hungarian</b>	Vacant	V	Stephen Lance	P
<b>Whippany</b>	Rev. Sarah Cairatti	A		A

***Teaching Elders Engaged in a Validated Ministry***

Rev. Mike Atzert ( <i>Chaplain</i> )	A
Rev. Joanne Miller	E
Rev. Robin Miller Curras ( <i>serving church out of bounds</i> )	P
Rev. Christine Davies	A
Rev. Jennifer Hrynyk	A
Rev. John C. Kile	A
Rev. Jeanne Radak ( <i>Presbytery Leader – Highlands Presbytery</i> )	P
Rev. Beth Scibienski ( <i>Serving RCA church</i> )	A
Rev. Salvatore Seirmarco ( <i>Chaplain – United Methodist Communities</i> )	A
Rev. Dr. Steven Shussett, Stated Clerk ( <i>Highlands Presbytery</i> )	P
Rev. Christopher Small ( <i>Chaplain – Hunterdon Healthcare Systems</i> )	A
Rev. Angella Son ( <i>Professor – Drew University</i> )	P
Rev. Caroline Unzaga	A

**Members at Large**

Rev. Leslie Dobbs-Allsopp	P
Rev. M. Elizabeth Blythe	E
Rev. Justin Choi	A
Rev. Courtney Cromie	A
Rev. Dan Dorrow	A
Rev. Jin Hee Han	E
Rev. Donna McDaid	A
Rev. Heather Morrison-Yaden	E
Rev. Hayley O'Connor	A
Rev. Gail Pendleton	A

**Honorably Retired**

Rev. Peter Amerman	E
Rev. Jeff Archer	E
Rev. Nancy Asbury	E
Rev. Charles Baier	E
Rev. Joicy Becker-Richards	E
Rev. Robert Beringer	E
Rev. Frederick Black	E
Rev. George Blank	E
Rev. Sally Campbell	E
Rev. Robert Colman	E
Rev. Cynthia Crouner	E
Rev. William Culton	E
Rev. James D'Angelo	E
Rev. William Davis	E
Rev. Judith Dean	E
Rev. Richard Dole	E
Rev. Birda Ferguson	E
Rev. Guy Ferguson	E
Rev. Janet Fishburn	E
Rev. Benhardt Fraumann	E
Rev. Mervin Fry	E
Rev. Deirdre Greenwood White	E
Rev. Peter Gregory	E
Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Hall	E
Rev. Dr. Edward Halldorson	E
Rev. David Hengerer	E
Rev. Kathryn Henry	E
Rev. Jean Holmes	E
Rev. Herbert Huffmon	E
Rev. Harold Johnson	E
Rev. Eugenia Johnston	E
Rev. Philip Jones	E
Rev. Steven Kengeter	E
Rev. Heup Young Kim	E

Rev. D. Paul LaMontagne	E
Rev. Dr. David Lawrence	E
Rev. Winter Lantz	E
Rev. Unzu Lee	E
Rev. Tony MacNaughton	P
Rev. James Morris	E
Rev. Elizabeth Morrison	E
Rev. Szabolcs Nagy	E
Rev. Chet Penza	E
Rev. Barbara Peters	E
Rev. John Potter	P
Rev. Donald Prytherch	P
Rev. Bronc Radak ( <i>serving Rockport</i> )	P
Rev. Jack Roan	E
Rev. Stephen Ross	E
Rev. Lorrie Rowland-Skinner	E
Rev. Diane Ruffle	E
Rev. Alan Schaefer ( <i>serving Dover</i> )	E
Rev. Bruce Schundler	E
Rev. Donald Scott	E
Rev. Sherman Skinner	E
Rev. Sarah Taylor	E
Rev. Charles Thompson	E
Rev. Alfred Tisdale	E
Rev. John Verser	E
Rev. David Young	P
Rev. Dr. Nancy Young	E

**Ruling Elders by Virtue of Office**

Paula Benson, Past Moderator (Highlands Presbyterian Church, Long Valley)	P
John Crozier, COM Co-Moderator (First Presbyterian Church of Boonton)	P
Wendy Doidge, Past Moderator (Presbyterian Church in Morristown)	P
Joe Martinoni, Past Moderator (First Presbyterian Church of Rockaway)	P
Ken Nickel, Past Moderator (First Presbyterian Church of Boonton)	P
Mel Prestamo, Past Moderator (Long Valley Presbyterian Church)	P
Donna Rahman, CPM Co-Moderator (Fairmount Presbyterian Church, Califon)	P
Scott Riker, ACT Member (Highlands Presbyterian Church, Long Valley)	P
Pete Peterson, ACT Co-Moderator (Fairmount Presbyterian Church, Califon)	P

**Others in Attendance**

Sonja Gaertner, Office Manager (Presbytery of the Highlands)	P
Lizabeth Hutchinson, Financial Administrator (Presbytery of the Highlands)	P
Patrick Allred, Young Leader Formation Team (Presbyterian Church in Morristown)	P
Jamie Evans, Visitor (Flemington Presbyterian Church)	P
Rev. Edwin Gonzalez-Castillo, Executive Director (Presbyterian Disaster Assistance)	P
Lilly Kwong, Visitor (Kitchell Memorial Presbyterian Church, East Hanover)	P
Joshua Lance, Visitor (Hungarian Presbyterian Church of Wharton)	P
Elise Bates-Russell, Executive Director (Johnsonburg Camp & Retreat Center)	P

**Total in Attendance – 94**

~ *Sonja Gaertner, Attendance Clerk – The Presbytery of the Highlands of NJ*

**ENROLLMENT OF CORRESPONDING MEMBERS & GUESTS**

Rev. Edwin Gonzalez-Castillo, PDA

Ruling Elder Elise Bates-Russell, Executive Director, Johnsonburg Camp & Retreat Center.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW RULING ELDER COMMISSIONERS**

**ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda was adopted as presented.

**CONSENT AGENDA & STATED CLERK'S REPORT**

The agenda and report were adopted as presented.

**SC-1**

Approve the minutes of the Presbytery meeting held November 15, 2022.

**SC-2**

Approve excuses for the Presbytery meeting of January 28, 2023.

**SC-3**

Receive the report of the Committee on Ministry.

**SC-4**

Receive the report of the Administration & Coordinating Team.

**SC-5**

Receive the report of the Church Development Team.

**PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE** – Edwin Gonzalez-Castillo, new PDA Executive Director, gave a brief overview of their good work, current efforts and how congregations can get involved.

**VOTING ON PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE BOOK OF ORDER**

**The Following Votes on Proposed Amendments to the Book of Order  
have been Submitted to the General Assembly**

**January 2023**

		Yes	No
1. 22-G ( <i>Page 15</i> )	Form of Government (G-2.0603): Preparation for Ministry: Purpose of Inquiry	Yes	
2. 22-K ( <i>Page 24</i> )	Form of Government (G-2.1002): Commissioning Ruling Elders to Particular Pastoral Service: Training, Examining, and Commissioning	Yes	

3. 22-L (Page 26)	Form of Government (G-2.1103): Certified Church Service: Christian Educators	Yes	
4. 22-O (Page 33)	Form of Government (G-3.0104): General Principles of Councils: Officers	Yes	
5. 22-P (Page 34)	Form of Government (G-3.0106): General Principles: Administration of Mission	Yes	
6. 22-J (Page 22)	Form of Government (G-2.1001): Commissioning Ruling Elders to Particular Pastoral Service Functions	Yes	
7. 22-E (Page 11)	Form of Government (G-2.0503): Ministers of Word and Sacrament: Categories of Membership		No

### November 2022

		Yes	No
1. 22-R (Page 38)	Form of Government (G-30401) “The Synod: Composition and Responsibilities”	Yes	
2. 22-A (Page 3)	Foundations of Presbyterian Polity (F-1.0302c) “The Calling of the Church: The Catholicity of the Church”	Yes	
22-B (Page 5)	Foundations of Presbyterian Polity (F-1.0404), “Openness to the Guidance of the Holy Spirit: Openness”	Yes	
3. 22-C (Page 7)	Form of Government (G-1.0501) “Meeting of the Congregation: Meetings”	Yes	
4. 22-H (Page 17)	Form of Government (G-2.0605) “Preparation for Ministry: Oversight”	Yes	
5. 22-S (Page 40)	Form of Government (G-4.0301) “Confidence and Privilege: Trust and Confidentiality”	Yes	
6. 22-T (Page 42)	Directory for Worship (W-3.0205) “Gathering: Confession and Forgiveness”		No
7. 22-U (Page 43)	Directory for Worship (W-3.0409) “Sacrament: Theology of the Lord's Supper		No
8. 22-V (Page 44)	Directory for Worship (W-3.0414) “Sacrament: Communion”	Yes	
9. 22-W (Page 45)	Directory for Worship (W-4.0403) “Ordination, Installation, and Commissioning: Order of Worship”	Yes	
10. 22-X (Page 47)	Directory for Worship (W-5.0104) “Worship and Personal Life: Household Worship”	Yes	
11. 22-Y (Page 48)	Directory for Worship (W-5.0104) “Worship and Personal Life: Household Worship”	Yes	

12. 22-M ( <i>Page 29</i> )	Form of Government (G-3.0134) “General Principles of Councils: Officers”	Yes	
13. 22-N ( <i>Page 31</i> )	Form of Government (G-3.0105) “General Principles of Councils: Meetings” —Y	Yes	

**WORSHIP, “Rekindle the Gift of God that is Within You”**

The Rev. Tom Brown and Ruling Elder Sue Cail, Moderator and Vice-Moderator, led worship, with music provided by Craig Barth (Morristown).

**QUICK START CHALLENGE INVITATION - Rev. Jeanne Radak, Presbytery Leader**

We have finally reached the threshold of the post pandemic season. Congregational leaders surveying the environment view pews not filled, low leadership energy, and anxiety about next steps.

As with any new season the first steps need to be taken. The Post Pandemic Challenge encourages congregational leaders to be bold in taking the next steps. There are no certainties or historical data to guide us on what will happen next. Faith and Hope light the path into this new season.

The challenges are designed to be taken in order. The first three challenges have “Quick Start” instructions for taking next steps.

**BREAKOUT GROUPS**

Groups worked on identifying congregations’ readiness for ‘Rekindling the Gift of God that is Within You’ by answering two questions. Share about something in your ministry setting that is being rekindled or that could be AND How might your congregation/ministry accept the quick start challenge? What one thing would you suggest to them.

**INVITATION TO DIGITAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Announcements were put in the ‘chat’ function of Zoom to be read later by the Moderator:

- The Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church is kicking off a special program this year on Creation Care. Our first event is coming up on Feb 5th. Here is some information from our website: Creation Care Program Date(s) - 02/05/2023 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm
- The last session of Officer Training in our current series on the Ordination Questions will take place via Zoom on 2/9, from 7-8:30pm. The previous two sessions were recorded and are, or will soon be, available on the website.
- Last Sundays in February and March for your youth grades 5-8 with an Ultimate Youth Night by Johnsonburg!
- “SOUPER BOWL” SUNDAY, which is February 12th this year, we continue to focus on helping the Franklin Food Bank tackle hunger. This year, instead of bringing in cans of soup, we hope you will consider making a donation to the Food Bank. Checks may be made out to Somerset Presbyterian Church and placed in the offering plate. (Please put “Food Bank” in the memo.) The church will then send in the donations.

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

Barbara Aspinall read out the nominations to the Presbytery.

**YOUNG LEADER FORMATION**

Class of 2023

Catherine Morgan (A) (Ringwood/Community)



Class of 2025

Stephen Gaden (A) (Morris Plains/Presbyterian)

With no nominations from the floor **THE SLATE WAS APPROVED**

### **PROPERTY & INSURANCE TEAM**

Lisa Kolterjahn presented the recent work of the team with regards to insurance. It has been discovered that Highlands Presbytery is part of a large insurance partnership encompassing multiple presbyteries. To collect data, a questionnaire will be sent to churches to determine needs and interests.

### **YOUNG LEADER FORMATION TEAM**

Patrick Allred, member of the Young Leader Formation Team presented and update on their work, including formation of the team, a new webpage, and the introduction of Johnsonburg Ambassadors. Patrick continued by inviting the Presbytery to participate in the “Spiritual Child” a Presentation by author Lisa Miller on Feb 16, 2023.

### **JOHNSONBURG CAMP & RETREAT CENTER**

Elise Bates-Russell shared the exciting improvements and sessions going on at Johnsonburg.

### **COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**

#### **PASTOR INTRODUCTIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

John Crozier introduced:

Rev. Audrey Webber, Associate Covenant Supply Pastor, Presbyterian Church in Morristown

Rev. Amy Sandlin, Covenant Supply Pastor, Trinity United Church, Warren

Rev. Clifford Acklam, Pastor, United Presbyterian Church, Flanders

### **CALL FINDER**

Jeanne Radak introduced Northeast Crossroads Call Finder, a resource to connect church professionals with congregational ministry opportunities in the fifteen presbyteries that serve the greater New York City and Philadelphia metro region. <https://mynextcallpcusa.org/>

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Under New Business, Stated Clerk Steven H. Shussett read the following: D-11.0701 Reporting the Decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission

...If the presbytery is not meeting [when the decision is received from the clerk of the permanent judicial commission], the stated clerk shall read the decision to the presbytery at its first stated ... meeting thereafter ... and enter the full decision upon the minutes of the presbytery.

The PREAMBLE to the Rules of Discipline (D-1.0101 -.0102).

Church discipline is the church’s exercise of authority given by Christ, both in the direction of guidance, control, and nurture of its members and in the direction of constructive criticism of offenders. The church’s disciplinary process exists not as a substitute for the secular judicial system, but to do what the secular judicial system cannot do. The purpose of discipline is to honor God by making clear the significance of membership in the body of Christ; to preserve the purity of the church by nourishing the individual within the life of the believing community; to achieve justice and compassion for all participants involved; to correct or restrain wrongdoing in order to bring members to repentance and

restoration; to uphold the dignity of those who have been harmed by disciplinary offenses; to restore the unity of the church by removing the causes of discord and division; and to secure the just, speedy, and economical determination of proceedings. In all respects, all participants are to be accorded procedural safeguards and due process, and it is the intention of these rules so to provide.

The power that Jesus Christ has vested in his Church, a power manifested in the exercise of church discipline, is one for building up the body of Christ, not for destroying it, for redeeming, not for punishing. It should be exercised as a dispensation of mercy and not of wrath so that the great ends of the Church may be achieved, that all children of God may be presented faultless in the day of Christ.

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Regarding Disciplinary Case Number 001, The Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey for the Presbyterian Church (USA) vs the Rev Scott Foster:

This is a Disciplinary case which has come before the Permanent Judicial Commission as a result of accusations submitted against Rev. Scott Foster, a teaching elder and a member of the Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey.

The Permanent Judicial Commission finds that it has jurisdiction, that the charges against Mr. Foster were filed with the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey within the required time limits.

----- HISTORY -----

On August 19, 2021 a written statement was received which contained allegations of alleged offenses (D-10.0101).

The allegations were transmitted by the Rev. Jeanne Radak, Presbytery Leader of the Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey to the Rev. Carl Wilton, Acting Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey. The Administration and Coordinating Team of the Presbytery subsequently appointed an Investigating Committee that first met on September 16, 2021, pursuant to D-10.0106.

A special committee consisting of two members of the Permanent Judicial Commission determined that administrative leave for Rev. Foster from his position as Interim Pastor of the Fairmount Presbyterian Church was not required at that time. Upon request of the Investigating Committee, that special committee met again on June 16, 2022. Based on further information they received from the Investigating Committee, the subcommittee again granted a hearing to Mr. Foster, after which they decided to impose administrative leave according to D-10.0106.

The Investigating Committee determined that the statements contained facts that constituted an offense as defined in D-2.0203b. The Investigating Committee provided Rev. Foster with a copy of the statement of alleged offenses described in D-10.0101; made a thorough inquiry into the facts and circumstances of the alleged offenses described in D-10.0101; made a thorough inquiry into the facts and circumstances of the alleged offenses, including an examination of the relevant papers, documents and records available to it; and interviewed all available witnesses (D-10.0202). At each and every conference with Rev. Foster, the committee informed him of the right to remain silent, to be represented by counsel, and if charges were later filed, to have counsel appointed if unable to secure counsel (D-10.0202; D-11.0301-.0302).

The Investigating Committee determined, in accordance with G-3.0102 and D-2.0203b, that there were probable grounds or cause to believe that an offense was committed by the accused; and has determined that the charges filed on the basis of the papers, documents, records, testimony, or other evidence could reasonable be proved, having given due regard to the character, availability and credibility of the witnesses and evidence available.

On June 23, 2022, The Investigating Committee, Rev. Foster, and his counsel, met with a certified mediator to discuss the Alternative Form of Resolution prepared by the Investigating Committee (D- 10.0202j). Failing to reach an agreement on the initial proposal, a revision of that document was sent on August 25, 2022. On September 6, 2022, Rev. Foster's counsel responded to the Investigating Committee's proposed Alternative Form of Resolution.

On September 23, 2022, Rev. Steven H. Shussett, the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey communicated the charges to the counsel of the person accused.

On September 30, 2022, Permanent Judicial Commission Co-Moderator Stuart Ours and Clerk Jamie Evans, the Prosecuting Committee and other appropriate persons, met with Rev. Foster and his counsel, for the pre-trial conference (D-10.0405).

On or around October 5, 2022, it was communicated to all parties that the trial would take place on November 19, 2022. [Stated Clerk Note: the trial was continued and concluded on January 21, 2023.]

----- CHARGES AND VERDICT ----- FOUR

(4) CHARGES, VERDICTS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

1. (ADULTERY) That beginning in or about March 2019, SCOTT FOSTER did commit the offense of adultery in that while married to [REDACTED] by engaging in a sexual relationship with [REDACTED]. The relationship continues to date while remains [REDACTED].

VERDICT #1 \_\_\_\_\_ Guilty \_\_\_\_\_ Vote 8-0 \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. (SEXUAL MISCONDUCT) That beginning in or about March 2019, SCOTT FOSTER, while serving as Pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Madison, did violate the Standards of Conduct of the Sexual Misconduct Policy by participating in an inappropriate relationship with [REDACTED]

This relationship is in violation of the Sexual Misconduct Policy and Standards of Ethical Conduct of the Presbytery of Newton now the Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey, and of the ordination vows in the Directory for Worship (W-4.0404).

VERDICT #2 \_\_\_ Guilty \_\_\_\_\_ Vote 8-0 \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. (ACCEPTING PAYMENTS) That beginning in or about March 2019 and continuing through November 2019, SCOTT FOSTER did accept payments in the amount of \$23,000.00 from [REDACTED]

VERDICT #3 \_\_\_\_\_ Guilty 7-1 \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. (LYING TO THE IC) That at an interview with the Investigating Committee on October 27, 2021, SCOTT FOSTER affirmed that his relationship with [REDACTED] did not begin until after his divorce, when in fact the relationship was conducted while he was married to [REDACTED] and while [REDACTED] was married to and continues to be married to [REDACTED]. He was not honest with the Investigating Committee and misrepresented the facts.

VERDICT #4 \_\_\_ Not Guilty \_\_\_\_\_ Vote 4-4 \_\_\_\_\_

----- ORDER -----

THIS PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION, ACTING AS A COURT OF THE CHURCH,  
THEREFORE IMPOSES THE CENSURE OF

- None
- Rebuke
- Rebuke with Supervised Rehabilitation
- X Temporary Exclusion**
- Removal from Ordered Ministry or Membership

*[Read to the Presbytery, but not a part of the Permanent Judicial Commission's final written report:*

Temporary exclusion from the exercise of ordered ministry is the second most severe of the four degrees of censure, the most severe being "Removal from Ordered Ministry."

Temporary exclusion is censure for a more aggravated offense and shall be either for a definite period of time, or, as in this case, for a period defined by completion of supervised rehabilitation imposed by the permanent judicial commission. (D-11.0403e)]

**DECISION OF THE PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION**

Guided by the principles of church discipline, as stated in D-1.0101, we the members of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey, hereby rule, in accordance with D-12.0104, that Rev. Dr. Scott Foster be temporarily excluded from the exercise of ordered ministry according to the terms below.

At the beginning of the exclusion period, and at the expense of the presbytery, the Committee on Ministry shall engage the services of a pastoral assessment center acceptable to them, to conduct an in-depth psychological and leadership assessment of Dr. Foster. The Investigating Committee shall provide a summary of the issues that resulted in the discipline to the pastoral assessment center prior to the initial assessment, so that the counselor has context for the assessment, which shall consider the following:

- a. What is the state of Dr. Foster's emotional and psychological well-being?
- b. What underlying issues or deficits contribute to Dr. Foster's behavior, and what is needed to address them?
- c. To what extent does Dr. Foster understand the impact of his behavior?
- d. To what extent is he contrite and willing to make amends to those he has injured?
- e. To what extent does Dr. Foster understand the boundaries he crossed and the pain those violations caused to others?
- f. To what extent does Dr. Foster grasp the significance and meaning of boundaries and the power imbalances of leadership?
- g. Under what circumstances could Dr. Foster engage in pastoral ministry with a reasonable expectation of success?

Dr. Foster agrees to sign such legal releases as the assessment center considers necessary for representatives of the presbytery to engage in conversation with their staff concerning their assessment of him.

Following the assessment period, and at his own expense, Dr. Foster shall continue to receive psychological counseling to address whatever issues or concerns are raised by the counselor at the assessment center. Dr. Foster shall choose an accredited professional therapist who holds an M.D. in psychiatry, a Ph.D. in psychology or is a licensed clinical social worker. This individual, and a minimum number and duration of counseling sessions, must be approved by the Committee on Ministry before Dr. Foster begins treatment. Dr. Foster agrees to sign such legal releases as his therapist considers necessary for representatives of the presbytery to receive information from the therapist about the number and duration of counseling sessions he has completed.

In addition, there shall be a committee of four people, two appointed by COM and two chosen by Dr. Foster who are PCUSA members. The committee shall meet with Dr. Foster from time to time to discuss the facts that led to the discipline, and the advancements toward acknowledgment and repentance of the wrongdoing. Dr. Foster shall be required to offer a written apology to the congregation of The Presbyterian Church of Madison and an apology on the Presbytery floor acknowledging an understanding of his actions and exhibiting remorse and repentance.

At such time as he and his therapist have concluded that appropriate progress has been made, and if he still desires to return to active ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Dr. Foster shall, at the expense of the presbytery, again engage the services of the assessment center to undergo a final assessment of his psychological fitness. Dr. Foster agrees to sign such legal releases as the assessment center considers necessary for representatives of the presbytery to engage in conversation with their staff concerning his case. Based on the final assessment report, the Committee on Ministry shall determine whether or not Dr. Foster is ready to be restored to active ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and, if their conclusion is affirmative, shall recommend that the presbytery vote to restore Dr. Foster to active ministry. Dr. Foster may then apply to the presbytery in writing, so the presbytery may determine by vote whether or not it is fully satisfied that the supervised rehabilitation has been successfully completed and to restore him to active ministry, according to Rules of Discipline D-12.0104h.

The Permanent Judicial Commission further rules that the Stated Clerk of the presbytery inform the presbytery of the full details of this decision.

----- ABSENCES AND NON-PARTICIPANTS -----

Rev. Linda Gaden, and Ruling Elders Donna Koeppel (Special Committee) and Ray Schmickle (Special Committee), members of the Permanent Judicial Commission, were not present and took no part in the proceedings.

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Dated this 21st day of January, 2023

[signed] Rev. David Harvey  
David Harvey  
Moderator, Permanent Judicial Commission

[signed] Jamie Evans  
Jamie Evans  
Clerk, Permanent Judicial Commission

The Stated Clerk then concluded:

In conclusion, whereas Scott Foster has been found guilty of the offenses of adultery, sexual misconduct, and accepting payments, and by such offenses he acted contrary to the Scriptures and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); now, therefore, the Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey, in the name and by the authority of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), does now declare him temporarily excluded from the exercise of ordained ministry until completion of the rehabilitation program described above.

The moderator closed the report of the Permanent Judicial Commission with prayer.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Moderator Tom Brown closed the meeting after worship prayer at 12:30 pm.

Attested: \_\_\_\_\_  
Steven H. Shussett Stated Clerk

## **REPORTS:**

Committee on Ministry Report  
Administration & Coordinating Team Report  
Church Development Team Report

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

Presbytery of the Highlands  
Stated Meeting  
Committee on Ministry Report  
January 28, 2023

**Items for Consent Agenda:**

None.

**Items for Action:**

None.

**Items for Report:**

*From the December 6, 2022 meeting:*

**COM-1**

Appointed Moderators: Rev. Brad Morgan for First Presbyterian Church of Lambertville; Rev. Merideth Mueller-Bolton for United First Presbyterian Church of Amwell, Ringoes (Larison's Corner).

**COM-2**

Received \$800 in contributions to the Clergy Care Fund from the November Presbytery meeting.

**COM-3**

Continue plans for the Retirement Celebration for four pastors on January 31, 2023.

**COM-4**

Approved the Terms of Call and Interim Covenant between Rev. Heather Morrison-Yaden and First Presbyterian Church of Newton.

**COM-5**

Approved the Terms of Call between Rev. Timothy Clarkson and Union Hill Presbyterian Church, Denville.

**COM-6**

Approved the Terms of Call and Covenant Supply Position description for a shared pastor position between Meyersville Presbyterian Church and First Presbyterian Church, Stirling.

**COM-7**

Approved the Discernment Report for the Kirkpatrick Memorial Presbyterian Church and approved the formation of Pastor Nominating Committee.

**COM-8**

Approved the Installation Commission Report for Rev. Ryon Herin as pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Rockaway.



**COM-9**

Heard a report from the Presbytery Leader that the New Call Finder Webpage is now up and running and can be found at mynextcallpcusa.org.

**COM-10**

Requested of the Administration and Coordinating Team (ACT) an Administrative Commission to assist the Fairmount Presbyterian Church, Califon. See attached description.

*From the January 10, 2023 meeting:*

**COM-11**

Appointed Moderators: Rev. Jean Holmes for West Milford Presbyterian Church; Rev. Dr. Nancy Young for First Presbyterian Church of Branchville following Rev. Dr. Jefferson Hatch's retirement in February.

**COM-12**

All who were required to take Boundary Training for 2022 have completed the training.

**COM-13**

Completed an exit interviews with Rev. Justin Choi and Rev. D. Paul LaMontagne.

**COM-14**

Completed planning for Retirement Celebration scheduled for January 31, 2023.

**COM-15**

Approved the following Terms of Call between:

- Rev. Dr. Patrick Sileo and First Presbyterian Church of Sparta.
- Rev. Clifford Acklam and United Presbyterian Church, Flanders.
- Rev. Michael Nelms and Yellow Frame Presbyterian Church, Newton.

**COM-16**

Approved a request from Mine Hill Presbyterian Church for an extension of terms of an elder and deacon.

**COM-17**

Approved the Policy/Process for a Pastor to move from Covenant Supply to Installed Pastor.

**COM-18**

Approved a position description for a 10-hour a week Bridge Pastor for West Milford.

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Administrative Commission for  
Fairmount Presbyterian Church, Califon  
Commission Charge

December 2022

**Introduction**

Over 2022 the Fairmount Church has experienced several significant events. In June the unexpected departure of the Interim pastor, over the year and more the loss of members and church leaders due to death and members moving from the area because of retirement. The stewardship/pledge income has dropped significantly because of leadership and membership losses. The income manse rental and use of the community house has dropped off or not kept up with inflation. In 2021 it became necessary to add a new roof to the community house which has added to the financial strain. At the end of 2022 the treasurer will be leaving causing another leadership gap.

### **Necessity to regroup and rethink and revision**

The loss of income, membership and leadership has necessitated that the Fairmount church needs to regroup, rethink and revision their next steps. They recently completed their discernment process. The vision of the session is for them to focus on reaching the community using their assets of people and property. They have a desire to call a ½ time pastor and to provide benefits. They understand that they have reached a critical place but would like the opportunity to engage in a larger conversation about where and how God is calling them into the future.

The Committee on Ministry and the Session have discussed and consulted about next steps.

### **Recommendations**

The Committee on Ministry recommends to the presbytery appoint an Administrative Commission to assist the session and congregation on the next steps in their journey.

The COM Recommends the following functions of an Administrative Commission to assist Fairmount:

The Administrative Commission (AC) for the Fairmount Presbyterian Church will have the following powers and responsibilities:

- To visit the Fairmount Presbyterian Church, Califon and to inquire into the concerns of the session and congregation members about the future of the church.
- The AC shall have access to all records and documents which pertain to the life and mission of the Fairmount Presbyterian Church, without limitation including all financial documents and accounts.
- The AC shall assist the Session of the Fairmount Presbyterian Church in the fulfillment of its responsibilities listed in G-3.0201. The Commission members shall serve alongside the session members of Fairmount Presbyterian Church with vote if needed, advising them and encouraging them as they fulfill their responsibilities. The Committee on Ministry shall appoint the moderator of the session.
- The AC shall have the authority to resolve whatever difficulties or issue may be

discovered, acting on behalf of the presbytery, which is “responsible for the mission of the government of the church throughout its geographical district.” In carrying out this responsibility, the Administrative Commission, is empowered:

- To provide coordination and guidance for the Fairmount Presbyterian Church, assisting the church in mobilizing its strength for making the most effective witness to Jesus Christ. (G-3.0303a) This will include at a minimum helping the session develop and develop a comprehensive financial sustainability plan which could include helping to implement appropriate financial procedures and controls. It will also include helping the session to plan and implement the plan for sustainable pastoral leadership for the congregation. Any other such guidance and coordination as becomes necessary during the course of the Commission’s work shall be included in the scope of this warrant.
- To assist in assessment of leadership capacity and potential leadership development within the congregation.
- To “take appropriate action to correct any irregularity or delinquency it may discover.” (G-3.0303d(3))
- To provide pastoral care for the Fairmount Church in a time of crisis, conflict, and uncertainty. This shall include praying with and for the congregation and session; encouraging communication among the participants in the church’s life; seeking opportunities for church members and participants to discern, share and vision where God is calling them into the future.
- To order - if it determines, after a thorough investigation and consultation with the Committee on Ministry, and after an opportunity to be heard has been accorded to the session - that the presbytery assume original jurisdiction over Fairmount Presbyterian Church

The Administrative Commission shall report in writing to the presbytery at least every six months.

Membership in this Administrative Commission shall be by appointment of the Moderator of presbytery, in consultation with the Committee on Ministry, the Stated Clerk and the Presbytery Leader.

Administration and Coordinating Team Report  
January 28, 2023

**Items for Report:**

*From the November 29, 2022 meeting:*

**ACT-1**

Reviewed the November 15<sup>th</sup> Presbytery Meeting.

**ACT-2**

Discussed plans for the January 2023 presbytery meeting. The theme for 2023 will be “*Rekindling the Gift*”. Agenda items include General Assembly Amendments, presentations and Worship.

**ACT-3**

Discussed the Presbytery’s areas of focus for 2023:

- Community Building and Connections

- Resourcing for the Post Pandemic Church
- Discerning where God is calling the Presbytery of the Highlands

#### **ACT-4**

Approved final schedule for 2023 Presbytery meetings:

- January 28, Saturday, 10 am – Zoom
- March 14, Tuesday, 7 pm – Zoom – Anniversary Meeting
- May 9, Tuesday, 7 pm – Hybrid Meeting – Johnsonburg Camp & Retreat Center
- September 9, Saturday, 10 am - Hybrid Meeting – Pluckemin Presbyterian Church
- November 14, Tuesday, 7 pm - Zoom

#### **ACT-5**

Approved recommendations from Budget and Finance Team:

- Up to \$6000 from Special Resourcing and Assistance Fund for a youth and young adult intern for the Presbytery in partnership with Johnsonburg Camp & Retreat Center.
- \$15,000 from Mission and Ministry Reserve fund for the PJC/Legal Fund.
- \$3,000 from Special Resourcing and Assistance Fund for COM support for a congregation.

#### **ACT-6**

Called for a Special ACT Meeting to act on a request from COM for an Administrative Commission.

#### **ACT-7**

Approved the preliminary plans for a Sabbatical for the Presbytery Leader in 2023.

#### **ACT-8**

Funds Development Team reported that the Clergy Care discussion at the November presbytery meeting was well received.

#### **ACT-9**

Reviewed the Worship Planning Team's plans for 2023 Presbytery Meeting Worship.

#### **ACT-10**

Received the report from the Presbytery Leader that the Discernment Team is almost ready to begin.

#### **ACT-11**

Financial Report – The Presbytery's revenue was lagging behind predictions but expenses were on target.

#### **ACT-12**

Leadership Reports:

- Vice Moderator attended the Moderator's conference in person. Hopes to invite one of the GA Co-moderators to a presbytery meeting in 2023.
- Stated Clerk/Resource staff – Busy with workshops, Synod Assembly and Stated Clerk responsibilities.
- Presbytery Leader has been appointed to the General Assembly Special Committee on a New Funding Model.

*From the December 8, 2022 meeting:*

#### **ACT-13**

The ACT approved the request from the Committee on Ministry for an Administrative Commission to assist the Fairmount Presbyterian Church, Califon. (See COM report for AC position description).

- Update: The Moderator Rev. Tom Brown has appointed the following:
  - Rev. Chad Rodgers – Lower Valley Presbyterian Church, Califon
  - Rev. Mary Beth Mardis-Lecroy – Old Greenwich Presbyterian Church, Stewartsville
  - Rev. James Scovell – First Presbyterian Church of Washington
  - Elder Paula Benson – Highlands Presbyterian Church, Long Valley
  - Elder Ruth Babula – Highlands Presbyterian Church, Long Valley
  - Elder David Boyer – Clinton Presbyterian Church

Church Development Team Report  
January 28, 2023

### **Items for Report:**

#### **CDT-1**

Technology Assistance:

- Two more congregations have met with Rev. Casey Carbone for their technology consultation.
- Three Technology Grants, amounting to \$2000 each, were granted in January 2023.

#### **CDT-2**

Discernment Studies:

- The Kirkpatrick Memorial Presbyterian Church Discernment study was approved.
- First Presbyterian Church, Stirling/Meyersville Presbyterian Church, Gillette have finished their report; this has been reported to COM.
- Fairmount Presbyterian Church, Califon has been removed from our list at this time.

#### **CDT-3**

Resourcing:

- Co-Moderator Rev. Carie Morgan will be organizing a book study on *We Aren't Broke* written by Mark Elsdon.

#### **CDT-4**

Speakers:

- Edwin Gonzalez-Castillo of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance will speak at the January Presbytery meeting to kickstart PDA efforts in Highlands Presbytery.
- Rev. Jeanne Radak will speak on the Quick Start Challenge at the January Presbytery meeting.
- A Matthew 25 event has been scheduled January 25 at 1pm for those involved or interested.
- Dr. Kimberly Wagner, Princeton Theological Seminary, will speak on post-trauma ministry, date and time to be determined.
- Rev. Dr. Chris Doyle will speak on his Doctor of Ministry research on ministry with Generation X.

#### **CDT-5**

Churches in Transition:

- The list of churches in transition, and therefore needing to enter the “Turning the Page” process, is unchanged at this time.