

The 14th Stated Meeting of The Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey

November 14th, 2023

*(to be approved at the 15th Stated Meeting of
The Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey)*

The Body of Christ, A Call to Gather

The Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey of the Presbyterian Church (USA) held its 14th Stated Meeting on November 14th, 2023, on the ZOOM platform.

The Vice-Moderator, Ruling Elder Sue Cail (Ringwood Community), called the meeting to order at 7 PM and led the opening prayer.

Introduction to Zoom Meeting and voting – *Vice-Moderator, Elder Sue Cail*

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

<u>Congregation</u>	<u>Teaching Elder</u>		<u>Ruling Elder</u>	
Allamuchy, Panther Valley	Rev. James Vespoli	P		A
Alpha	Rev. Scott DeCaro	P		A
Andover	Vacant	V	Sandra Wozniak	P
Basking Ridge (3)	Rev. Dennis Jones	A	Ashley Bastow	P
	Rev. Dr. Maureen Paterson	P	Nancy Bedner	P
			Lee Horner	P
Bedminster, Lamington (2)	Rev. Caroline Jinkins	P	Fred Paine	P
			Bob Wittpenn	P
Belvidere	Rev. Dr. Pamela Szurek	A		A
Blairstown	Rev. David Harvey	P	Zac Burke	P
Boonton	Rev. Carie Morgan	P		A
Bound Brook (3)	Rev. Linda Owens	E	Kathy Hobbs	P
			Daniel Richard	P
				A
Branchville (2)	Rev. Dr. Nancy Young	P		A
	Rev. David Young	P		A
Califon, Fairmount	Vacant	V	Joyce Martin	P
Califon, Lower Valley	Rev. Chad Rodgers	P		A
Cedar Knolls, Hildale Park	Rev. Ross Lang	P		A
Chatham Township (2)	Rev. Dr. Ellen Clemot	P		A
	Rev. Thomas Brown	P		A
Chatham, Ogden Memorial	Rev. Kathi Heath	P	Allan Paradise	P
Chester	Rev. Christopher Scrivens	P	John Hellriegel	P
Clinton	Rev. Tracey Henry	P		A

Delaware	Vacant	V		A
Delaware, 1st Oxford	Vacant	V		A
Denville, Union Hill	Rev. Timothy Clarkson	P		A
Dover, First Memorial	Rev. Alan Schaefer (Ret.)	E		A
East Hanover	Vacant	V		A
East Hanover, Kitchell	Rev. Hannah Allred	A		A
Flanders (2)	Rev. Cliff Acklam	P	Lois Steward	P A
Flemington (3)	Rev. Amy Lincoln	P	Cecelia Hopkins Ann Engberg Michael Russell	P P P
Florham Park, Calvary	Rev. Ronald de Groot	A		A
Franklin	Rev. Julie Raffety	P		A
Frenchtown	Rev. Merideth Mueller-Bolton	P	Kathy Skerbenz	P
Gillette, Meyersville	Rev. Stefanie Muntzel	P		A
Hackettstown (2)	Rev. Erin Hayes-Cook	E		A A
Hampton, Musconetcong Valley	Stephanie Farley, CRE	P	Rob Celentano	P
Lambertville	Vacant	V	Phil McCloughan	P
Lambertville, 2nd English	Rev. H. Bradford Morgan	P		A
Long Valley	Vacant	V	Leah Korbel	P
Long Valley, Highlands	Rev. Robin Burton Palmer	P	Ruth Babula	P
Madison (2)	Rev. Jacquelyn Van Vliet	P	Becky Moody	P A
Mendham (2)	Rev. Scot McCachren	P	Per Ralamb	P A
Milford	Rev. Dr. Linda Erkert-Bullock	A		A
Milford, Alexandria	Rev. Nicholas Hatch	A		A
Milford, Holland Bible	Rev. Geoff Stanley	A		A
Mine Hill	Vacant	V	Debbie Hooper	P
Morris Plains (2)	Rev. Donald Brown	A	Susan Vigilante Alec Jain	P P
Morristown (3)	Rev. Daniel Vigilante Rev. Audrey Webber	A P	Karen Griffith Craig Barth Clarence Curry	P P P
New Vernon	Rev. William Stone	P	Candace Weeks	P
Newton (2)	Rev. Heather Morrison Yaden	P		A A
Newton, Yellow Frame	Rev. Michael Nelms	A		A
Oak Ridge	Rev. Dr. Christopher Doyle	P		A
Ogdensburg	Rev. Alden Johnson	A		A
Parsippany	Rev. Donald Bragg	A		A
Phillipsburg, Harmony	Rev. Scott Bohr	A		A

Phillipsburg, Pilgrim (2)	Rev. Richard Gelson	P	Charles Lunn	P A
Pittstown, Bethlehem	Rev. Linda Gaden	E		A
Pluckemin	Rev. Ian Rankine	A		A
Port Murray, Rockport	Rev. Robert “Bronc” Radak	P		A
Ringoes, 1st Amwell	Vacant	V		A
Ringoes, Kirkpatrick	Vacant	V	Marie Knapp	P
Ringwood (2)	Rev. Fred Milligan	P		A A
Rockaway (2)	Rev. Ryon Herin	P	Rich Basile Laurie Morse	P P
Somerset	Rev. Nancy Nalepa-Skibo	P	Tom Hauck	P
Sparta	Rev. Dr. Patrick Sileo	P		A
Stanhope	Rev. Peter Magnan	P	Carol Barry	P
Stewartsville	Rev. Stephen Choi	P		A
Stewartsville, Old Greenwich (2)	Rev. Mary Beth Mardis-Lecroy	P	Jennifer Miller	P A
Stirling	Rev. Stefanie Muntzel	P		A
Stockton	Rev. David Snyder	A	Iren McKnight	P
Succasunna	Vacant	A		A
Sussex	Rev. Katherine Scott-Kirschner	P	Richard Hayzler	P
Taiwanese/American	Rev. Chia Chun (Annie Kakun Tsai)	A		A
Titusville	Vacant	V	Kris Schmidt	P
Wantage, Beemerville	Rev. Barry Young	P		A
Warren, Trinity United	Rev. Amy Sandlin	P		A
Washington (2)	Rev. James Scovell	P		A A
West Milford	Rev. Dr. Christopher Doyle	P	Betsy Engelhardt	P
Wharton	Rev. Sarah Green	P		A
Wharton, Berkshire Valley	Rev. Dr. Kenneth Ngwa	A		A
Wharton, Hungarian	Vacant	V	Stephen Lance	P
Whippany	Rev. Sarah Cairatti	A	Tim Lee	P

Teaching Elders Engaged in a Validated Ministry

Rev. Mike Atzert (<i>Chaplain</i>)	P
Rev. Joanne Miller	E
Rev. Robin Miller Curras (<i>serving church out of bounds</i>)	A
Rev. Christine Davies	P
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>)	P
Rev. Angella Son (<i>Professor – Drew University</i>)	E
Rev. Caroline Unzaga	A

Members at Large

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

Retired

Rev. Peter Amerman	A
Rev. Janice Ammon	P
Rev. Jeff Archer	A
Rev. Nancy Asbury	A
Rev. Barbara Aspinall	P
Rev. Charles Baier	A
Rev. Joicy Becker-Richards	A
Rev. Robert Beringer	A
Rev. Frederick Black	A
Rev. George Blank	A
Rev. Sally Campbell	A
Rev. Robert Colman	A
Rev. Cynthia Crowner	A
Rev. William Culton	P
Rev. James D'Angelo	A
Rev. William Davis	A
Rev. Judith Dean	A
Rev. Richard Dole	A
Rev. Birda Ferguson	A
Rev. Guy Ferguson	A
Rev. Dr. Janet Fishburn	A
Rev. Benhardt Fraumann	A
Rev. Mervin Fry	A
Rev. Peter Gregory	A
Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Hall	A
Rev. Dr. Edward Halldorson	A
Rev. David Hengerer	A
Rev. Dr. Jefferson Hatch	A
Rev. Kathryn Henry	A
Rev. Jean Holmes	A
Rev. Herbert Huffmon	A

Rev. Harold Johnson	A
Rev. Eugenia Johnston	A
Rev. Philip Jones	A
Rev. Steven Kengeter	A
Rev. Heup Young Kim	A
Rev. Dr. David Lawrence	A
Rev. Unzu Lee	A
Rev. Tony MacNaughton	P
Rev. James Morris	A
Rev. Elizabeth Morrison	A
Rev. Szabolcs Nagy	A
Rev. Chet Penza	A
Rev. Barbara Peters	A
Rev. John Potter	P
Rev. Donald Prytherch	A
Rev. Bronc Radak (<i>serving Rockport</i>)	P
Rev. Jack Roan	A
Rev. Stephen Ross	A
Rev. Lorrie Rowland-Skinner	A
Rev. Diane Ruffle	A
Rev. Alan Schaefer (<i>serving Dover</i>)	A
Rev. Bruce Schundler	A
Rev. Donald Scott	A
Rev. Sherman Skinner	A
Rev. Sarah Taylor	A
Rev. Charles Thompson	A
Rev. Alfred Tisdale	A
Rev. John Verser	A
Rev. Deirdre Greenwood White	A
Rev. David Young	P
Rev. Dr. Nancy Young	P

Ruling Elders by Virtue of Office

Matt Allen, Calvary Presbyterian Church, Florham Park, Past Moderator	P
Sue Cail, Community Presbyterian Church of Ringwood, Member of ACT	P
John Crozier, First Presbyterian Church of Boonton, Co-Moderator of COM	P
Wendy Doidge, Presbyterian Church in Morristown, Past Moderator	P
Pete Peterson, Clinton Presbyterian Church, Co-Moderator of ACT	P
Joe Martinoni, First Presbyterian Church of Rockaway, Past Moderator	P
Jeanne Perry, Community Presbyterian Church, Chester, Member of COM	P
Pete Peterson, Clinton Presbyterian Church, Co-Moderator of ACT	P
Donna Rahmann, Fairmount Presbyterian Church, Co-Moderator of CPM	P
Scott Riker, Highlands Presbyterian Church, Long Valley, Member of ACT	P

Others in Attendance

Sonja Gaertner, (Office Manager & Attendance Clerk) <i>Highlands Presbytery</i>	P
Lizabeth Hutchinson (Financial Administrator) <i>Highlands Presbytery</i>	P
Hildy Benjamin, Presbyterian Church of Morris Plains	P

Betty Darcy, Presbyterian Church in Morristown	P
Jamie Evans, Flemington Presbyterian Church	P

Total in Attendance – 115

~ Sonja Gaertner, Attendance Clerk – The Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey

WORDS OF GREETING

INTRODUCTION OF NEW RULING ELDER COMMISSIONERS

Fred Paine – Lamington Presbyterian Church, Bedminster

Brian Richard – Bound Brook

Ann Bartlett -Bethlehem

Tim Lee – First Presbyterian Church Whippany

Phil McCloughan – Lambertville Presbyterian Church

Leah Korbel – Long Valley Presbyterian Church

Karen Griffith – Presbyterian Church, Morristown

Clarence Curry – Presbyterian Church, Morristown

Frence Paine – Lamington Presbyterian Church

Betsy Engelhardt – West Milford Presbyterian Church

Rob Celentano – Hampton Presbyterian Church

Richard Hayzler – Sussex Presbyterian Church

Ann Engberg – Flemington Presbyterian Church

Joyce Martin – Fairmount Presbyterian Church, Califon

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

Ruling Elder John Crozier (Boonton), Co-Moderator of the Committee on Ministry, made the following introductions:

Carie Morgan – Interim Pastor, First Presbyterian Church of Boonton

Rev. James Vespoli, Covenant Supply Pastor, Panther Valley Ecumenical Church, Allamuchy

CORRESPONDING MEMBERS AND GUESTS

The Stated Clerk reported that there were no corresponding members or guests in attendance.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The agenda was adopted by unanimous consent.

CONSENT AGENDA & STATED CLERK'S REPORT

SC-1

Approve the minutes of the Presbytery meeting held September 9, 2023

SC-2

Approve excuses for the Presbytery meeting of November 14, 2023.

SC-3

Receive the report of the 2022 Session Minutes Review - Part 2.

SC-4

Receive the 2024 Imbalance Correction.

SC-5

Receive the interim report of the Administrative Commission for the Westminster Presbyterian Church.

SC-6

Receive the interim report of the Administrative Commission for the Fairmount Presbyterian Church.

SC-7

Receive the report of the Administration and Coordinating Team.

SC-8

Receive the report of the Committee on Ministry.

SC-9

Receive the report of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry.

SC-10

Receive the report of the Nominating Committee.

SC-11

Receive the report of the Church Development Team.

SC-12

Receive the report of the Property and Insurance Team.

SC-13

Receive the report of the Young Leader Formation Team.

SC-14

Receive the report of the Committee on Representation.

SC-15

Receive the report of the Discernment Team.

CPM-1

To include the attached language for Field Education into the Committee on Preparation Manual, for clarification purposes.

By unanimous consent, the Consent Agenda was approved.

STATED CLERKS REPORT**Items to Report:****SC-16**

On October 17, 2023, the Synod of the Northeast Permanent Judicial Commission heard the appeal “Scott Foster v The Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey,” based on the decision rendered in January 2023. The appeal was heard, in person, outside of Albany NY, and Chair of the Prosecuting Committee, the Rev. Dr. Christopher Doyle was in attendance, as well the Presbytery’s Counsel, Tania Nemeth, and the Presbytery’s Stated Clerk, the Rev. Dr. Steven H. Shussett.

Four Specifications of Error were claimed by Mr. Foster:

1. Manifestation of prejudice in the conduct of the case.
2. Injustice in process or decision.
3. Error in constitutional interpretation.
4. Undue severity of censure

In each case, the specification of error was not sustained.

The order of the decision of the Presbytery's Permanent Judicial Commission was affirmed.

The Synod of the Northeast Permanent Judicial Commission has ordered that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey report this Decision to the presbytery at its next meeting, that the presbytery enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an except from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Northeast. (D-13.0404f).

It is noted that Mr. Foster has 45 days after this decision was communicated to file an appeal with General Assembly Permanent Judicial Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven H. Shussett,

Synod of the Northeast Decision and Order 2023-01 and Disciplinary Case No. 001
(Attached to this report)

WORSHIP – Meeting Theme: Filled with Joy

Worship led by Rev. Tom Brown (Chatham Township) and Sue Cail, music by Rev. Mary Beth Mardis-Lecroy (Old Greenwich).

Tom Brown presided over this portion of the meeting.

ADMINISTRATION AND COORDINATING TEAM

Presentation of the 2024 Budget

Co-Moderator Pete Peterson, Ruling Elder (Clinton), presented a second reading of the 2024 Budget to the Presbytery, and moved the following:

MOTION: That the Presbytery approve the 2024 Operating Budget as presented.

MOTION APPROVED

Nominations to the Nominating Committee – Pete Peterson

As nominations to the Presbytery's Nominating Committee are made by the ACT, Pete Peterson **MOVED** the following:

Class of 2024

- Elder Lisa Gray (B) (Stewartsville/Old Greenwich)
- Rev. James Scovell (B) (Washington/First)

Class of 2025

- Rev. William "Tex" Culton (B) (Ret.)
- Rev. Amy Lincoln (B) (Flemington/Presbyterian)

Class of 2026

- **Rev. Barbara Aspinall (B) (Ret.)**
- **Elder Alec Jain (A) (Morris Plains/Presbyterian)**

Receiving no nominations from the floor, the **NOMINATIONS were MOVED, SECONDED, AND CARRIED.**

DISCERNMENT TEAM

Rev. Tracey Henry (Clinton) led the Presbytery in a process meant to contribute to the work of the Discernment Team. Breakout groups were formed to answer discussion questions. The results will be published at a later date.

WORSHIP – Filled with Joy

Worship led by Tom Brown, Sue Cail, music by Mary Beth Mardis-Lecroy.

INVITATION TO DIGITAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Rev. Barbara Aspinall, Ret. put the following names into nomination:

NOMINATIONS FOR COMMISSIONERS AND DELEGATE TO THE 226TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2024)

Clergy

Rev. Rich Gelson, Pilgrim Presbyterian Church, Phillipsburg
 Rev. Robin Palmer Burton, Highlands Presbyterian Church, Long Valley
 Rev. Fred Milligan, Community Presbyterian Church Ringwood – Interim Pastor

Elders

Craig Barth, Presbyterian Church in Morristown
 Alec Jain, Presbyterian Church of Morris Plains
 Elder Scott Riker, Highlands Church, Long Valley

Young Adult Advisory Delegate

Ella Choi, Stewartsville

Receiving no additional nominations from the floor, polling was used to determine elections. The following persons were **ELECTED**:

Clergy

Rev. Rich Gelson, Pilgrim Presbyterian Church, Phillipsburg
 Rev. Robin Palmer Burton, Highlands Presbyterian Church, Long Valley

Elders

Craig Barth, Presbyterian Church in Morristown
 Alec Jain, Presbyterian Church of Morris Plains

Young Adult Advisory Delegate

Ella Choi, Stewartsville

ELECTION TO PRESBYTERY COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS, AND TEAMS

With nominations presented for each Committee, Commission, and Team, and no nominations from the floor, the following persons were **ELECTED**:

Administration and Coordinating Team (ACT)

Class of 2024

- Elder John Hellriegel (B) (Chester/Community)
- Rev. Tom Brown (Chatham/Presbyterian) – (Immediate Past Moderator)
- Rev. Brad Morgan (A) (Lambertville/Second English)
- Rev. Christopher Small (A) (Validated Ministry)

Class of 2025

- Elder Sue Cail (Ringwood/Community) - (Moderator)
- Rev. Scott DeCaro (A) (Phillipsburg/Westminster & Alpha/United)
- Elder Alec Jain (A) (Morris Plains/Presbyterian)
- Elder Pete Peterson (B) (Clinton/Presbyterian) co-moderator

Class of 2026

- **Rev. David Harvey (B) (Blairstown/First) co-moderator**
- **Rev. Stefanie Muntzel (A) (Meyersville/Presbyterian & Stirling/First)**
- Rev. Chad Rodgers (Lower Valley/Presbyterian) – (Vice Moderator)
- **Vacant**

Property and Insurance Team (P&I)

Class of 2024

- Elder Lisa Kolterjahn (A) (Stewartsville/Old Greenwich) co-moderator
- Rev. Julie Raffety (B) (Franklin/First) co-moderator

Class of 2025

- Rev. Scot McCachren (A) (Mendham/First)
- Elder Ken Nickel (A) (Boonton/First)

Class of 2026

- **Elder Alan Ford (B) (Pittstown/Bethlehem)**
- **Elder Doug Smith (B) (Gillette/Meyersville)**

Church Development Team (CDT)

Class of 2024

- Rev. Nicholas Hatch (A) (Milford/Alexandria)
- Rev. Carie Morgan, (A) (Boonton/First) co-moderator
- **Vacant**

Class of 2025

- Rev. Ryon Herin (A) (Rockaway/First)
- Rev. Mary Beth Mardis-Lecroy (A) (Stewartsville/Old Greenwich)
- Rev. Ian Rankine (A) (Pluckemin/Presbyterian) co-moderator

Class of 2026

- **Rev. Dr. Meredith Mueller-Bolton (B) (Frenchtown/Presbyterian)**

- **Vacant**
- **Vacant**

Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)

Class of 2024

- Rev. Christine Davies (A) (Chaplain/Member at Large)
- Elder Donna Rahmann (A) (Califon/Fairmount) co-moderator

Class of 2025

- **Vacant**
- **Vacant**

Class of 2026

- **Rev. Dr. Christopher Doyle (A) (Oak Ridge/Presbyterian & West Milford/Presbyterian)**
- **Rev. Kathi Heath (A) (Chatham/Ogden Memorial)**

Permanent Judicial Commission (PJC)

Class of 2025

- Rev. Barbara Aspinall (Ret.)
- Elder Donna Keoppel (Boonton/First) (co-clerk)
- Elder Stuart Ours (Washington/First) (co-moderator)
- Elder Mel Prestamo (Long Valley/Presbyterian)

Class of 2027

- Elder Jamie Evans (Flemington/Presbyterian) (co-clerk)
- Rev. Linda Gaden (Pittstown/Bethlehem)
- **Elder Lisa Gray (Stewartsville/Old Greenwich)**
- Rev. David Harvey (Blairstown/First) (co-moderator)

Class of 2029

- **Rev. Tom Brown (Chatham/Presbyterian)**
- **Elder Jack Felch (Stewartsville/Old Greenwich)**
- **Rev. Fred Milligan (Ringwood/Presbyterian)**
- **Vacant**

Committee on Ministry (COM)

Class of 2024

- Elder Jean Bowers (B) (Washington/First)
- Elder John Crozier (B) (Boonton/First) co-moderator
- Rev. Linda Gaden (A) (Pittstown/Bethlehem)
- Rev. Caroline Jinkins (A) (Bedminster/Lamington)
- Elder Jeanne Perry (B) (Chester/Community)
- Rev. Dr. Patrick Sileo (B) (Sparta/First)

- Rev. David Young (A) (Ret.)
- **Vacant**

Class of 2025

- Rev. Robin Palmer Burton (B) (Long Valley/Highlands)
- Rev. Dr. Ellen Clark Clemot (B) (Chatham/Presbyterian)
- Rev. Rich Gelson (B) (Phillipsburg/Pilgrim)
- Elder Joe Martinoni (B) (Rockaway/First)
- Rev. Heather Morrison Yaden (A) (Newton/First)
- Rev. Amy Sandlin (A) (Trinity/United)
- **Vacant**
- **Vacant**

Class of 2026

- **Rev. Michael Atzert (B) (Chaplain/Member at Large)**
- **Elder Gerald Chandler (B) (Newton/First)**
- **Elder Betty Darcy (B) (Morristown/Presbyterian)**
- **Rev. Dr. Maureen Paterson (B) (Basking Ridge/Presbyterian)**
- **Elder Carol Skidmore (B) (Basking Ridge/Presbyterian)**
- **Rev. Jacquelyn Van Vliet (B) (Madison/Presbyterian) co-moderator**
- **Vacant**
- **Vacant**

Corporation Officers

- **Treasurer – Elder Becky Moody (2024 -2028)**
- President of Corporation – Rev. David Harvey
Term: ACT Moderator
- Secretary of the Corporation – Rev. Julie Raffety
Term: Property and Insurance Moderator

Blair Academy Consultation Team

Class of 2024

- Elder Barbara Morgan (B) (Berkshire Valley/First)
- Rev. Jim Scovell (B) (Washington/First)

Class of 2025

- Ann Bain (A) (Branchville/First)
- Rev. Dr. Pamela Szurek (A) (Belvidere/United)

Class of 2026

- **Elder Owen Newson (B) (Stanhope/First)**
- **Rev. Katherine Scott-Kirschner (A) (Sussex/First)**

Committee on Representation (COR)

Class of 2024

- Elder Marie Knapp (A) (Milford/Alexandria)
- Rev. Erin Hayes-Cook (A) (Hackettstown/First) moderator

Class of 2025

- Elder Mel Prestamo (B) (Long Valley/Presbyterian)
- Rev. Annie Tsai (B) (Taiwanese American Fellowship)

Class of 2026

- **Rev. Bill Stone (B) (New Vernon/First)**
- **Elder Bisham Singh (B) (Bedminster/Lamington)**

Young Leader Formation Team

Class of 2024

- Amy Clarkson (A) (Denville/Union Hill)
- Joann Willans (A) (Whippany/First)
-

Class of 2025

- Patrick Allred (B) (Morristown/Presbyterian)
- Steven Gaden (A) (Morris Plains/Presbyterian)

Class of 2026

- **Catherine Morgan (B) (Ringwood/Community)**
- **Rev. Katherine Scott-Kirschner (B) (Sussex/First)**

With this, the report of the Nominating Committee was concluded.

SHARING OF DIGITAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cookie Walk & Mistletoe Market Craft Fair on Sat, Dec 9th at Franklin Presbyterian Church
(vendors contact church office for a table 973-827-6444)

Like Pluckemin and Franklin, Union Hill has a Medical Equipment ministry.

Flemington Presbyterian Church is in the process of looking for a choir director/organist when our wonderful Jay Smith retires next year.

Community Thanksgiving Dinner at Frenchtown Church this Sunday 4 -6!

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

The Moderator moved that the meeting be adjourned following the blessing. This **MOTION** was **SECONDED, AND CARRIED.**

WORSHIP III – Rev. Tom Brown**INSTALLATION OF 2023 MODERATOR AND VICE-MODERATOR OF THE PRESBYTERY OF THE HIGHLANDS OF NEW JERSEY**

Ruling Elder Sue Cail (Ringwood) and Rev. Chad Rodgers (Lower Valley) were installed as 2024 Moderator and Vice-Moderator, respectively. Rev. Tom Brown presided.

Elder Cail then exercised her moderatorial privilege, taking time to thank outgoing moderator Tom Brown for his service.

ADJOURNMENT

Moderator Brown closed the meeting after prayer at 12pm.

Attested: _____
Steven H. Shussett Stated Clerk

REPORTS:

226th General Assembly Nominees

Permanent Judicial Commission The Synod of the Northeast, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Decision and Order 18 October 2023

Westminster Administrative Committee Interim Report

Young Leader Formation Team Report

Discernment Team Report

Imbalance Correction

Property & Insurance Team Report

Committee on Representation Report

Committee on Preparation for Ministry Report & Attachment

Disciplinary Case #001

Fairmount Administrative Committee Report

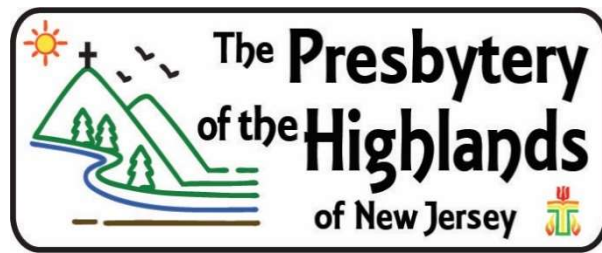
Administration and Coordinating Team Report – Part 1

Administration and Coordinating Team Report – Part 2

Review of the 2022 Session Minutes Report – Part 2

226th

Salt



General Assembly
Lake City, Utah

June 25th – July 4th 2024

Committee work online (June 25th – June 27th)

Travel (June 28 -29)

General Assembly Plenary (June 29 – July 4)

The Presbytery of the Highlands sends

2 Elders, 2 Ministers and 1 Young Adult Advisory Delegate (YAA)

The Presbytery Nominating Committee presents the following Ruling Elders and Ministers to serve as Commissioners at the 2024 General Assembly meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The presbytery will elect two ruling elders and two teaching elders to serve.

The committee asks the presbytery to consider issues of diversity when choosing candidates. This includes criteria such as gender, age, racial/ethnic diversity, size of church, diversity of churches, and providing an opportunity to those who have not attended to participate. The following is this the applications of Elders and Ministers who have applied to be commissioners to the 226th General Assembly.

Ruling Elder Applicants

Vote for 2

Elder Craig Barth

Presbyterian Church in Morristown

Local Church Involvement

Current: 2nd Term on Session on Worship & Music Committee,
Chair of W&M,

Communications and Tech To Session.

Additional Current: Safety Committee, Youth Music Mentor, Welcoming Committee, Comm
& Tech Assistant. Adult Education Committee.

Presbytery Involvement

Current: Synod Permanent Judicial Commission and itinerant substitute church music leader.

Former: Administrative and Coordinating Team and served on an Administrative
Commission to help a church in crisis.



Former
Rep from

Have you attended the General Assembly as a Commissioner before?

Yes, GA 220 in 2012 for Newton Presbytery – serving on the Ecumenical and Interfaith
Committee and as a YAAD in 1972

Tell us about yourself:

Lifelong Presbyterian, though not afraid to seek the Spirit's movement in the most seemingly
surprising places. Happily married to my wife Elizabeth (30 years). Two (fully employed)
sons. Private Practice Audiologist (35 years).

What excites you or concerns you about GA?

I have seen the Spirit of Wisdom, the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Love, at times, infiltrate all Council levels of this Denomination. It requires listening with both our ears and our heart, and parking personal agendas at the door.

Reformed and always reforming seems to be the overarching goal at both the G.A. and the local church level. I expect the 226th G.A. to be as important (though more peaceful) than the 220th. God is calling us to be more efficient with our administrative structures and systems on all Council levels, yet have especially this Council continued to be our social witness to the world at large

What excites you or concerns you about the church today?

We, as a gathered faith community of believers and seekers, we no longer have the comfort or complacency of being the "social norm." in our local communities. Yet, the call to "witness and worship" is as strong today as ever before. How? Does that mean the future Church will re-form back to an Upper Room? Will it be an Online Community with no geographic bounds, serving in place of, or besides, our brick and mortar? This is both a joy and concern that will energize me for years to come.

Elder Alec Jain**Presbyterian Church of Morris Plains*****Local Church Involvement***

- Finance Committee and Finance Chair
- Served on Session
- Preschool Committee
- 150 year celebration committee
- Community outreach ministries

***Presbytery Involvement***

- Presbytery meetings
- Permanent Judicial Commission
- Administration and Coordinating Team
- Presbytery Budget and Finance Committee
- Interfaith NJ Coalition

Have you attended General Assembly before –

yes. 2020 for Newton Presbytery, the Pandemic virtual assembly

Tell us about yourself:

Married 18 years with 3 children. US government employee for 22 years. Active in bridging church/community to our family.

What excites you or concerns you about the General Assembly?

- GA is an opportunity for me and the local church to learn more and develop more of our spiritual walk.
- GA is where our local, regional and national topics can have a voice and result.
- GA to some is complex and difficult to navigate but I feel one person has a voice at GA and can make a change.

What excites you or concerns you about the church today?

- The church recently has become more appealing to more people, offering more services to its community.
- It has become a place more transparent and a place where you can have your spiritual walk at all degrees.
- My concerns are lack of ability for younger members to participate, letting more families engage there.

Elder Scott Riker
Highlands Church, Long Valley



Local Church Involvement

When three local churches shared a ministry and then merged, I was involved in the process and served on several PNCs. Served on Session and finance and budget committees. Implemented last Sunday lunched to bring the congregation together. During the Pandemic set up ZOOM meetings, implemented sanctuary camera and sound system. I have lead Bible studies and filled the pulpit.

Presbytery Involvement

Served as a commissioner for the church. Have attended many seminars and workshops. Served on Administration and coordinating Team and the Presbytery budget team during the Presbytery Transition. Always loved worship at Presbytery meetings.

Have you attended General Assembly Commissioner before? Attended last GA in 2022 in Louisville. Served on the Polity committee. Enjoyed the process of crafting motions. Lead the committee in prayer and was inspired by the learning of the stories of commissioners and staff.

Tell us about yourself.

When I retired from working in IT for 47 years, I wanted to become more involved in the church. My faith strengthens me and encourages me in all I do.

What excites you or concerns you about GA?

Excited to see what has been accomplished by committees and commissions that were set up I 2022. Concerned that they may not achieve they could. The world needs the church so badly. Looking forward to the group worship. Concerned about the kind of environment Salt Lake City will provide.

What excites you or concerns you about the Church today?

Concerned about what is happening with the church today. I see a church with substantial assets that does not seem to find its way to meet the needs of the world. I see very faithful, dedicated, and creative people risk being ground down and burnt out by the world. I am excited that I might have a chance to make a difference.

Minister Members Applicants
 Vote for 2

Rev. Robin Palmer Burton
Highlands Presbyterian Church – Long Valley
Presbytery Involvement

In this Presbytery I am serving on the Committee on Ministry and an Administrative Commission. In previous Presbyteries I have served on a variety of Committees and as chairperson of CPM and Mission. I have also served several terms on the leadership council.



Have you attended GA before –

Yes 2014 – Detroit

Have you attended GA on your own before? Yes, 1989, 1991 , 1996, 2012

Tell us about yourself:

I am a lifelong Presbyterian, ordained a Deacon at 16, Ruling Elder at 22 and then as a teaching Elder. I embrace the Presbyterian form of government and the shared leadership between Teaching and Ruling Elders.

What excites you or concerns you about G.A.?

The world and the PCUSA is ever changing. I look forward to and encouraged by how we as Presbyterians embrace those changes and see where the Holy Spirit is leading us as a denomination. I get excited about worshipping together and gathering with people from the United States and across the world as we share our joys and concerns for our denomination and the world and work together to answers Christ's call to do justice, to love kindness and walk humbly with our God.

What excites you or concerns you about the church today?

Burdened by the division and desperation I see in the world, I am deeply grieved by the ways I believe God is being mischaracterized and misrepresented, both inside and outside of the church. I look for ways we can come together as Christians and Presbyterians to uplift the church and its people.

Rev. Rich Gelson
Pilgrim Presbyterian Church
Local Church Involvement

- Solo pastor • Very active as mission partner in various community and county agencies concerning homelessness as well as addiction and recovery.
- Work collegially with local colleagues for the Presbyterian Depot (established when I served the former EMMCO)



Presbytery Involvement

- Currently serving on COM • Twice served in the past on the Board of Camp Johnsonburg

Have you attended General Assembly as a Commissioner before? If so, when? No

Have you attended General Assembly on your own before? If so, when?

No

Tell us about yourself:

- Will be 54 years old this coming November. • M.Div, PTS '97; Ordained since 1998. Have served three 1K (at the time) suburban congregations with a focus on small group discipleship and local missions. Have served two "Pastor Driven" (vs. Program) sized congregations – in my 8th year at Pilgrim after serving a decade at Fairmount. • Happy husband to Rev. Stefanie Muntzel and proud dad to Young Adults Anna, Becca and Crosby.
- Singer and songwriter, kayaker, nature photographer

What excites you or concerns you about G.A.?

- Excited to experience this level of collegiality, worship, and future discernment while bringing 25 very active years of adaptive experiences to the ministry of GA.
- Excited about Matthew 25 initiative and eager to learn more.
- Concerned about how to practically connect GA outcomes on the local level, especially given the ongoing natural attrition rate, the unyielding cultural shifts away from centralized, institutionalized spirituality and religion, and the impact of the dangerously conflicted political climate in our country.

What excites you or concerns you about the church today?

- Worship is both. Exciting because I'm glad and grateful for the Holy Spirit's intercessions and that I still absolutely love preaching and leading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Concerning because streaming worship, empty pews, and sharply declining contributions do not build and sustain community.
- Excited about ongoing progressive conversations and community care, while also concerned about the level of intolerance and hate coming from extremist corners of society.
- Concerned about my ability to continue being an adaptive leader as well as train and elect other adaptive leaders.

Rev. Fred Milligan

Community Presbyterian Church Ringwood – Interim Pastor

Have you ever attended GA as a commissioner – NO

Have you attended on your own? Yes – multiple times

Tell us about yourself.



I am a lifelong Presbyterian and soon to be Honorably Retired Minister of Word and Sacrament. I have served congregations in Chicago, Whitewater Valley, Lackawanna, Mackinac and Philadelphia Presbyteries as well as the General Assembly as Associate for Stewardship Education. I also served as Head of staff of the Santiago Community Church in Santiago, Chile for six years. My attendance at General Assemblies was related to my roles as Executive Director and President of the Urban Presbyterian Pastors Association and Presbyterians for Earth Care as well as staff responsibilities during my time on the General Assembly staff. I have served several terms on the national boards of directors of Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association and Presbyterians for Earth Care and have spoken before G.A. committees during several of the General Assemblies which were considering matters related to these groups. I have drafted successful Commissioners resolutions as well as Presbytery overtures on various matters related to these interests.

In recent years I have become increasingly involved with matters related to the Climate Crisis. I attended the COP26 Climate negotiations in Glasgow, UK in 2021 and the Interim consultations in Bonn, Germany in 2022. I assisted the ACT Alliance office at the U.N. with local activities around the Climate Ambition Summit in NYC in September, 2023.

What excites you or concerns you about GA?

I am eager to be engaged with the decision-making processes which will affect the future life and ministry of our denomination.

What excites you or concerns you about the church today? I believe the PCUSA is in a process of adjusting from an "established" church with all the elements of privilege and disconnection from the needs of the poor and excluded that position entailed, to a "church on the margins" with an opportunity to walk in solidarity with, and learn from those on the

margins in our world as well as the voiceless creatures. And in doing so we have an opportunity to bear witness to the crucified and risen Christ in our midst and represent a genuine alternative faith community to Christian Nationalism which has enthralled so many Americans. I believe we are the church called forth for this moment in history. It would be an honor to serve the as a commissioner to the next General Assembly

Permanent Judicial Commission
Synod of the Northeast, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Decision and Order
18 October 2023

Rev. Dr. Scott Foster Appellant

SNE 2023-01

V.

Decision and Order

The Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey
 Appellee

This is an appeal to the Synod of the Northeast Permanent Judicial Commission (hereinafter "Commission" or "SJPC") filed by the Rev. Dr. Scott Foster (hereinafter "Appellant") from a decision of the Permanent Judicial Commission of the Presbytery of the Highlands (hereinafter "Appellee") dated January 21, 2023.

JURISDICTIONAL STATEMENT

The Executive Committee of this Commission found on March 13, 2023, that the SPJC has jurisdiction, that Appellant has standing to file the appeal, that the appeal was properly and timely filed, and that the appeal states one or more grounds for appeal under D- j 3.0106. There were no challenges by either party to this finding.

APPEARANCES

The Appellant was present at the hearing and was represented by Ruling Elder Sharon M. Davison. The Presbytery of the Highlands (hereinafter "Appellee") was represented by Ruling Elder Tania M. Nemeth.

HISTORY

This disciplinary case came before this Commission on an appeal filed by Appellant from the decision of the PPJC rendered on January 21, 2023.

The case originated with a written complaint filed with the Acting Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of the Highlands on August 19, 2021, by the Rev. Jacqui Van Vliet, who succeeded Appellant as a Pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Madison. The Investigating Committee filed formal charges against the Rev. Foster on June 8, 2022.

The appeal of the decision of PPJC was received by the Synod of the Northeast's Stated Clerk on March 4, 2023. The Presbytery of the Highlands' Stated Clerk filed the Record of the Case with the Synod's Stated Clerk on August 1, 2023. The Appellant filed his brief on August 30, 2023. Appellee filed its brief on September 29, 2023. The Executive Committee of this Commission met via Zoom with both parties' counsel for a pre-hearing conference on October 4, 2023. The hearing on the appeal took place in Guilderland, NY, on October 17, 2023.

The Appellant, both in the Notice of Appeal and in Appellant's Brief, claimed four

Specifications of Error. This case is governed by the Book of Order in effect between 2019 and 2023¹. This Commission's decision on each Specification is presented and explained below:

Specification # 1. Manifestation of prejudice in the conduct of the case

Appellant argues that the "[PPJC] allowed manifestation of prejudice in the conduct of the case" (Appellant's brief, p. 3) because Appellee's counsel raised questions about whether Appellant was texting during the trial in violation of the order of sequestration of witnesses. (Transcript Nov. 19, 2022, Vol. 1 of 2, pp. 91-94, 97-99, 135). Appellant further argues that the PPJC allowed manifestation of prejudice in the conduct of the case when the PPJC issued an order that limited access to electronic devices on the second day of trial. (Transcript Jan. 21, 2023, Vol. 1 of 2, pp. 5-6).

This specification of error is not sustained.

This Commission determines that there was no prejudice to Appellant when (a) Appellee's counsel raised the question of whether Appellant was texting a witness; (b) the PPJC'S mandate that only certain persons could have computers or cell phones present at the second day of trial; or (c) Appellant lacked access to a computer or cell phone during the second day of trial.

No evidence was presented that supported Appellant's argument that Appellee's counsel's questions during the referenced cross examination had any influence at all, let alone prejudicial impact, on the ultimate decision of the PPJC. Nor do we believe that the exchanges during or the determinations made at trial would result in such prejudice. The PPJC's mandate prior to the second day of the trial was applied equally to all parties. The PPJC was acting within its authority to manage the order of sequestration by limiting access to electronic devices. Finally, Appellant was not prejudiced by the limited access to electronic devices on the second day of trial because he was able to use a notepad instead of a computer to take notes. (Transcript, Nov. /9, 2022, Vol. 1 of 2, p. 98).

Specification # 2. Injustice in process or decision

The Appellant contends that "the PPJC did not use the beyond a reasonable [sic] standard in deciding this matter." (Appellant 's Brief p. 4). Appellant also contends that the PPJC "did not have a basis to find that the evidence compelled an abiding conviction that the material facts necessary to prove the charge are true." (Id.).

This specification of error is not sustained.

After hearing the proof at trial in a disciplinary matter, the Book of Order provides as follows:

After careful deliberation, the session or permanent judicial commission shall vote on each charge separately and record the vote in its minutes. In order to find the accused guilty of a charge, the session or permanent judicial commission must find that the pertinent facts within that charge have been proven beyond a reasonable doubt. Proof

beyond a reasonable doubt occurs when the comparison and consideration of all the evidence compels an abiding conviction that the material facts necessary to prove the charge are true. [Book of Order D-I 1.0403a].

1 Although Counsel for the Appellee referred to the most recent edition of the Book of Order during the hearing on appeal, our determinations are based solely on the Book of Order in effect between 2019 and 2023 and reported decisions of the GAPJC.

The PPJC found Appellant guilty on three of the four charges as follows:

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 [REDACTED] remains legally married to [REDACTED].

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 the 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).

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]

The PPJC determination was unanimous on charges 1 and 2, and was 7-1 on charge 3. The PPJC deadlocked on the charge of "Lying to the IC" by a vote of 4-4, resulting in a finding of not guilty on that charge.

Appellant contends that the PPJC failed to apply the "beyond a reasonable doubt" standard when reaching its verdict. According to Appellant, this Commission should set aside the PPJC's verdict and conduct a de novo review of the evidence. However, that is not the standard of review that applies to this appeal. "Appeals in disciplinary cases exist to review proceedings of lower governing bodies ... and not to retry issues of fact." Presbytery of Wyoming v. King (Disciplinary Case 218-06).

In reaching its decision, the PPJC necessarily made factual findings.² "Factual determinations made by a trier of fact are accorded a presumption of correctness." (Presbytery of New York City v. Edmonds, 220-09) "These determinations are not to be disturbed on appeal unless they are 'plainly wrong, without supporting evidence or manifestly unjust.'" (Id. quoting Chesterbook OK Taiwanese Presbyterian Church v. National Capital Presbytery, Minutes, 2006, p. 493).

This Commission may reverse a PPJC decision only if it is contrary to the evidence. This Commission may not substitute its own judgment for that of the PPJC. (Lewis v. Presbytery of New York City Remedial Case 207-13). Based on our review of the record, there is sufficient evidence from which the PPJC could find beyond a reasonable doubt that Appellant did commit the three offenses set forth above. Appellant provided no basis

upon which to conclude that the PPJC failed to apply correctly the "beyond a reasonable doubt" standard, and there was nothing presented to demonstrate that the factual determinations were "plainly wrong, without supporting evidence or manifestly unjust."

Specification # 3. Error in constitutional interpretation

3a. Appellant contends that the PPJC erred in finding that Appellant engaged in sexual misconduct.

This specification of error is not sustained.

2 Some of the evidence supporting a conviction is circumstantial. However, the Book of Order provides that, "No distinction should be made between direct and circumstantial evidence as to the degree of proof required." [D-14.0101].

We review questions of constitutional interpretation for error. This Commission gives deference to the PPJC as to findings of fact and credibility findings. In reaching its decision, the PPJC necessarily made factual findings. "Factual determinations made by a trier of fact are accorded a presumption of correctness." (Presbytery of New York City v. Edmonds, 220-09). "These determinations are not to be disturbed on appeal unless they are 'plainly wrong, without supporting evidence or manifestly unjust.'" (Id. quoting Chesterbook OK Taiwanese Presbyterian Church v. National Capital Presbytery, Minutes, 2006, p. 493).

"Rather than contain a criminal code, where conduct specifically proscribed may be prosecuted, the Constitution is infused with principles and standards to which ordained officers voluntarily submit." (Presby. of Greater Atlanta v. Ransom 219-02; 2010). As a member of what is now the Presbytery of the Highlands, Appellant voluntarily submitted to and is subject to the presbytery's sexual misconduct policy. On April 11, 2018, Appellant signed a statement in which he certified that he had read the sexual misconduct policy and understood its terms. Section C Responding of the Newton Presbytery Sexual Misconduct Policy (March 2018) signed by Appellant states that violations of the policy by teaching elders would result in their being "subject to inquiry and discipline (censure and correction) under the 'Rules of Discipline' of the Book of Order." At the appeal hearing, Appellant's counsel conceded that a violation of the misconduct policy could constitute an offense under the Rules of Discipline. There is sufficient evidence to support the PPJC's findings that the presbytery's sexual misconduct policy applied to Appellant's conduct and that Appellant's actions in this matter violated the presbytery's sexual misconduct policy.

3b. Appellant contends that the PPJC erred in constitutional interpretation when it found the Appellant guilty of adultery.

This specification of error is not sustained.

As we stated above, we review questions of constitutional interpretation for error; and this Commission gives deference to the PPJC as to findings of fact and credibility findings.

In Appellant's brief Appellant states "[a]dultery is defined as voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and a person who is not his or her spouse [...I." (Appellant's Br. P. 15) At the appeal hearing, Appellant's counsel stated that their definition is a general

"legal" definition of what constitutes adultery. The definitions of adultery that are found in the Book of Confessions are far broader than the definition supplied by Appellant and do not assist him in this matter. (See e.g. The Book of Confessions, 7.247-7.249, The Larger Westminster Catechism). Even applying Appellant's narrower definition of adultery to the facts found by the PPJC, the PPJC did not err in its interpretation of Scripture or the Constitutions of the Presbyterian Church (L .S.A.) when it determined that Appellant had engaged in adultery because evidence supported that Appellant began a sexual relationship with someone not his spouse while still married.

Specification # 4. Undue severity of censure

The Appellant contends that the censure established is unduly severe because (a) Appellant was placed on administrative leave, (b) the open-ended nature of the temporary exclusion is too broad; (C) the PPJC gave the Presbytery the power to continue to investigate this matter on an ongoing basis; (d) no standards were established by which to end the temporary exclusion; and (e) there is no evidence that the Appellant has any psychological issues which need to be addressed.

The Appellant's specification of error is not sustained.

Placing Appellant on administrative leave has no direct correlation to the specific requirements of the censure. The decision to place Appellant on administrative leave was appropriate under terms of the Presbytery's sexual misconduct policy in accordance with the Book of Order D-10.0106.

The temporary exclusion is not open-ended. Appellant with his therapist shall determine the timing of the final assessment which then leads to the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry's consideration of the appellant's request to be restored to active ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The censure does not state or imply that the Presbytery has the power to continue to investigate this matter on an ongoing basis. As stated in Appellee's brief, "the investigation was concluded prior to the filing of the charges." (Appellee's Br. p. 31). In addition, we find it persuasive that "this [censure] is not a search for new evidence but is a restorative process." (Appellee's Br. p. 31).

The censure process ordered by the PPJC provides the standards which need to be met. They are: (a) the two psychological and leadership assessment reports of a pastoral assessment center chosen by the Committee on Ministry, (b) counseling services of an accredited professional therapist chosen by Appellant, (c) the support of a four member committee, two of whom shall be appointed by Appellant; and (d) apologies to the Presbyterian Church of Madison and to the Presbytery of the Highlands.

The process of censure does not assume that Appellant has psychological issues which need to be addressed, but rather lists a number of questions that shall be asked during the process of assessment and counseling. Given that the PPJC found Appellant guilty of three out of four charges, the PPJC's process of restoration reasonably includes an assessment of psychological health and fitness for ministry.

ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that the decision of the PPJC is affirmed.

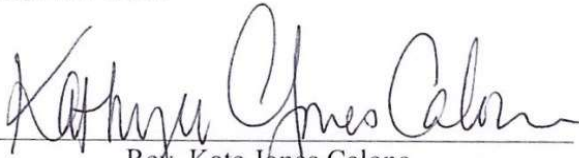
It is further ordered that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Northeast report this Decision to the synod at its next meeting, that the synod enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). (D-13.0404f)

It is further ordered that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey report this Decision to the presbytery at its next meeting, that the presbytery enter the full Decision upon its minutes, and that an excerpt from those minutes showing entry of the Decision be sent to the Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Northeast. (D-13.0404f)

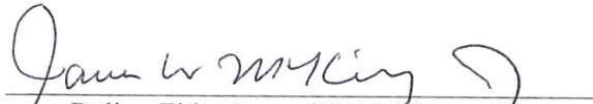
ABSENCES

Ruling Elder Craig Barth, a member of this Commission, is a member of a congregation in the Presbytery of the Highlands and thus was recused from this case and took no part in either the hearing or the deliberations.

Dated this 18th day of October, 2023 in Guilderland, New York



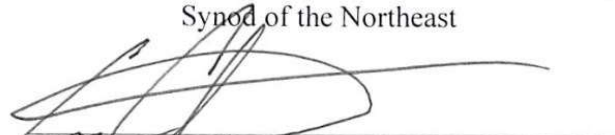
Rev. Kate Jones Calone
Moderator, Permanent Judicial Commission
Synod of the Northeast



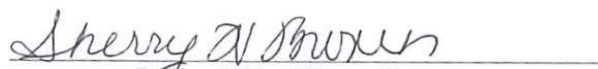
Ruling Elder James W. McKinsey, Jr.
Clerk, Permanent Judicial Commission
Synod of the Northeast



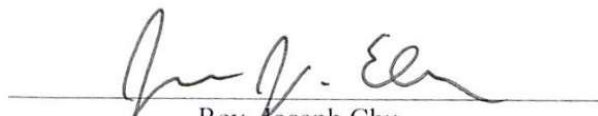
Ruling Elder Peter Weishaar
Vice-Moderator, Permanent Judicial Commission
Synod of the Northeast



Rev. Casey Carbone
Asst. Clerk, Permanent Judicial Commission
Synod of the Northeast



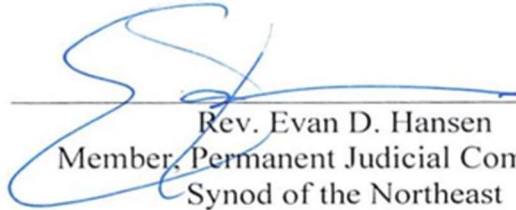
Ruling Elder Sherry Brown
Member, Permanent Judicial Commission
Synod of the Northeast



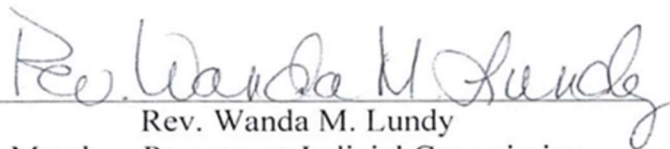
Rev. Joseph Chu
Member, Permanent Judicial Commission
Synod of the Northeast



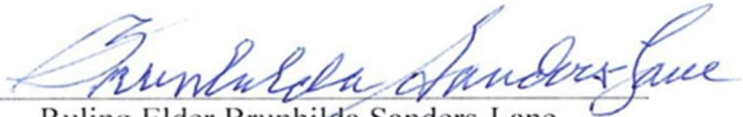
Ruling Elder Caroline Demers
Member, Permanent Judicial Commission
Synod of the Northeast



Rev. Evan D. Hansen
Member, Permanent Judicial Commission
Synod of the Northeast



Rev. Wanda M. Lundy
Member, Permanent Judicial Commission
Synod of the Northeast



Ruling Elder Brunhilda Sanders-Lane
Member, Permanent Judicial Commission
Synod of the Northeast



Rev. Cass L. Shaw
Member, Permanent Judicial Commission
Synod of the Northeast

Interim Report of the Administrative Commission for the Westminster Presbyterian Church, Phillipsburg, NJ

The Administrative Commission for the Westminster Presbyterian Church of Phillipsburg was formed in May 2023. Members of the AC are RE Cathy Ahart, Rev. Nicholas Hatch, Rev. Ryon Herin, RE Pete Peterson (Moderator), staff liaison Lizabeth Hutchinson, Resource Staff/Stated Clerk Steven Shussett, and Presbytery Leader Jeanne Radak.

The commission for the AC is, after many years of ministry, to work with the Session to conclude the affairs of the Westminster Presbyterian Church, dissolve the Westminster Presbyterian Church, provide for the spiritual and pastoral care of any remaining members and assist in their transition to new church homes, take possession of the property, all funds, all records, and to oversee the disposal of the property on behalf of the Presbytery.

The AC held its first meeting on site at the church on May 10 along with outgoing pastor Scott DeCaro and his wife Kim, Shaun Souders (Clerk of Session), and Kevin Cochrane (Treasurer). The church had already held its final worship service. The AC was given a tour of the physical facility. Rev. DeCaro reported that there was no longer current use of the facility aside from storage of items. Records of the church had been turned over to Liz Hutchinson. After touring the facility and discussing the general condition of the facility, the AC agreed to meet with the Session of Presbyterian Church on May 23 via Zoom to conclude the work of the church.

On May 22, 2023, the AC agreed to enter into an agreement with Coldwell Banker Realty in Clinton, NJ to list the property for sale at \$850,000.

The AC met with the Session for a final meeting on May 23, 2023. During the meeting, it was noted that a listing agreement had been agreed to, that all records had been transferred, that Liz Hutchinson would take responsibility for the property management in coordination with the AC, and Rev. DeCaro would pass along to the AC any membership issues that might arise that had not been previously addressed. The AC thanked the Session of the church for its many years of ministry.

During the summer, the Coldwell Banker Realty agents responded to various inquiries by potentially interested parties. In October, in response to a recommendation from the agents at Coldwell Banker Realty, the AC agreed to revise the asking price for the property to \$750,000. The AC is hopeful that this reduction in price will spur interest on the part of potentially interested parties in purchasing the church property.

Respectfully submitted,

Pete Peterson
Moderator, Westminster Administrative Commission

November 14, 2023

Young Leader Formation Team Report

Items to Report:

The Young Leader Formation Team is now meeting on the first Friday of each month from 9 – 10 am via zoom. New team members are always welcome!

Stay tuned for more information about our upcoming events:

1. January 20, 2024
Zoom gathering for those involved or interested in youth ministry
Megan DeWald from the Institute for Youth Ministry at Princeton Theological Seminary will provide information about “The Log College Project” and how churches within the Presbytery may join together to create innovative youth ministry designs that meet the needs of their communities.
2. As the culmination of their participation with the Princeton Theological Seminary Ministry Collaboratory, the Whippany Presbyterian Church will partner with their community to host a “Communi-chill” event on January 6th in Whippany, including bonfires and a skating rink! Roughly 4 – 8 pm. Joann Willans will share advertising for the event with the Presbytery – all invited to attend this innovative, intergenerational community event.
3. Family Spiritual Formation Day at Johnsonburg
We are working on planning a family day retreat during Lent (late February/early March). More information will be coming soon!

Stay tuned for more exciting things happening in Youth Ministry!

Check out the Young Leader Formation Webpage for future events and ongoing resources:

<https://highlandspresbytery.org/young-leader-formation-team/>

Please send photos and stories from your church’s youth ministry or information about upcoming youth opportunities to add to the webpage to Steve Shussett at steves@highlandspresbytery.org

For more information about youth events at Johnsonburg Camp and Conference Center, go to <https://www.campjburg.org/>

To access resources through the Institute for Youth Ministry at Princeton, go to iym.ptsem.edu.

For resources/grants for engaging young adults (23-29) in your church ministry, go to Ministrycollaboratory.ptsem.edu

To contact Megan DeWald for more information on youth ministry support: megan.dewald@ptsem.edu

Respectfully Submitted,

Discernment Team Report

Poll #2 — Concerns and Issues within the life of the Congregations in The Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey

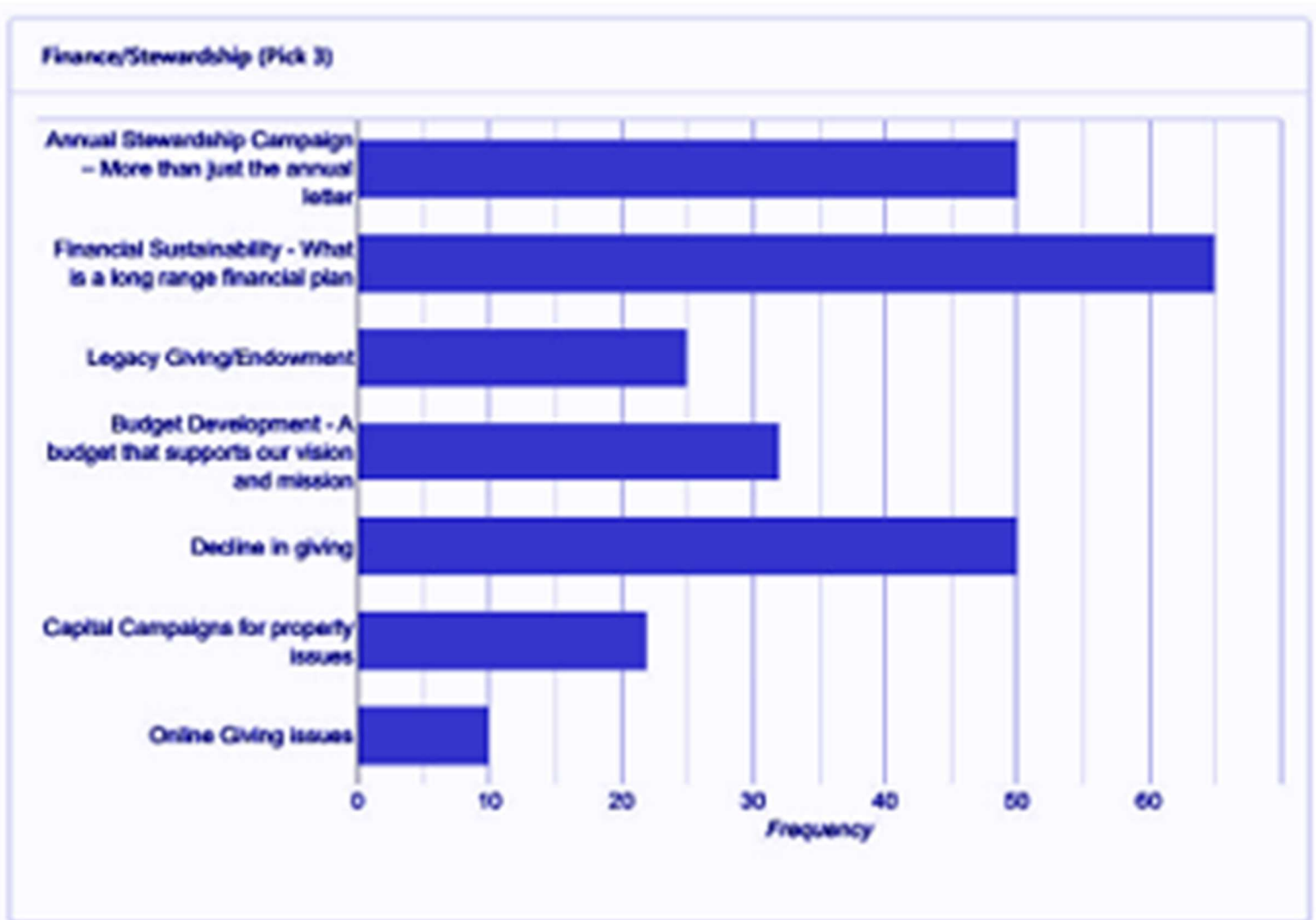
Poll was open September through October 2023

84 people responded, representing 46 congregations.

Top three responses in each category including graph of responses

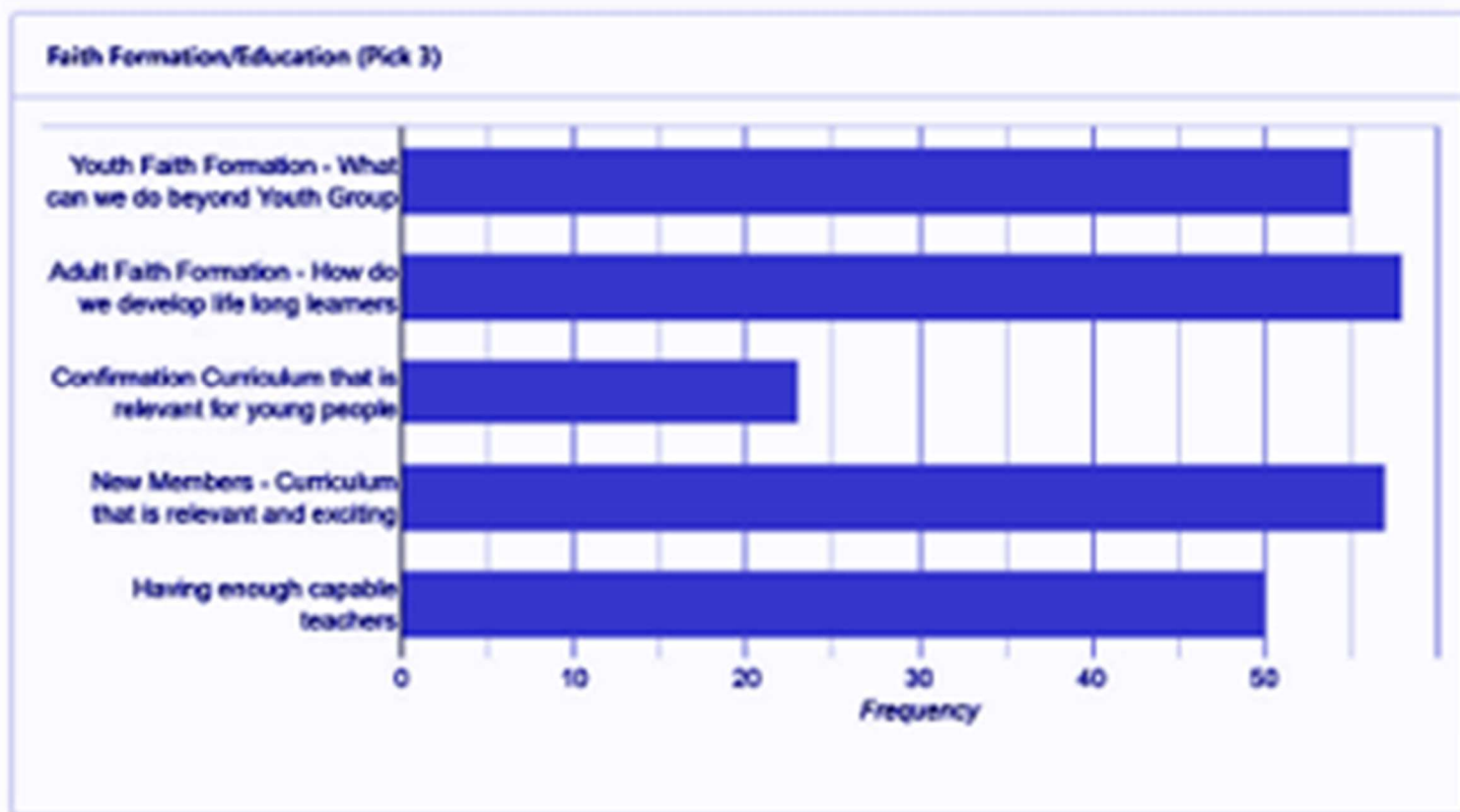
Finance and Stewardship

- Financial Sustainability — What is a long range financial plan?
- Annual Stewardship Campaign — more than just the annual letter
- Decline in giving.



Faith Formation

- Adult Faith Formation — How do we develop lifelong learners?
- New Members Curriculum — Curriculum that is relevant and exciting
- Youth Faith Formation — More than Youth Group



THE PRESBYTERY OF THE HIGHLANDS OF NJ

IMBALANCE CORRECTION FOR November 14, 2023

Effective January 1, 2024

The Book of Order (2023-2025), G-3.0301 "Composition and Responsibilities" states:

The presbytery is the council serving as a corporate expression of the church within a certain district and is composed of all the congregations and ministers of the Word and Sacrament within that district. The presbytery shall adopt and communicate to the sessions a plan for determining how many ruling elders each session should elect as commissioners to presbytery, with a goal of numerical parity of ministers of the Word and Sacrament and ruling elders. This plan shall require each session to elect at least one commissioner and shall take into consideration the size of congregations as well as a method to fulfill the principles of participation and representation found in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103. Ruling elders elected as officers of the presbytery shall be enrolled as members during the period of their service. A presbytery may enroll, or may provide by its own rule for the enrollment of, ruling elders during terms of elected service to the presbytery or its congregation.

The recommended imbalance correction is based on the following information:

<u>Teaching Elder Members</u>	
Members as of 10/31/2023	143
Temporary Members	3
Non-resident Members	<28>
TOTAL RESIDENT TEACHING ELDERS	118

Ruling Elder Commissioners

Administration and Coordinating Team Members

Sue Cail	
John Hellriegel	
David Peterson	
Lisa Fraebel	
Scott Riker	5

Committee/Team Chairs

John Crozier (COM)	
Donna Rahmann (CPM)	2

Past Presbytery Moderators not serving on ACT or a Committee Moderator

Matt Allen
 Paula Benson
 Wendy Doidge
 Alan Ford
 Lisa Gray
 Joe Martinoni
 Margaret Meyers
 Ken Nickel

Mel Prestamo	35
Michael Young	10
<i>Commissioned Ruling Elders</i>	
Stephanie Farley	1
<i>Certified Christian Educator</i>	0
<i>One Commissioner Elected by Each Church Session</i>	77
<i>Additional Elected Commissioners by Church Size & attendance</i>	23
TOTAL RULING ELDER COMMISSIONERS	118

Churches Entitled to Additional Ruling Elder Commissioners

<u>Church</u>	<u>Total Commissioners</u>
Basking Ridge	3
Bound Brook	3
Flemington	3
Morristown	3
Blairstown	2
Boonton	2
Chatham	2
Clinton	2
Flanders	2
Franklin	2
Frenchtown	2
Lambertville	2
Milford, Alexandria	2
Pluckemin	2
Ringoes, Kirkpatrick	2
Rockaway	2
Somerset	2
Succasunna	2
West Milford	2

****Please note that the proposal to redress the imbalance is designed to facilitate ruling elder commissioners' attendance at stated meetings of the Presbytery. It is evaluated annually. Churches who routinely fail to send the additional commissioners that they are allotted under the proposal may not be granted additional commissioners when the imbalance proposal is re-evaluated next year.***

November 14, 2023

Property and Insurance Team Report

Items for Report:

From the October 3, 2023 meeting:

P&I-1

Discussion regarding interrelationship between the Presbytery and the Property and Insurance Team.

- Who has the authority to approve property sales?
- Who Determines the Use of Proceeds from a property sale?

P&I-2

Plans were made for training of the Property & Insurance Team.

P&I-3

Co-Moderator Rev. Julie Raffety shared her experience of her attendance at the Presbyterian Foundation meeting held on September 19, 2023 featuring a representative from The Insurance Board discussing best practices for churches.

P&I-4

Discussion regarding the sale of the manse of the First Presbyterian Church of Franklin.

P&I-5

The Team is awaiting a response from Brown & Brown regarding the information that was provided to them.

November 14, 2023

Committee on Representation Report

Items for Report:

COR-1

Over the past year the Committee on Representation met several times to define and better understand what our role is in the work of the presbytery. We spent time getting to know each other's context of life and faith community. Via Zoom we talked about what diversity and inclusion looks like in our context and how we might be a resource to faith communities within our presbytery. After trying a few exercises within our group we decided to engage our community with a book study with the book *The Power of Stories* by Rev. Dr. Jaqui Lewis. Our goal was to create a space to discuss diversity, dynamics of identity, through the power of stories. We also wanted to provide a resource for people to use stories to create community. Over the months of April and May we met via zoom to delve into this book, attendance varied between 5-15 people from our presbytery. Thank you to the members of this group who have offered their time and talents.

November 14, 2023

Committee on Preparation for Ministry Report

Items to Report:

From the September 18, 2023 meeting:

CPM-2

The committee met with Candidate, Laura Choi for her annual consultation. Laura is a member of the Stewartsville Presbyterian Church.

From the October 16, 2023 meeting:

CPM-3

The committee met with Candidate Jessica Fisher for her annual consultation. Jessica is a member of the Presbyterian Church of Morris Plains.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna Rahmann and Bronc Radak
CPM Co-Moderators

Field Education*

Purpose

Field education is an integral part of preparation for ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) . Through supervised experiences in congregations and agencies, the student has an opportunity to:

- develop basic skills in the practice of ministry,
- clarify and focus the sense of call,
- discern specific gifts for ministry,
- integrate theology and theory with experience,
- develop pastoral identity and character,
- build a network of persons (in ordained ministry and otherwise) who can serve as references as the student seeks a first call and who can continue to be mentors during early years in ministry.

Requirements

The Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey requires one unit of supervised field education. ***Service in the Inquirer's/Candidate's home church is not acceptable to the presbytery***, regardless of whether or not the seminary grants credit for the experience. Inquirers/Candidates will be required to resign from their home sessions and cease any active leadership roles in their home congregations while they are serving their field education assignments.

Fulfilling the required unit will ordinarily be accomplished:

- in a Presbyterian Church (USA) congregation that is not their home church,

- part time (10-12 hours per week),
- during a full academic year or following graduation.

The CPM reserves the right to require a second year of field education in a Presbyterian church due to circumstances and/or readiness for a call. Additional field education placements at the student's discretion can provide an opportunity to explore a particular sense of call or setting.

One unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is also required, ordinarily in an institutional setting. The CPE unit must be distinct from the field education experience.

Because such field education positions and CPE placements require biblical, theological, and pastoral understandings, field education and CPE positions are open only to second- and third-year students.

Expectations

It is expected that the seminarian will get a well-rounded parish experience. This will include:

- sharing in worship leadership, including occasional preaching;
- sharing pastoral responsibilities as available, including visitations, weddings, funerals, etc.;
- attending session meetings as permitted and time allows;
- and any other activities that might be available to them; such as leading a Bible Study or adult education class, or assisting in youth ministry.

The pastor and candidate should meet at least weekly to review the student's experiences, ask questions, share observations, etc.

Preaching outside of the field education placement is discouraged as it (1) limits the student's supervised leadership when liturgist, and (2) denies the supervisor opportunity to witness the student's preaching.

Ordinarily, field education over the full academic year or following graduation will include the entire liturgical and program calendar, from the start of Sunday School and other programming (September), Advent/Christmas (November-December), Ordinary Time (January-February), and Lent/Easter (March-May). The goal is that the student get a well-rounded experience of the church and program year.

Field Education Plans and Reporting

All field education plans must be submitted to and approved by the CPM prior to acceptance of the position.

The plan shall indicate how the Expectations (above) are expected to be met, while the mid-point and final evaluations (see below) will include actual goals and achievements in those same categories.

The field education plan shall include agreement on how the church and academic calendars will be coordinated. For example, a seminary's breaks or holidays may coincide with Advent/Christmas or Lent/Easter, but worship leadership at these times is an important

experience for the student. Self-care provided by breaks are important, but so is the real-life experience of the challenging schedule these seasons require.

At the mid-point of the field education experience, student and supervisor will meet to evaluate how well they are living into the covenant they established at the beginning of the experience. At the end of this experience they will meet again, to evaluate student's progress toward their learning goals and other progress made during the year. The supervisor shall provide the student with a written report that can include, but is not limited to an evaluation of the student's gifts, growth areas, experiences, responses and any suggestions the supervisor might have for the future growth of the student. When these reports or forms are required by the seminary, duplicates can be used to inform the CPM.

Following these mid-point and final evaluations, it is the student's responsibility to submit the forms to their CPM liaison within 30 days of dates established by CPM. The liaison will forward this material to a CPM Moderator or Co-moderator. Completing them is necessary for meeting their presbytery requirement. These reports will be kept confidential, as is the practice for the required psychological evaluation.

Compensation

Compensation shall be provided, and is arranged between student, church, and seminary, and the arrangements included in the field education plan provided to the CPM. Reimbursement is expected for the following: mileage for private vehicle use while on official church business (but normally not for commuting to the site) at the current IRS rate; any pre-approved, out-of-pocket expenses such as supplies, trips, meals, or overnight lodging necessitated by the field education work.

Note: Stipends and mileage reimbursements are considered taxable income.

*With appreciation for materials created by the Presbytery of Boston, and Pittsburgh and Princeton Theological Seminaries.

For Prospective and Approved Field Education Supervisors*

Purpose

Field education is an integral part of preparation for ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) . Through supervised experiences in congregations and agencies, the student has an opportunity to:

- develop basic skills in the practice of ministry,
- clarify and focus the sense of call,
- discern specific gifts for ministry,
- integrate theology and theory with experience,
- develop pastoral identity and character,
- build a network of persons (in ordained ministry and otherwise) who can serve as references as the student seeks a first call and who can continue to be mentors during early years in ministry.

Requirements

The Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey requires one unit of supervised field education.

Fulfilling the required unit will ordinarily be accomplished:

- part time (10-12 hours per week),
- during a full academic year or following graduation.

Expectations

It is expected that the seminarian will get a well-rounded parish experience. This will include:

- sharing in worship leadership, including occasional preaching;
- sharing pastoral responsibilities as available, including visitations, weddings, funerals, etc.;
- attending session meetings as permitted and time allows;
- and any other activities that might be available to them; such as leading a Bible Study or adult education class, or assisting in youth ministry.

The pastor and candidate should meet at least weekly to review the student's experiences, ask questions, share observations, etc.

Preaching outside of the field education placement is discouraged as it (1) limits the student's supervised leadership when liturgist, and (2) denies the supervisor opportunity to witness the student's preaching.

Ordinarily, field education over the full academic year or following graduation will include the entire liturgical and program calendar, from the start of Sunday School and other programming (September), Advent/Christmas (November-December), Ordinary Time (January-February), and Lent/Easter (March-May). The goal is that the student get a well-rounded experience of the church and program year.

Field Education Plans and Reporting

All field education plans must be submitted to and approved by the CPM prior to acceptance of the position.

The plan shall indicate how the Expectations (above) are expected to be met, while the mid-point and final evaluations (see below) will include actual goals and achievements in those same categories.

The field education plan shall include agreement on how the church and academic calendars will be coordinated. For example, a seminary's breaks or holidays may coincide with Advent/Christmas or Lent/Easter, but worship leadership at these times is an important experience for the student. Self-care provided by breaks are important, but so is the real-life experience of the challenging schedule these seasons require.

At the mid-point of the field education experience, student and supervisor will meet to evaluate how well they are living into the covenant they established at the beginning of the experience. At the end of this experience they will meet again, to evaluate student's progress toward their learning goals and other progress made during the year. The supervisor shall provide the student with a written report that can include, but is not limited to an evaluation of the student's gifts, growth areas, experiences, responses and any suggestions the supervisor might have for the future growth of the student. When these reports or forms are required by the seminary, duplicates can be used to inform the CPM.

Following these mid-point and final evaluations, it is the student's responsibility to submit the forms to their CPM liaison within 30 days of dates established by CPM. The liaison will forward this material to a CPM Moderator or Co-moderator. Completing them is necessary for meeting their presbytery requirement. These reports will be kept confidential, as is the practice for the required psychological evaluation.

Compensation

Compensation shall be provided, and is arranged between student, church, and seminary, and the arrangements included in the field education plan provided to the CPM. Reimbursement is expected for the following: mileage for private vehicle use while on official church business (but normally not for commuting to the site) at the current IRS rate; any pre-approved, out-of-pocket expenses such as supplies, trips, meals, or overnight lodging necessitated by the field education work.

Note: Stipends and mileage reimbursements are considered taxable income.

Questions for Prospective Pastor/Church

- How would you describe your site's broader community context?
- How would you describe your site's current areas of strength?
- How would you describe your supervisory style?
- What opportunities could you make available for a student at your site?
- For what tasks or ministry areas would you like a student to take responsibility? (optional)
- What monthly stipend, if any, could you provide a student?
- What mileage reimbursement, if any, could you provide a student?

- What sort of work environment and resources would be available to a student?

*With appreciation for materials created by the Presbytery of Boston, and Pittsburgh and Princeton Theological Seminaries.

The January 28, 2023 Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey
 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.

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 [REDACTED] remains legally married to [REDACTED].

VERDICT #1 _____ Guilty _____ Vote 8-0 _____

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]
[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 _____

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]
[REDACTED]

VERDICT #3 _____ Guilty 7-1 _____

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 Koepfel (Special Committee) and Ray Schmickle (Special Committee), members of the Permanent Judicial Commission, were not present and took no part in the proceedings.

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.

November 14, 2023

**Interim Report of the Administrative Commission
for the Fairmount Presbyterian Church, Califon, NJ**

The AC held its first meeting on February 6, 2023. At that meeting Rev. Chad Rodgers was appointed moderator and Elder Paula Benson was appointed secretary of the commission.

We then joined the Fairmount Session for their regular meeting on February 13, 2023.

Between February and September, we met with the Session every other month for their regular meetings and joined some special meetings. Our interactions have remained positive and supportive throughout with good communication in both directions. Our goal as a commission was to encourage and empower the session, to help assess their current circumstances, help them make difficult decisions, if necessary, and to help them meet the following, self identified, goals:

- stabilize finances
- sort out lease with the Haytown Preschool
- find a tenant for the manse
- hire a part time pastor

The AC met on the following dates: 2/14, 4/25, 6/12 and 8/22 (generally these were a day to a week after their session meetings).

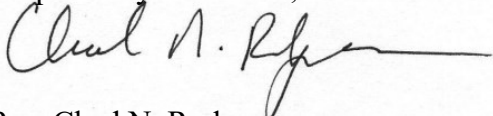
Throughout our time we identified the following areas we could lend support and encouragement:

- Manse issues
- Possible Re-finance of loan Haytown preschool lease
- Finances and Giving (expenses to run church)
- The church rolls (looking at members who may not be active)

We had many conversations encouraging the Fairmount Session to renegotiate their lease with Haytown preschool so it would be more favorable to the congregation's financial position.

To date they have a tenant in the manse, have a new lease which now provides some stable monthly income, have been given permission by COM (with our blessing) to look for a part time pastor (15 hours a week), and generally seem to have a much more positive feeling about their congregation's present circumstances. They are looking into reworking the loan and hope to fill their pastoral leadership void soon.

Respectfully submitted,



Rev. Chad N. Rodgers,
Moderator

November 14, 2023

Administration and Coordinating Team Report – Part 1

Items for Report:

From the October 24 Meeting:

ACT-3

Approved the Dissolution of Involuntary Pastoral Relationship Policy recommended to ACT by the Committee on Ministry. (see attached)

- Background: The Book of Order requires that all Terms of Call include the Presbytery's Dissolution Policy.

ACT-4

Approved changing the classes of the Committee for Preparation for Ministry from 3 classes of 3 members to 3 classes of 2 members.

- Background: The CPM has found that 6 people is more than enough for the number of inquirers and candidates presently enrolled.

ACT-5

Approved \$10,000 from the Special Resourcing and Assistance Fund for the PJC/Legal Reserve Fund.

- Background: The Judicial Fund has been depleted by the recent Boy Scout and disciplinary case. The Special Resourcing and Assistance Fund is an available to the ACT for projects and issues that are not covered or anticipated by committees and teams. Normally the fund receives its funding from a portion of the sale of property.

ACT-6

Reviewed the September Presbytery meeting.

ACT-7

Reviewed the agenda and theme for the November presbytery meeting.

ACT-8

Reviewed the agenda and theme for the January Presbytery meeting.

ACT-9

Reviewed the year-to-date financial reports.

ACT-10

Personnel Committee reported they will be conducting annual staff reviews soon.

ACT-11

Discernment Team reported that they are continuing their work and will be moving into the next phase soon.

Leadership reports:

ACT-12

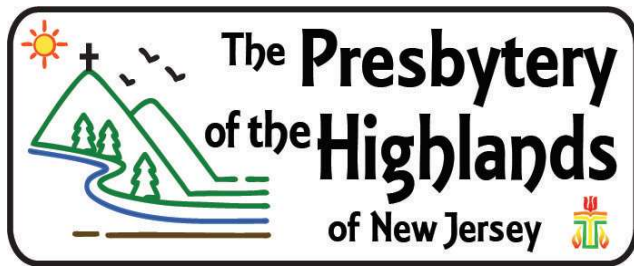
Moderator Tom Brown reported that he had appointed the Administrative Commission for Morris Plains and is working on Long Valley. (See the ACT Part 2 Report). He led the installation services of Rev. Dr. Christopher Doyle and West Milford Presbyterian Church and Rev. Kathi Heath and Ogden Memorial Presbyterian Church of Chatham.

ACT-13

Resourcing Staff and Stated Clerk Steve Shussett reported that he attended the *Mid Council Pension, Mission and Benefits Conference*; participated in the Synod Church Discipline Training in Hightown, NJ along with several members of the presbytery; attended the Appeal to the Foster Disciplinary case and will report at summary of the decision to the presbytery (see attached). As Resource staff there have been several workshops this fall – clerk of Session workshop, YLF retreat and a Church Development workshop featuring Rev. Mark Elsdon. Several more are scheduled.

ACT-14

Presbytery Leader – Jeanne Radak reported that she was on family leave for 2 ½ weeks because of the premature birth of their grandson. All are doing well now. Because of family leave she had to miss the Mid Council gathering. She will be attending the General Assembly Special Committee on development of a Funding Model in Louisville the first few days of November.



Involuntary Dissolution Policy
Presbytery of the Highlands
October 2023

The pastoral relationship in the PC (USA) is a three-way covenant between a pastor, a congregation and a presbytery. When a pastoral relationship is established, it is a time for celebration. But there inevitably comes a time that the pastoral relationship will be dissolved. Most commonly, it is the pastor who initiates the dissolution of the pastoral relationship by resigning, ordinarily to accept another pastoral call, to enter another form of labor, or to retire from professional ministry. Ideally, when that time comes, such dissolution happens amicably.

However, on occasion, the pastoral relationship is dissolved under less-than-ideal circumstances. There are occasions when either a congregation or presbytery initiates action to end a relationship with a particular pastor, with which the pastor may not immediately agree. Through counseling and assistance from the Committee on Ministry (COM), it is hoped that such dissolutions may become mutually agreed upon.

In all cases of Presbyterian pastoral relationships, it is the Presbytery through the COM that creates or dissolves a pastoral relationship. Moreover, the COM has responsibility for ongoing review and supervision of the relationship between a pastor and an employing congregation.

Principles for Dissolution:

- All conditions for dissolution shall be compatible with the provisions of the most current Book of Order and the policies of the Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey
- The COM is commissioned by the Presbytery to approve aspects of pastoral relationships between pastors, Certified Christian Educators and Commissioned Ruling Elders and congregations. This includes dissolution and severance.
- All official matters regarding separation/termination of a pastor shall be documented in writing and shared with all three parties.
- An appropriate and regular process of review, evaluation, and (if necessary) mediation or conflict intervention shall precede the start of any process of dissolution in accordance with the Book of Order.
- The dissolution agreement shall include the specific arrangements for termination of pastoral service.
- Once COM has taken its action, all agreements are final. COM shall be responsible for monitoring the completion of the agreements.

Dissolution policy and guidelines concerning involuntary dissolution of pastoral relationships.

- The Committee on Ministry has final authority regarding the dissolution agreement.

- The dissolution severance agreement should be negotiated by the session, the pastor and COM representatives. In special circumstances an outside mediator might be considered. The session shall make the recommendation to the congregation only after consulting with the COM.
- The severance shall be a minimum of sixty days. A pastor's length of service to a congregation may be considered when negotiating terms of severance.
- In accordance with IRS rules, severance does not include reimbursable professional expenses or other allowance amount after the termination of service date.
- Study leave time and continuing education funds are not included in the severance package.
- Unused vacation time may be added to the severance amount calculated on a basis of one week per quarter for the calendar year.
- Leave of absence time and compensation provided by the church prior to the dissolution may be considered in determining the amount of severance. However, there will still be sixty days severance no matter how many weeks of leave of absence.
- Payments should usually be made according to the regular payroll schedule of the church.
- Normally, severance ceases when the pastor obtains future employment. However, if the pastor obtains employment that is not comparable to the former compensation, the church may consider making up the difference during the term of the severance package.
- A church must prove financial hardship for this policy to not apply.
- All agreements must have the following included:
 - The date of termination of service and the date of termination of salary/housing.
 - Severance will include cash salary, housing (or use of manse and utilities , if applicable), Board of Pension Benefits, and Social Security offset. The church shall be responsible for continuing coverage until the end of the agreement.
 - The severance will include an agreement for satisfying the conditions of any "loan" for purchase of a house or any other financial agreement between pastor and congregation.
 - A date for vacancy of manse and/or church office will be included.
 - Signatures of the clerk of session, the pastor and the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery or COM moderator.

November 14, 2023

Administration and Coordinating Team Report – Part 2

Items for Report:

From the October 5, 2023 Called meeting:

ACT-15

Approved a recommendation from the Committee on Ministry for an Administrative Commission for the Long Valley Presbyterian Church. See attached.

ACT-16

Approved a recommendation from the Committee on Ministry for an Administrative Commission for the Presbyterian Church of Morris Plains. See attached.

Addendum:**ACT-17**

Moderator Tom Brown appointed the following:

Administrative Commission for Long Valley Presbyterian Church

- Rev. Daniel Vigilante – Morristown
- Rev. Stefanie Muntzel – Stirling/Gillette
- Rev. Amy Lincoln – Flemington
- Elder Jeanne Perry – Chester
- Elder Ken Nickel – Boonton

Administrative Commission for Morris Plains

- Rev. Robin Burton Palmer – Highlands
- Rev. Nancy Nalepo-Skibo – Somerset
- Elder Sherrie Guthrie – Morristown
- Elder Carl Woodward – Chatham Township
- Rev. Bill Stone – New Vernon

The Warrant for the Administrative Commission to the Long Valley Presbyterian Church September 30, 2023

Introduction

The Presbytery is given the authority in our polity to “nurture the covenant community of Christ... promoting the peace and harmony of the congregations, and inquiring into sources of congregational discord; supporting congregations in developing the graces of generosity, stewardship, and service; assisting congregations in developing mission and participating in the mission of the whole church;... warning and bearing witness against error in doctrine and immortality in practice within its bounds; and serving in judicial matters in accordance with the rules of discipline (G-3.0303d).”

In exercising this authority, the Committee on Ministry has made a deliberate inquiry into the situation at the Long Valley Presbyterian Church. This inquiry began in May 2023, after the pastor of Long Valley and the Chair of Personnel reached out to the COM, individually and independently, for assistance in addressing discord between the pastor and session and among members of the congregation.

This COM inquiry consisted of sending a team of three COM members to meet with the pastor and elders to assess the level of concern that existed. Following their initial work the Team requested that the entire COM approve an immediate Leave for the pastor for medical reasons. The Leave began on June 18th and would be for at least 90 days.

In addition to the Leave, the COM also approved the hiring of a Clergy Coach and Consultant to work with the Pastor and the Session throughout the summer of 2023.

The COM team believes progress is being made, but ongoing and continued support from the Presbytery will be needed.

In our connectional polity we are well-suited to provide such support for one another in times of trouble. In order for continued support to be most effective and also to act on behalf of the Presbytery and with the Presbytery’s full authority, it requires technical language of a warrant for an Administrative Commission.

Next Steps and Ongoing Support

This document describes the ways in which the Commission will support, protect, and encourage the Long Valley Presbyterian Church’s “Ministry under the Word.” The Committee on Ministry, the Stated Clerk, and the Presbytery Leader remain committed to achieving resolution and reconciliation to the greatest extent possible.

The Committee on Ministry has determined, at its electronic meeting of October 3, 2023, that significant work still needs to be done at the Long Valley Presbyterian Church so that the ministry of the Word is not placed in jeopardy. *It therefore requests that the Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey, acting through its Administrative Commission, create and empower an Administrative Commission.*

Among the responsibilities given to an Administrative Commission in our polity are the following: visiting particular councils, congregations or agencies over which they have immediate jurisdiction reported to be affected with disorder, and to inquire into and settle the difficulties therein, except that no commission shall have the power to dissolve a pastoral relationship unless such power has been specifically delegated to it by the appointing body (G-3.0109b(5)).

Recommendations

The Committee on Ministry recommends that the Presbytery appoint an Administrative Commission to assist the Session and Congregation on the next steps in their journey.

The Administrative Commission for Long Valley Presbyterian Church will have the following authority and responsibilities:

1. To continue the work of the COM Team, working with the Pastor and Session in an advisory and supportive role while they discern their future together.
2. The AC shall have access to all records and documents which pertain to the life and mission of the Long Valley Presbyterian Church, without limitation, including all financial documents and accounts, personal records and other documents that as they are needed or required to their work.
3. The AC shall assist the Session of the Long Valley Presbyterian Church in the fulfillment of its responsibilities listed in G-3.0201. The Commission members shall serve alongside the session members of advising them and encouraging them as they fulfill their responsibilities. The AC may have the authority to vote at session meetings only if necessary.
4. To inquire into any continuing or emerging difficulties occurring in the Long Valley Presbyterian Church, affording to all interested parties fair notice and an opportunity to be heard on the matters at issue, in accordance with G-3.0109b, the Commission shall use its discretion in ensuring that all concerned parties have all pertinent documents communicated to them, The Commission shall conduct its business in the open, without undue secrecy, At the same time, the Commission shall take seriously any evidence or allegations of wrongdoing in the life of this church by any party,
5. To settle whatever difficulties may be discovered or emerge, acting on behalf of the Presbytery, which is “responsible for the mission and government of the church throughout its geographical district.” In carrying out this responsibility, the Administrative Commission, acting on behalf of Presbytery, is hereby empowered:

- a. To provide pastoral care for the First Presbyterian Church in a time of crisis, conflict, and uncertainty. This shall include praying with and for the congregation, Session, Pastor, and his family;
- b. Encouraging communication among the participants in the church’s life;
- c. Seeking opportunities to recommend services of confession, healing, and reconciliation; and
- d. Directing all participants in the church’s life to a renewed encounter with the demands of God’s Word,

This Administrative Commission shall report to presbytery at least every six months, beginning in November 2023, Furthermore, it shall report to the COM through the church’s liaison, on a monthly basis, The Administrative Commission may at any time request additional responsibilities and authorities that they may need to assist the Long Valley Presbyterian Church in moving forward with their mission and ministry.

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.

If requested by the Administrative Commission, the Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey, shall secure Counsel for their work.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION

for The Presbyterian Church of Morris Plains.

October 2, 2023

Introduction

On September 3 and 4, the Committee on Ministry (COM) liaison, the Presbytery Leader, and the Stated Clerk began receiving phone calls, text messages, and emails from parents and staff of Joyful Noise Nursery School, a ministry program of Presbyterian Church of Morris Plains (PCMP). They also received numerous phone calls, text messages and emails from members and staff of the Presbyterian Church of Morris Plains. The presenting issue appeared to be the unexpected resignation of the Joyful Noise Nursery School (JNNS) director days before the beginning of the school year.

Over the next few days following the initial contacts additional communications raised concerns in the following areas:

- Areas of Financial concerns including lack of transparency, and alleged misuse of funds and questionable accounting practices.
- Suggestion of Personnel Issues including inconsistencies and confusion regarding the relationship between the church and JNNS, false allegations, lack of clarity concerning personnel policy, slowness of response to personnel issues and stories of harassment of staff and volunteers. The Pastor and Personnel Committee shared concerns about the behavior of the Preschool director prior to her resignation.
- Confusion and lack of communication about the departure of the Preschool director. Parents sent a petition only to be met with silence or brief responses that did not provide clarity or interest in resolving their requests.

The Presbytery Leader shared these concerns with the COM on September 5, two members of the COM volunteered to be part of the initial team to review the communications and information. They met on September 7 and on September 8 sent an email to the Moderator/Pastor and Clerk of Session requesting a meeting immediately along with a request for documents that possibly could shed light on the concerns. On September 9 at the Presbytery meeting, the Clerk of Session informed the Presbytery Leader that neither she nor the pastor could make themselves available to meet the following week.

On September 13 the Pastor called the Presbytery Leader indicating that they needed legal assistance because the director of the preschool downloaded and deleted sensitive preschool documents days prior to her resignation. At that time the Presbytery Leader indicated that they would get back to the Session after they have reviewed the documents requested and also said that the Session and Pastor were to maintain the status quo until a time when things could be sorted out.

The requested documents, which included financial information, minutes, structure/organization information, and personnel info, was received via hard copies at the Presbytery office on Friday, September 15. Additional information was requested and received on September 27. The COM team reviewed the information and determined that there are significant questions and concerns that warranted a more in-depth review of the issues, accusations and concerns relating to Morris Plains Session and its organization including its relationship with Joyful Noise Nursery School.

After consulting with the Stated Clerk, COM liaison and one co-moderator of COM, it was determined that an Administrative Commission was needed. On September 28 the Moderator/Pastor and Clerk of Session along with other members of Session invited by the Pastor, met with the Presbytery Leader and COM Team to be informed that Team will be recommending to COM on Tuesday, October 3 that an Administrative Commission be appointed and that the ACT will be meeting on October 5 to act on the COM request. On September 29, late afternoon, it was brought to the attention of the COM team that the Pastor had called an emergency meeting for Saturday, September 30, with JNNS parents and staff to respond to their concerns. On Friday, September 29 the Pastor and others met with an attorney and had a “cease and desist” letter developed and sent to the former director of the JNNS accusing her of downloading/deleting JNNS information from the JNNS server. The COM team was not informed of any of these actions or the potential repercussions of these actions. It is unclear whether the session met, discussed/debated the merits or content of the letter. The Presbytery Leader was informed with a brief email, after inquiring about session action, that the session had approved the letter. The Pastor and Personnel Committee met with the parents and staff on September 30.

The COM team has determined that there is a need to investigate and review the actions and concerns and accusations of Presbyterian Church of Morris Plains Session and Pastor along with a review of the issues concerning the relationship between PCMP and the JNNS.

Purpose

The Purpose of the Administrative Commission for Presbyterian Church of Morris Plains is to review the work and actions of the session and moderator of the church as relating to the Book of Order G -3.0108

G-3.0108 Administrative Review

Higher councils shall review the work of lower councils in the following ways:

a. General Administrative Review

Each council shall review annually or biennially, based on the body’s meeting frequency, the proceedings and actions of all entities related to the body, all officers able to act on behalf of the body, and lower councils within its jurisdiction. In reviewing the procedures of the lower council, the higher body shall determine whether the proceedings have been correctly recorded, have been in accordance with the Constitution, have been prudent and equitable, and have been faithful to the mission of the whole church. It shall also determine whether lawful injunctions of a higher body have been obeyed.

b. Special Administrative Review

If a higher council learns at any time of alleged irregularity or delinquency of a lower council, it may require the lower body to produce any records and to take appropriate action.

c. Directed Response

The higher council may direct the lower council to reconsider and take corrective action if matters are determined to be out of compliance. In addition to administrative review, review and correction may be sought by initiating judicial process as described in the Church Discipline.

G-3.0303 Relations with Sessions

Presbytery, being composed of the ministers of the Word and Sacrament and commissioners elected by the session of congregations within its district, has a particular responsibility to

coordinate, guide, encourage, support, and resource the work of these congregations for the most effective witness to the broader community. In order to accomplish this responsibility, the presbytery has authority to:

d. Counsel with a session concerning reported difficulties within a congregation, including:

1. Advising the session as to appropriate actions to be taken to resolve the reported difficulties. 2. Offering to help as a mediator, and 3. Acting to correct the difficulties if requested to do so by the session or

if the session is unable or unwilling to do so, following the procedural safeguards of the Church Discipline.

Administrative Commission responsibilities and authority:

The Administrative Commission (AC) for Presbyterian Church of Morris Plains shall have the following powers and responsibilities:

- To visit the Presbyterian Church of Morris Plains, Morris Plains, NJ and to inquire into the concerns of the Session, Congregation members, parents and staff of Joyful Noise Preschool. Their inquiries may include hearing the concerns and issues of present and former congregation members, active participants of JNNS, present and former staff members and volunteers and others that the Commission feels need to be heard and/or who can provide helpful information.
- The AC shall have access to all records and documents which pertain to the life and mission of the Morris Plains Presbyterian Church and Joyful Noise Nursery School, without limitation, including all financial documents and accounts, personnel files of past and present staff and volunteers.
- The AC shall have the authority to resolve whatever difficulties or issues 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 and authorized:
 - To provide coordination and guidance for the Presbyterian Church of Morris Plains, assisting the church in mobilizing its strength for making the most effective witness to Jesus Christ. (G-3.0303a)
 - 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) and if necessary consult with the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery on any issues that they may uncover related to Church Discipline in the Book of Order.
- The AC is to provide pastoral care for the Morris Plains Presbyterian Church in a time of crisis, conflict, and uncertainty. This shall include praying with and for the congregation, the session, the preschool staff and the pastor and his family; 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.
- The AC may 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

Presbyterian Church of Morris Plains.

The AC shall assist the Session of the Presbyterian Church in Morris Plains in the fulfillment of its responsibilities listed in G-3.0201. The Commission members shall serve alongside the session members of Morris Plains Presbyterian Church, with vote if needed, advising them and encouraging them as they fulfill their responsibilities. If necessary, the Administrative Commission may request that The Committee on Ministry appoint the moderator pro tem.

The Administrative Commission shall report in writing to the Presbytery at least every six months. The COM liaison will provide monthly reports to the Committee on Ministry. 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.

The Administrative Commission may at any time request additional responsibilities and authorities that they may need to assist the Morris Plains Presbyterian Church in moving forward with their mission and ministry.

Review of the 2022 Session Minutes Report – Part 2 November 14, 2023

Minutes approved without exceptions:

Madison, Presbyterian Church of Madison

Whippany, First Presbyterian Church of Whippany

Minutes approved with exceptions:

Alpha, United Presbyterian Church of Alpha

Belvidere, United Presbyterian Church in Belvidere

Clinton, Clinton Presbyterian Church

Milford, Holland Bible Church

Pluckemin, Pluckemin Presbyterian Church

Ringoes, Kirkpatrick Memorial Presbyterian Church

Ringwood, Community Presbyterian Church of Ringwood

Sparta, First Presbyterian Church of Sparta

Titusville, First Presbyterian Church of Titusville

Wantage, Beemerville Presbyterian Church

Warren, Trinity United Church

Minutes not approved

Califon, Lower Valley Presbyterian Church

Gillette, Meyersville Presbyterian Church

Milford, Milford Presbyterian Church

Newton, First Presbyterian Church of Newton

Stewartsville, Old Greenwich Presbyterian Church

Wharton, Wharton United Community Church