

**Warrant**  
for an  
**Administrative Commission**  
of The Presbytery of Northeast New Jersey concerning  
**the First Federated Church of Bayonne, Presbyterian and Reformed**

**September 17 2022**

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:  
a time to be born, and a time to die;  
a time to plant and a time to pluck up what is planted.

*Ecclesiastes 3: 1-2*

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life.  
Those who believe in me, though they die, will live;  
and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.

*John 11: 25-26*

A commission is empowered to consider and conclude matters referred to it by a governing body. The appointing body shall state specifically the scope of power given to a commission. A commission shall keep a full record of its proceedings, which shall be submitted to its governing body to be incorporated in its minutes and to be regarded as the actions of the governing body itself. (G-3.0109b)

The decision of an administrative commission shall be the action of the appointing governing body from the time of its completion by the commission and the announcement, where relevant, of the action to parties affected by it. Such decision shall be transmitted in writing to the stated clerk of the governing body, who shall report it to the governing body at its next meeting. A governing body may rescind or amend an action of an administrative commission in the same way actions of the governing body may be modified. (G-3.0109b)

Since 1828, the First Federated Church, Presbyterian and Reformed, has existed as a faithful witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the City of Bayonne. Christ Presbyterian Church Federated in 1952 with First Reformed Church (established 1828), itself being a 1951 merger with Third Reformed Church. Seeing the community from its roots as Bergen Neck through to modern Bayonne the Church listed on both the State and National Registers of Historic Places has been a beacon of Christ's love in its community.

In the 1990's following a period of decline in membership and much deterioration of the building under the leadership of their longest serving pastor Rev. Barbara Kotora, the small group worshipping there was able to fundraise and complete an extensive renovation of the historic building. The building secured, the congregation then began reaching out to the community through a weeknight video series, welcoming in 12 step groups and a community chorus to use their facilities, partnering with a day care and other community engagement activities.

Following Rev. Kotora's retirement in 2020 and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the small remnant who remain find themselves no longer able to maintain divine worship, nor the building administration duties. They requested of the Presbytery and the Classis to be removed from their duties no later than 9/30/2022.

The COM of the Presbytery of Northeast New Jersey therefore requests that the presbytery, at its 7<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting on September 17, 2022, create and empower an Administrative Commission. This Administrative Commission shall have the power to conclude the following actions:

1. To assume the original jurisdiction of the Session/Board of Elders/Consistory of First Federated Church.
2. To dissolve the First Federated Church.
3. To provide for the continuing spiritual and pastoral care of the remaining members of the First Federated Church.
4. To transfer members of First Federated Church to other congregations and to provide for pastoral care for those who do not wish to, or are unable to transfer their membership.
5. To grant letters of dismissal to members for those who have not found a new church after a period of one year.
6. To take possession of all real and personal property of First Federated Church along with financial records and inventories of equipment and to oversee transfer of all real property and accounts to the Presbytery or Classis.
7. To ensure that bills are paid, the property is maintained and secured and adequate insurance coverage is in place.
8. To consult with the Session/Board of Elders/Consistory or its representatives regarding requests the congregation may have relating to the disposition of equipment, memorials and other property, honoring them where possible and to retain such for future use at the discretion of the Presbytery and Classis.
9. To assert the claim of the Presbytery and Classis to any property of the First Federated Church not known at this time or property which may come as beneficiary of a will or trust not known at this time.
10. To assert that the First Federated Church property remains a vital asset to the ministry of the Presbytery of Northeast New Jersey and the Classis of greater Palisades and to hold prayer services on the property.
11. To discern, in consultation with the COM and Vision Team (Trustees) of the Presbytery as well as their equivalents at the Classis, the future use of the real property and in the

event that the decision is to sell the property to carry out that sale. The RCA prefers sale to be held as a last resort only after all new ministry possibilities are exhausted. This will include a community needs assessment as well and consideration of possibilities for new worshipping communities in this community.

12. To transfer to the Stated Clerk for forwarding to Presbyterian Historical Society all official records of the congregation. Other historical records shall be transferred to the stated clerk for storage or transfer to PHS at their direction. Records may also be transferred instead for deposit to the RCA equivalents if the commission deems that a more appropriate repository.
13. To work with the current tenants in the building and other groups who use the facilities to insure a smooth transition.
14. To complete any additional tasks necessary to close the corporation of the church.
15. To see that the long life and faithful history of the First Federated Church, and its antecedents is suitably celebrated in a service of worship.

In undertaking these actions, the Administrative Commission shall be sensitive to the memory, heritage, and concerns of the members of the First Federated Church.

The Administrative Commission shall invite members of the First Federated Church to participate in its work with voice but without vote.

Membership in this Administrative Commission shall be by appointment of the Moderator of the Commission on Ministry for the 3 PC(USA) Members. Additionally the Classis of Greater Palisades of the RCA shall appoint 3 members according to their own processes and customs.

This Administrative Commission shall report its actions to a future Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Northeast New Jersey. They shall provide the Presbytery with interim reports semi-annually and their warrant shall conclude with the completion of the above delegated tasks.

Rev. Bobbie Arrowsmith, Chair, COM of the Presbytery of Northeast New Jersey  
Rev. Jeremy T. Campbell, Stated Clerk of Presbytery