

# The Presbytery of Northeast New Jersey

Presbyterian Church (USA)

## STATED MEETING

### #9

Online Via Zoom  
February 21, MMXXIII

### ATTENDANCE.

See Attached Appendix I for attendance. All others excused at their request or absent.

### MINUTES.

#### **Call to Order.**

In accordance with the bylaws and electronic meeting policy of the Presbytery of Northeast New Jersey, the 9<sup>th</sup> Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Northeast New Jersey was called to order on Tuesday, February 21, 2023, using ZOOM technology as a result of the continuing COVID-19 related caution about large in person gatherings. The meeting was called to order at 6:33 pm (EST), by the Co-Moderator Pastor Kirk Woodward (Fewsmith Memorial) and opened with prayer. The meeting docket was arranged in a worshipful work format in which the elements of worship are interspersed with the business of the body.

A quorum was present.

Pastor Woodward led the presbytery in a **call to worship** and **opened the meeting with prayer**.

#### ***Corresponding Members.***

it was **VOTED** to enroll Rev Rodney Havemen (RCA Greater Palisades Classis) Elder Elise Bates-Russell (Johnsonburg Camp and Retreat Center) and David Staniunas (Records Archivist, Presbyterian Historical Society) as a corresponding members for this meeting.

#### ***Stated Clerk.***

Teaching Elder Jeremy T. Campbell (Stated Clerk), presented the report of the Stated Clerk. He presented the Consent Agenda.

#### Consent Agenda —

- 1) Approve the Docket for this meeting.
- 2) Approve the Minutes of the November Stated Meeting as circulated.
- 3) Approve the Minutes of the December Special Meeting (including adjourned session in January) As Circulated
- 4) Approve the Excuses collected at the meeting.
- 5) Receive the Finance Committee's Report. (See Appendix II)

- 6)Receive the Report of the Vision Team with the exception any Items called out for Presbytery Action. (See Appendix III)
- 6)Receive the Report of the COM with the exception any Items called out for Presbytery Action. (see Appendix IV)
- 9)Receive the report of the CPM with the exception any Items called out for Presbytery Action.. (See Appendix V)
- 10)Receive the interim report of the Administrative Commission serving the Calvin Linden congregation. (See Appendix VI)
- 11)Receive the report of the Organizing Co-Leader and Resource Presbyter (See Appendix VII)
- 12)Receive the report of the Stated Clerk and enact the items therein. (See Appendix VIII)

There was a request to pull the Stated Clerk's report from the consent agenda. The Presbytery **VOTED** to enact the remaining the items on the Consent Agenda.

The Clerk shared that allegations of offense had been received by the Stated Clerk against 2 Teaching Elder members of the Presbytery Following some questions and discussion about the policy on appointing **Investigating Committees** it was **VOTED** to enact the items in the Stated Clerks' Report.

Rev. Campbell shared the plan for amendments. Amendments will be placed on the Consent Agenda at the May Meeting. Any which Presbyters wish to pull will be discussed during New Business based on the time available. If others remain to be discussed a special meeting will be called in June for that purpose. Rev. Campbell encouraged presbyters to pay attention to the newsletter for information on the amendments.

#### ***Moment for Mission — New Jersey Together***

Rev. Rodney Haveman presented on going solar at church and the work of NJ Together. He shared about putting stewardship into action by investing in renewable energy, and to help them lower utility bills so that savings can fund ministry. They are looking to form a group solar development. NJ together can help with building evaluations, understanding different ownership structures etc. Rev. Rodney Haveman; Rodney.w.haveman@gmail.com; 201-321-1764

**Rev. Jupj Carniero** (Hillside Millennium and St. Paul's Newark) led the presbytery in a **prayer of confession** and offered assurance of pardon.

#### ***Living our Mission — Hearing God's word.***

A **Sermon** on John 1:29-31 entitled "**I have a Dream**" was given by **Rev. Rodney Haveman**. He challenged presbyters to think about what they are known for, and to use that identity to reshape the world.

#### ***Living our Mission: Giving.***

**Rev. Eileen Lindner** (HR, Community Ministries Commission) shared about the new application for grants of up to \$4000 to congregations, These are to launch new programs or to expand current ones... encouraging congregations to live out the Gospel where they are...

**Rev Steve Huston** (Organizing Co-Leader and Resource Presbytery presented his report. He shared that **Minister Directory is now available** on the website. He offered the presbytery's great **thanks to the Financial Task Force** for their hard work and service as we have been organizing into one new presbytery. He also updated the presbytery of the **role of Vision team** in our current structure.

**Davaughn Hoots** a member of the **Community Ministries Commission** spoke to the presbytery about the **impact of online ministry** presence reminding them to engage both the

people who are physically in the room as well as those who aren't. He shared that the grants Rev. Elieen Lindner mentioned earlier can be used to **help upgrade technology**, and that he or others could help with **advice on how to improve technology** to achieve good results. and to expand our reach.

**Rev. Bobbie Arrowsmith (HR, COM convener)** welcome **Rev Jin Bae** who has begun serving **Cranford, First, Rev Carson Washington** who is serving **Memorial West, Rev. Samy Estephanos** who serves as a **Chaplain** and serves a new worshipping community called **Freedom Fellowship** as they begin these ministries within our presbytery. She also recognized **Rev. Tom Craig** who has been granted the status **Honorably Retired**.

The COM report continued with the adoption of a **warrant for an administrative commission** to walk along side the **Elmwood Park** church as they conclude their congregational witness. **Rev. Shelley Gardner** of COM's Admin Team presented the warrant and it was **VOTED** to adopt it.

**Pastor Doris Peterson** (Elizabeth Ave-Weequahic, Co-Moderator, Convener CPM) presented **Candidate Michelle Wildridge** to be **examined for ordination**. Michelle shared about her current work as a chaplain, her faith journey and answered questions on her statement of faith. It was **voted to sustain her examination** and she will be ordained to her chaplaincy ministry which has previously been validated by COM.

**Elder Elise Bates-Russell** reported on **Johnsonburg Camp and Retreat Center**. She shared that the capital campaign has reached 1.5 million dollars thanks to the support of this presbytery along with many others as well as congregations and individuals. She shared about the increased reach Johnsonburg is having with recent camp closures in eastern PA and with Holmes in New York State deciding not to have summer camp this year. She also shared that the social justice cohort model which has been very successful new program for Johnsonburg is being taken and duplicated in other places. She reminded presbyters that summer camp registration time is here and will send materials to churches who would like them

**David Staniunas** shared about the work of **Presbyterian Historical Society**. He shared that as the denomination's archives they are available to store and properly care for permanent records from congregations such as rolls registers and minutes. He encouraged congregations to consider sending any such documents which they don't frequently access to Philadelphia where they can be cataloged and stored in a conducive environment to their preservation. He also shared about a current initiative to lift up the history and records of Black Presbyterians and noted that PHS has digitized the entire Rev. Dr. Katie Geneva Cannon collection which following her passing was donated 1/3 each to Union Seminary New York, Union Seminary Virginia, and Presbyterian Historical Society. The collection includes papers, notes artwork and more.

### ***Nominating Committee.***

**Rev. Dr. Deborah Huggins** (Summit, Central) presented the Nominating report (see appendix IX)

She placed the following slate in nomination:

#### **Co-Moderator**

Teaching Elder Dan Martian (Livingston) Class of 2025

#### **Finance Committee**

Ruling Elder Ruth Ariazza (North Plainfield, Nuevas Fronteras) Class of 2024

Following lengthy discussion about the need for balance between ruling and teaching elders, and reminder that nominees from the floor must be present to accept nomination it was **VOTED** to elect the slate as presented.

***Adjourn.***

The docket having reached its end, the Presbytery **VOTED** to adjourn and the meeting was closed with prayer and benediction offered by Pastor Doris Peterson (Co-Moderator).

**Attest:**

**Jeremy T. Campbell**  
**Stated Clerk**

Finance Committee  
Report to Presbytery  
February 2023

It is with great pleasure to update the PNENJ on the newly formed Finance Committee. We have met 3 times in the past 6 week period, with our first official meeting being held last Thursday, Feb. 16.

During this time together via ZOOM, we had an opportunity to meet our financial advisors to discuss their strategies going forward. We reviewed the January 2023 income and expense numbers, as well as finalize some ideas concerning procedures around the Capital Asset Committee. We are happy to report the January income did exceed our expenses. We want to thank all the churches that stepped forward early and paid their per Capita.

We have multiple tasks in front of us which we hope to address in the next quarter:

1. Complete the audit that is currently going on for multiple past years,
2. Write and enact a complete set of financial procedures and guidelines that will govern everything from our financial reports to expense account receipts, to providing this body an accurate and complete financial picture in preparing the annual budget, to providing a balance sheet.
3. Continually monitor our income and expense numbers to ensure the PNENJ can carry out the financial obligations of its ministry and mission to our communities and world.

In the next several months, we will be formalizing several reports that we can present to this body for review and comments. Thank you for your ongoing support.

The Committee members:

Rick Boyer

Martha Day

\*Ruth Ariazza (waiting for Presbytery and Employer Approval)

Denise Kennedy - Treasurer

Judy Tharaud - Asst. Treasurer

Liz Hutchinson - Financial Coordinator/Bookkeeper

Rick Friedl - Chair

Sincerely,

Richard J Friedl

Vision Team Report  
February 21, 2023

While I was a member of the Vision Ministries Committee in one of my former presbyteries, we used to be teased by the other members of presbytery and were often referred to as the airy fairy committee. They said this because we spent almost all of our time looking over the horizon and discussing what we saw. And when the presbytery leader came and asked us to lead a visioning process with the presbytery so we could then develop a strategic plan. I remember people on the committee joking that vision statements and strategic plans were so 20th century. By the time we finished the process, they argued, the landscape would have already changed.

The Vision ministries team was created because people recognized that so much time was being spent putting out fires and managing the daily work of the presbytery that there was little if any time to think about, let alone discuss, the future. Our task was to consider the adaptive changes that needed to take place while the rest of the presbytery focused on the technical details.

I share this with you because this was the bias I brought to our Vision Team. It took me a while to realize this was not what other people were thinking. There is still no consensus on what the vision team is called to do. We are still figuring out its role.

Back in August of last year, I wrote an article for the presbytery newsletter in which I began to address this issue and share the direction of my thinking. Drawing from both the Book of Order and the NJ Missional Invitation, I was reminded that we often confuse a congregation's council (the session) with a presbytery's council (all the minister members and congregations in a particular region.)

The reason people get confused is because many presbyteries have a "council" that is elected to help coordinate and manage the work of the presbytery. These "councils" might include the moderator and vice-moderator along with the chairs of all standing committees, some at-large members, and staff. The "council" may even serve as the Board of Trustees. I've even heard people refer to these "councils" as "the presbytery's session" - but that is not our polity. In order to be less confusing, some presbyteries have renamed their "councils" as coordinating cabinets or leadership teams - although their function remains largely unchanged.

While the presbytery does not have a mission statement that we developed on our own, we do have a shared mission "to help congregations and the church as a whole to be more faithful participants in the mission of Christ." [G-3.0101] This is actually a good definition of what it means to be missional. Indeed, our missional invitation quotes Paul Hooker who states.

Mission is not an item on the "to do" list of the Church; the mission of God is the reason for the Church. Congregations in particular and the Church as a whole do not exist to serve their

own aims or even to guarantee their own survival. We exist solely to participate with Christ in expressing the love of God to the world, a love that “empties itself” for the sake of the world, even to the point of death.

One of the challenges ahead of us is emptying ourselves of how we think a presbytery has to be organized in order to function “properly”. At their meeting next week, I am asking the Vision Team to consider the job description for a new Administrative Operations Committee. While it will be easy to focus on the technical details of the committee, it is the adaptive changes that I feel the Vision Team is best suited to address. I see the Vision Team as a place where we are not bound by deadlines and action items so we have more freedom to invite God into our conversations and discern how God is transforming the very idea of what it means to be a presbytery. And as we continue to discern, and as we bring more people into the process, there will occasionally be actions for the presbytery to take.

I understand this may not sit well with everyone in the presbytery and that is okay. It is important to hear from everyone in this process. That is part of the reason the Vision Team will be focused on bringing people together this year in a number of small gatherings. The goal is to help facilitate new relationships within the presbytery while also engaging people in dialogue about our ongoing transformation.

Thank you for being a part of the process.

Steve Huston  
Organizing Co-Leader  
Convener of the Vision Team

Dear Finance Task Force,

Judy Tharaud, Denise Kennedy, Jamie Cella, Eileen Lindner, Joan Van Pelt, Dave Bomgaars, Skip Winters (liaison)

On behalf of the Presbytery of Northeast New Jersey, the Vision Team would like to extend our deepest appreciation for the outstanding job you have done in successfully consolidating three presbytery financial systems into one new system. Your hard work and dedication over the past two years, meeting almost weekly, has resulted in a streamlined and efficient financial system that will greatly benefit the presbytery.

We would like to take this opportunity to specifically acknowledge the following accomplishments that your team has achieved, while recognizing this is not an exhaustive list of all that you did:

1. Consolidated payroll system: This made it possible to provide timely and accurate compensation for our staff.
2. New bank account: This provided a more secure and efficient way to manage our transactions.
3. New chart of accounts: This streamlined our financial reporting and has improved our ability to track and analyze our financial performance.
4. Draft guidelines for investments and financial procedures: This provided a framework for us to make informed financial decisions and to ensure compliance with standard accounting procedures.
5. Two Budgets: This provided us with a clearer understanding of our income and expenses as a new presbytery.
6. Job description for finance committee: This provided a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the finance committee, which will help to ensure that our financial decisions are made in the best interest of the presbytery and its mission.

Your expertise and attention to detail have been invaluable, and your commitment to this project has been nothing short of remarkable. The results of your efforts will be felt by the entire presbytery and will serve as a foundation for our future financial success.

Please accept our heartfelt thanks for all that you have done. Your contributions to this project will not be forgotten, and we look forward to your continued involvement in shaping the future of our presbytery.

Sincerely,  
Kirk Woodward and Doris Peterson  
Co-Moderators



Vision Team  
DRAFT minutes 1/24/2023

Attendance

Guests

RE Judy Tharaud  
TE Eileen Lindner  
RE Joan Van Pelt

Members

TE Bill Schramm  
TE Denise Kennedy  
CRE Doris Peterson  
CRE Kirk Woodward  
RE Debbie Murphy  
RE Gayle Griffin  
RE Skip Winder  
TE Jeremy Campbell  
TE Steve Huston  
RE Linwood Bagby  
TE Wanda Lundy

The Vision Team met for its regular January meeting on Tuesday January 24th 2023 at 4PM via Zoom. The meeting was opened with prayer by Rev. Steve Huston.

The **order of the day** was to hear from the **Finance Task Force** to thank them for their hard and through work, and to listen to any concerns which were remaining to insure that nothing gets lost in the transition to the new Finance Team which has begun its work. The **vision team expressed their gratitude** to the Finance Task Force and heard concerns including the need for better communication both internally and externally as we go forward, both between groups of the presbytery as well as between the presbytery and churches, particularly in per capita and mission giving interpretation. Everyone agrees that task of integrating the three former presbyteries financially was much larger than was initially anticipated.

Rev. Jeremy Campbell, Stated Clerk provided an **update on the sale of the former Central Newark** property. This sale is currently the subject of litigation. It remains likely that the sale will be completed in calendar 2023 though closing will be delayed.

Next the Vision team considered the request of the **Institute of Music for Children** that Rev. Ron Thompson be elected as the presbytery's representative to the Institute board. It was clarified that because the institute was founded by a former church of Elizabeth Presbytery, and because of property revision clauses, when the church closed it was set up that the presbytery trustees would have the privilege of sending a board member. It was moved seconded and **VOTED to send Rev. Thompson as our designee board member.**

It was recommended that **Finance Manager RE Liz Hutchinson be our board of pensions employer representative.** This person is the person responsible for completing salary information etc. which must be entered annually. Liz who also serves Highlands Presbytery in a similar capacity has been their employer rep for many year, and our current employer rep Linwood Bagby found that he would need to call Liz to get the information needed to enter information so he supports this plan. It was **VOTED** both designate Liz employer rep and to add this responsibility to her job description.

Lastly there was discussion of the Budget request of the Vision Team in light of the 6% draw limit requested during the Budget meeting. The vision team discussed what could realistically be accomplished during this budget year and focus on key priorities of relationship building. It was moved, seconded and VOTED to revise the budget request to \$29,500 for 2023.

There was discussion of doing a doodle poll to make sure the Vision Team meets when the most members are able to be present.

The meeting was **adjourned with Prayer** at 4:14.

Attest

Jeremy Campbell  
Stated Clerk/ Corporate Secretary

*If you have any questions about this report, contact  
Stated Clerk Jeremy Campbell prior to the meeting. Telephone: 201-599-1111  
Email: jtcampbell@pnenj.org*

## **Commission on Ministry Report to Presbytery**

Presbytery of Northeast New Jersey

February 21, 2023

### **A. Actions Taken by the Transitions Team (Convener Madelynne Lindsey)**

**Cranford:** The COM **APPROVED** the installation commission for the Service of Installation of the Rev. Jin Bae to be held on January 22<sup>nd</sup> at 3:00 PM. Members of the Commission include:

TE Rev. Richard Boyer  
TE Rev. Shelley Gardner  
TE Rev. Doris Glaspy  
TE Rev. Doris Peterson  
RE Rosemary Schultz

**Mideast Evangelical Congregation** - The Team reviewed the Mission Study presented by the members of the congregation and **APPROVED** them to move forward to form a PNC to call an installed pastor.

**First Presbyterian Church – Carlstadt** – The Team reviewed the Discernment Report presented by the team and **APPROVED the RECOMMENDATION** that COM construct a conflict resolution team to work with the members of the Session, the congregation, and the Discernment Team.

### **B. Actions taken by the Administrative Team (Convener Rev. Mike Capron)**

**Paul's Run, Philadelphia/Michelle Wildridge** – The Team voted to **VALIDATE** the ministry at **Paul's Run** in Philadelphia as a position that one could be ordained to. We understand that the CPM will be speaking with Michelle Wildridge about being ordained there.

**Iglesia Presbiteriana en San Sebastian, PR/ Jennie Lee Salas**

The team voted to **VALIDATE** the ministry of Rev. Jennie Lee Salas as a Temporary Supply Pastor at Iglesia Presbiteriana en San Sebastian, PR.

**Elmwood Park**

The team **APPROVED** the warrant to create an Administrative Commission to close this congregation and **RECOMMENDED** that it be presented to Presbytery for approval.

The Team **APPROVED** the request to extend Mark Rudy's service on the Session for a seventh year.

**C. Actions Taken by the Membership Team (Convener Rev. Susan Friedl)**

**Memorial West**

The Membership Team **RECEIVED** Rev. Carson Washington into temporary membership, serving Memorial West and the greater community. Rev. Washington will retain membership in the National Baptist convention.

**Freedom Fellowship**

The Membership Team **RECEIVED** Dr. Samy A. H. Estefanos into membership. Dr. Estefanos lives in the bounds of the presbytery and serves the Freedom Fellowship, a first- and second-generation Arabic and English-speaking congregation.

**First Presbyterian Church, Springfield**

The updated Mission Study was reviewed and discussed. The Team **GRANTED** permission for the congregation to form a Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) to search for an installed Head of Staff.

### **First Presbyterian Church, Ramsey**

The Minister Information Form (MIF) prepared by the Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) was received, discussed, and **APPROVED**.

Honorably Retired (HR) membership status was **GRANTED** to Rev. Thomas Craig.

### **D. General**

The COM voted to move the regular meeting date for April to April 13<sup>th</sup>.

The COM met in an information session with the Memorial West congregation on December 1<sup>st</sup>. There was no regular meeting in December.

## Report of the Commission on Preparation for Ministry

February 21, 2023

1) For Presbytery Vote:

The Commission on Preparation for Ministry, being satisfied with the progress of Michelle Wildridge, and the candidate have passed all standard ordination exams. The CPM presents her for examination for ordination to the office of Minister of the Word and Sacrament. Ms. Wildridge serves as the Chaplain at Paul's Run in Philadelphia. the Commission on Ministry has validated this ministry beyond our congregations, and the Presbytery of Philadelphia has consented to our ordaining Michelle if the way be clear. Michelle is associated with Nuevas Fronteras in North Plainfield.

2) Other actions of the commission for information

The Commission met with inquirer Anthony Falce (Bellville, Fewsmith) and offered advice as he continues his seminary studies and prepared to take Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

## Wildrdge- Brief Statement of Faith: (Revised 2/2023)

As a being in the world created and ordained by God, I believe that the world did not and does not begin with us, but with God, where God is the owner and we are the stewards. We are partners with God. We are to till the soil, care for the people, places, things, and we have a covenant with God for creation. With Moses, God said "I will be your God and you will be MY people."

Within *Creation*, nothing is to be rejected. I also believe that creation is a showing of grace to us. Everything that was created and ordained was done so by God, and is therefore connected to the gracious activity and holy activity of God. Creation, whether the pets we own, the corn we eat, or the stop light that was created by a man, is for our benefit. It gives us something to take care of. As it states in Genesis we are the tillers of the Earth and because of this we are given a command by God because the world is ours to help, cherish and take care of.

I believe in the *Trinity*. I believe that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are God who is three in one. I believe that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are there to help, love, and guide me through my life. I have seen and understand now more than earlier in my life where the trinity has shown up especially as I get older and have a more firm grasp on my theology and the theology of the church.

*Jesus* is the most relatable of the three. Christ went through the human death, but also rose again. I trust in Jesus Christ, fully human and fully divine, sent by God to walk among us. He gathered crowds and small groups, using the technology and familiar images of his day to convey God's love and reign to all. He particularly embraced those labeled by society as outcasts and unbelievers. In my personal faith journey Jesus caring for the outcasts, the marginalized. In my life the idea that Jesus delivers and supports all of creation and not the perfect parts of creation has strengthened my faith on many occasions. He visited the sick and comforted the suffering. As a pastor in the area of end of life, comforting the sick and suffering shows the closeness of Christ to us, and that Christ is there for us even in the most difficult of situations, when there seems to be no hope. Jesus also challenged powerful institutions, calling them out on oppressive bureaucracy and legalism, and back to the heart of their best traditions. In Luke and Matthew's gospels, we seen countless times wherever Jesus calls out oppressive systems, and offers a different way of caring about the world. Ultimately, he was subjected to betrayal, torture, and execution. He willingly accepted a fate he did not deserve, so that we might know mercy and grace, and through this act be once and for all awakened to God's love, saved and redeemed. I trust that God raised Jesus from death into life, giving hope and reassurance for the life to come, and the life today: We are a resurrection people.

Jesus promised that his presence would remain, even when his physical form did not. Because of this, I trust in *the Holy Spirit*, who comforts, guides, and binds together God's people in all places.

*God* is almighty, but sometimes seems distant. But God is always there to help us. God is also forgiving, compassionate, and understanding. I trust in one God who is the creator and sustainer of all worlds. I trust—even when I do not necessarily understand—that this one God is also somehow three: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As such, God reigns over all; God loves all.

I believe the *mission* and my call throughout the church is an example of stewardship. I am a servant of God, a steward of God's will that has been called to bring the love of Christ throughout the world. I believe my calling is with the marginalized community, those who are on the outside of not only society but also in the church. I further believe my call can change, grow, and morph, and in that way I am open to where this journey goes.

I believe in the power of the *sacraments* and the meaning they place upon my faith. The sacraments I believe proclaim grace, give us a place of community with God, and welcome us into the church.

*Baptism*, is a sacrament that I believe started my call. Through baptism, God claims us as beloved children and members of Christ's body, the church, washing us clean from sin as we renounce the power of evil and seek the will and way of God. In baptism we are called to a new way of life as Christ's disciples, sharing the good news of the gospel with all the world as an act of worship.

*Communion*, I believe that communally we remember the death and forgiveness of sins through this sacrament and the love of Christ that is a reminder when we partake in eating the bread and drinking the cup offered by God, our memory of the promises is made present by the Holy Spirit. The Lord's Supper is a sacrament of continuous growth, nourishment and new life. Just as humans need food and drink for nurture and sustenance, Calvin wrote that the Holy Meal is God's way of providing for our maintenance during the whole course of our lives after we have been received into God's family. Both sacraments provide a visible, in fact a graphic, way of presenting God's promises. Through this promise, we continue to proclaim the death and resurrection of Christ, in action, and faith.

*Scripture*, we read these things in God's written word, the Bible, which testifies to Christ, God's living word. I trust in the scriptures and the church as faithful guides to direct my paths closer and closer to God's Kingdom. As a minister, we are called to share the good news and the



scripture, which is “The rule of faith in life.” As a minister I will follow and uphold scripture and proclaim the words inspired by God.

As a follower of the Presbyterian tradition I seek to abide by the tenants of the *Reformed tradition* which are exemplified in our confessions. I seek to listen to the voice and heart of God in the Holy Scriptures, which is the unique and authoritative witness to the triune God fully and finally revealed in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. The Book of Confessions are, “reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do” and the foundation our our tradition.

I live in God’s world, I live to serve God’s will and follow Christ's example of forgiveness of sins, and embrace the Holy Spirit as it embraces us in our daily lives. I trust that God calls together faithful believers in every age to be the church: To worship, pray, fellowship, study, and serve one another and the world. I pray and believe that God, the sacraments, and the tenants of the reformed tradition continue to guide and direct my ministry on whatever path it takes.

INTERIM REPORT OF THE CALVIN LINDEN ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION TO THE  
PRESBYTERY OF NORTHEAST NEW JERSEY  
FEBRUARY 21, 2023

The Administrative Commission of the Calvin Linden Presbyterian Church has met nine times since October of 2022. Seven of those meetings have been over zoom and two of those meetings have been with members of the Congregation. The second meeting was held on Sunday, January 15, 2023 following the 10 AM worship service. Members who were unable to attend in person had the ability to participate online.

The Administrative Commission is working alongside, in conjunction with the Congregation to discern their future. Over the years, the Slovak population of the Community, which was the mainstay of the Linden Calvin Presbyterian Church has changed. Membership at Linden Calvin has declined, with long time members retiring and moving away and in other cases, passing away.

The Administrative Commission is in the process of receiving and reviewing current financial reports, including contributions and expenses, current membership roles and possible opportunities for the church in the future.

An invitation has been sent to Clerk of Session, Anne Kenderes, for a third, in person meeting with the Congregation, either on Monday night, February 27 or Tuesday night, February 28, 2023, at 7:30 PM. Online opportunities would also be made available. The purpose of this meeting would be to bring the Congregation up to date on the work of the Administrative Commission and to begin to lay the groundwork for the final, closing worship service at Calvin Linden.

We, as the Administrative Commission covet the prayers of the Presbytery as we journey alongside the members of Calvin Linden Presbyterian Church as we discern the journey together.

Elder Linda Macari, Rev. Dan Martian, and Elder Skip Winter

## February 2023 Co-Leader Report

I was able to resume my congregational visits in the new year. To date, I have visited a total of 51 pastors and/or sessions. I have worshiped with a total of 45 congregations. To date, I've been able to connect with a total 72 churches. That leaves me with about 25 churches to go.

As I reflect on what I've heard and seen during my visits there are a couple of things that come to mind. First, while the church is called to be the body of Christ, a lot of churches are overwhelmed because they are trying to be the entire body all by themselves. Taking some liberties with Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, I see there is a need to remind ourselves, "There are different kinds of churches, but the same Spirit. There are different ways to serve the needs of your community, but you all serve the same Lord. There are different expressions of the church, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work."

Paul Nixon and Beth Ann Estock wrote a book titled *Weird Church*. I've shared it with several congregations since I finished reading it last month. It explores more than a dozen expressions of the church - from table fellowships to theme park churches. While traditional-institutional churches are dying at a rapid pace, new expressions of the church, what our missional invitation refers to as gospel communities, are taking their place. Since many of these expressions don't require buildings or professional clergy I've been asking myself, what would it look like for the presbytery to help congregations transition from one expression of the church to a new expression of the church in their community?

The second thing I've been reflecting on is the health of our congregations and our presbytery. Early this winter, I was invited into a significant conflict that was developing in one of our member congregations. I also spent a number of hours on the phone coaching congregational leaders through smaller conflicts at other churches. I am thankful I have the help of those on the Synod's Mediation Team and the staff at Lombard Mennonite Peace Center (who trained many of us).

As I reviewed my conflict mediation training materials I was reminded of some important points for our lives together as a presbytery (and congregations). The first is that there will be differences. Second, where there are differences we need more dialogue and less debate because the goal of a debate is victory and the goal of a dialogue is to gain greater understanding. Third, when entering into a dialogue we must be careful not to confuse issues and people. It is okay to challenge ideas and express concern. It is not okay to attack someone's character. For us to continue to develop as a presbytery, we

will need to be mindful of how we relate to one another as siblings in Christ who are called to both speak the truth and to love.

Finally, from an institutional perspective, the Finance Task Force, which was formed by the transition team in the fall of 2019, has completed their time together. A new Finance Committee was oriented in January and is already hard at work to pick up where the task force left off. The Vision Team is currently working on a new job description for an Administrative Operations Committee that could potentially assume the responsibilities of the Personnel committee and the Property and Insurance Committee. This would provide two committees to oversee the institutional needs of the presbytery.

And I am happy to announce that after more than a year of merging, sorting, and verifying data, there is now a directory of our minister members and commissioned pastors. You can find it on our website under the About Us tab. The committees, commissions, and teams have also been updated. You can also find them under the About Us tab and then click on Leadership in the dropdown menu.

Steve Huston  
Organizing Co-Leader

## Stated Clerk's Report February 21st 2023

### Consent Agenda

- 1) Approve the Docket for this meeting.
  - 2) Approve the Minutes of the November Stated Meeting and December/January Special Meeting as circulated.
  - 3) Approve the Excuses collected at the meeting.
  - 4) Receive the Treasurer's Report.
  - 5) Receive the Minutes and report of the Vision Team.
  - 6) Receive the Report of the COM with the exception any Items called out for Presbytery Action.
  - 7) Receive the report of the CPM with the exception any Items called out for Presbytery Action
  - 8) Receive the report of the Organizing Co-Leader and Resource Presbyter.
  - 9) Receive the report of the Stated Clerk and enact the items therein.
  - 10) Receive the interim report of the Administrative Commission serving the Linden Calvin congregation.
- B) Take notice that the Stated Clerk is in receipt of written allegations of offense against 2 teaching elder members of the presbytery.
- C) Elect the following investigating Committees to investigate the allegations received:
- i) Teaching Elders David Jahnke, Valencia Norman, and Ruling Elder Laura Phillips
  - ii) Teaching Elders Kee Boem So and Greg Horn and Ruling Elder Claudia Heffner
- Gloria Tate will serve as alternate in the case that any of the above must back out.
- D) Empower the Stated Clerk, in consultation with the Convener of the Commission on Ministry to appoint members of future Investigating Committees between stated meetings, with any such appointments to be reported at the next stated meeting of the Presbytery.

## **Report of the Nominating Team**

February 15th 2022

### **Co-Moderator**

CRE Doris Peterson (Newark, Elizabeth Ave-Weequahic) Class of 2024

**TE Dan Martian (Livingston, First) Class of 2025**

### **Finance Committee**

TE Rick Boyer (Maplewood, Prospect) Class of 2024

**RE Ruth Ariazza (North Plainfield, Nuevas Fronteras) Class of 2024**

RE Rick Friedl (Ridgewood, First) Class of 2025

CRE Martha Day (Montclair, Central) Class of 2026

Also TE Denise Kennedy, RE Judy Tharaud serve by virtue of office.

(Please note all slots for Ruling Elders on finance committee are full, additional members, if any, must be teaching elders)