

September 2023 Co-Leader Report

I imagined things around the presbytery might slow down during the summer while church programs were taking a break, pastor's were vacationing, and church committees didn't meet. That was not the reality. The time since our last stated meeting has been filled responding to numerous phone calls and emails. Most issues could be resolved quickly, "What's the password for posting a position on www.mynextcallpcusa.org?" (the answer is callfinder2022). Other questions were more complicated and involved research and conversations with representatives from places like the Board of Pensions and the Presbyterian Foundation. Some issues had to be resolved in person (like the sprinkler inspection for an unoccupied church in Bayonne) and so I spent a good deal of my time this summer on the road visiting with sessions, church committees, and pastors. I also got to do some pulpit supply, a couple of last minute fill-ins for a baptism and communion, and attend some congregational celebrations.

When I wasn't on the road resourcing pastors and congregations or responding to calls and emails I was busy with the continued organizational work of the Presbytery. The Administrative Operations Committee was unboarded in June and has begun the necessary work to make sure the Presbytery's policies are in compliance with changes to the Book of Order that took effect this summer. They have also been working to evaluate the Presbytery's staff in order to make informed decisions about future staffing needs, staffing models, and compensation.

Finally, I have been working with presbytery leaders and clerks from around the presbytery and the synod to discuss and create sample policies for mid-councils and congregations in regards to anti-racism, anti-harassment, and boundary training. In addition to these specific policies I have been working on a "Policy on Policies" for the PNENJ that reflects the aspirations expressed in the missional invitation.

To that end, I am also currently reading *Many Voices, One Song* by Jerry Koch-Gonzalez and Ted Rau. The book explores the topic of Sociocracy, a system of self-governance that distributes power throughout an organization in order to create decision making that works for everyone. The more I read, the more I see our own polity following many of the principles outlined in the book. Yet, there are still areas where our polity prevents all voices from being heard and listened to, especially those who have historically been silenced by the "rules".

Steve Huston
Organizing Co-Leader