

The Vine

NEWS FROM PRESBYTERY OF THE JAMES

*I am the vine;
you are the branches.*

John 15:5

Barbee-Watkins Named Lead Presbyter

Commissioners at a special meeting on May 17 voted to extend a call to the Reverend Dr. Floretta “Flo” Barbee-Watkins to serve as lead presbyter for vision and collaboration. She arrived June 27, with enthusiasm and an open heart for meeting the people of our presbytery and helping us put our new mission into practice.

A native of Atlanta, Barbee-Watkins received a Master of Divinity with an emphasis in homiletics and Christian education from Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary. In 2020, she earned a doctorate in education in organizational leadership from Northcentral University.

Throughout her ministry, Barbee-Watkins has served the Church with heart and soul in a variety of ways.

For 18 years she was the pastor of Seigle Avenue Presbyterian Church, now known as “the Avenue,” in Charlotte, North Carolina. She is a 20-year veteran of the US Air National Guard, retiring in 2017 as deputy wing chaplain. Most recently, she was the transitional general presbyter for Presbytery of Detroit.

In 2013, Barbee-Watkins was elected the first African American clergywoman moderator of Presbytery of Charlotte. She has served as co-moderator of PC(USA)’s Advocacy Committee for Women’s Concerns and is a member of the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

The role Barbee-Watkins fills is new, created in 2021 through the presbytery’s strategic plan. The plan split the formerly combined role of general presbyter and stated clerk into separate positions and added two new presbyter positions. [See Chalfant and



Rev. Dr. Floretta “Flo” Barbee-Watkins

Ring Complete Presbyter Triumvirate, page 3.]

As lead presbyter, Barbee-Watkins has oversight of the presbytery office, staff,

budget, and ministries. She also serves as staff liaison to the Committee on Preparation for Ministry.

When introducing Barbee-Watkins as the selected candidate at the May meeting, search committee co-moderator Barbara Flynt said, “We overwhelmingly felt the spirit calling [her] to be our new lead presbyter.”

Jess Cook, also co-moderator of the committee, echoed Flynt’s comments, adding, “Flo is so full of vision that this time feels like fertile soil. I’m excited for folks to get to know her.”

Barbee-Watkins is looking forward to that as well. She is planning events around the presbytery to meet and learn about our congregation leaders

See BARBEE-WATKINS on page 7



Members of the Presbyter Search Committee invited Flo Barbee-Watkins to Camp Hanover during the final phase of the interview process for the lead presbyter position. Pictured are (front row) Beverly Bullock, Flo Barbee-Watkins, Peggy Fox, (back row) Barbara Flynt, Jen Rowe, Ken Henry, Noah Morgan, and Jess Cook.

STATED MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Presbytery Approves Three Candidates for Ordination, Elects Interim Stated Clerk

The 111th stated meeting of Presbytery of the James was held virtually on June 14. A small contingent of commissioners participated in person at Westminster Church (Richmond) to test a hybrid setup for the future. Moderator Dan Jordanger (Providence, Gum Spring) called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and led the presbytery in prayer.

Melissa Phillips (Salisbury Church), moderator of the Examinations Committee, welcomed new ministers to the presbytery:

- Nicholas Cammarata (Presbytery of Mackinac), member-at-large
- Inger Manchester (Salem Presbytery), pastor of Rockfish Church
- Kelsey Hawisher-Faul (Presbytery of the Peaks), member-at-large
- Peter Hawisher-Faul (Presbytery of the Peaks), member-at-large
- Daniel Mensah Awuah (Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana), pastor of Holy Trinity Church

Rev. Keli Shipley Cooper, candidates Jay Morgan and Rachel Sutphin, and Ruling Elder Kenna Payne led the presbytery in worship. Cindy Corell, PC(USA) mission co-worker serving Haiti, delivered the message.

The body divided into groups to hear preaching by three candidates for ordination to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament:

- Kelley Connelly (Shenandoah Presbytery) to serve as UKirk campus minister at Virginia Commonwealth University and Second Church (Richmond)
- Jay Morgan (Second Church, Richmond) to serve as resident chaplain at Westminster Canterbury in Richmond
- Rachel Sutphin (Presbytery of the Peaks) to serve as a covenant pastor at First Church (Charlottesville)

Each was approved.

Robbie D'Orazio (Swift Creek Church), was welcomed as a candidate for ministry. Rev. Nicole Ball, member at large, gave the charge to the candidate and Ruling Elder John Burns (Swift Creek Church) offered a prayer.

Ruling Elder Marilyn Johns (Gayton Kirk) was elected interim stated clerk effective July 1 following the retirement of current clerk Fred Holbrook.

The Committee on Nominations presented several names for open positions: Wayne Johnson (Eastminster) to the Commission on Ministry; Rev. Joseph Taber

(Culpeper) to the Westminster Presbyterian Homes Board; Natasha Taylor (Salisbury) to the Leadership Connections Team; and Rev. Lauren Ramseur (Voices of Jubilee) to the Mission & Service Team. All were approved.

The business of the day included the following:

- Recognition of Deborah Rexrode, former associate for stewardship.
- Recognition of Rev. Fred Holbrook upon his retirement and the conclusion of his service to the presbytery.
- Presentation by David Staniunas, records archivist with the Presbyterian Historical Society and assistant stated clerk, PC(USA).
- Approval of a motion presented by the Trustees of Presbytery of the James, Inc. to ratify the action taken on December 6, 2021, to pay off the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program (PILP) church mortgage grants of four historically black churches.
- Approval granted to commissioned pastors to administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, when authorized by the Commissioned Pastor Committee and when invited by the session, in a church in which they are not commissioned to serve.
- Approval of a four percent increase in the minimum compensation criteria for 2023.



Rev. Nicholas Cammarata



Rev. Kelsey Hawisher-Faul



Rev. Peter Hawisher-Faul



Rev. Daniel Mensah Awuah



Kelley Connelly



Jay Morgan



Rachel Sutphin



Robbie D'Orazio



Marilyn Johns

Chalfant and Ring Complete Presbyter Triumvirate

At a special meeting on August 9 via Zoom, commissioners approved two recommendations from the Presbyter Search Committee: electing Barbara Chalfant as presbyter for congregational life and Leigh Anne Ring as presbyter for relational care.

A graduate of Union Presbyterian Seminary and a certified Christian educator, Chalfant has served congregations in Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Virginia. Her most recent position was associate for mission for the Presbytery of West Virginia where she worked with ministries involved in peacemaking, social justice, hunger action, disaster response, and serving older adults.

Chalfant will guide and equip presbytery members and ministries in exploring new opportunities for enriching congregational life. She also will serve as the staff liaison to the Committee on Nominations, the Committee on Representation, and the Youth Council.

Ring recently earned a Master of Divinity from Union Presbyterian Seminary. She also holds a Master of Arts in Christian education and was certified as a Christian educator in 2001.



Barbara Chalfant



Leigh Anne Ring

Ring served three Presbyteries of the James congregations as an educator: Second (Petersburg), Bon Air, and River Road. She also has been a member of the Committee on Ministry and served as presbytery moderator in 2020.

Ring's role will be to provide pastoral support and oversight of presbytery ministers, educators, chaplains, and commissioned pastors. She will serve as staff

liaison to the Commission on Ministry.

"The process of selecting Barbara and Leigh Anne involved careful deliberation and guidance by the Spirit," shared Presbyter Search Committee co-chair Barbara Flynt.

After interviewing by teleconference eleven candidates for the positions, the committee invited some to a second round of interviews, held in person, in June before making their final selections..

Ring begins work August 15. Chalfant will join the staff September 6.

Learn more about these additions to the presbytery team on our website, presbyteryofthejames.com.

Living Life So That Others See Jesus in You

What is evangelism to you and your congregation?

Rev. Dr. Ray Jones, director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency's Office of Theology, Formation, & Evangelism, says "the very word that means to declare good news and glad tidings" has been twisted by contemporary culture into something different, even ugly.

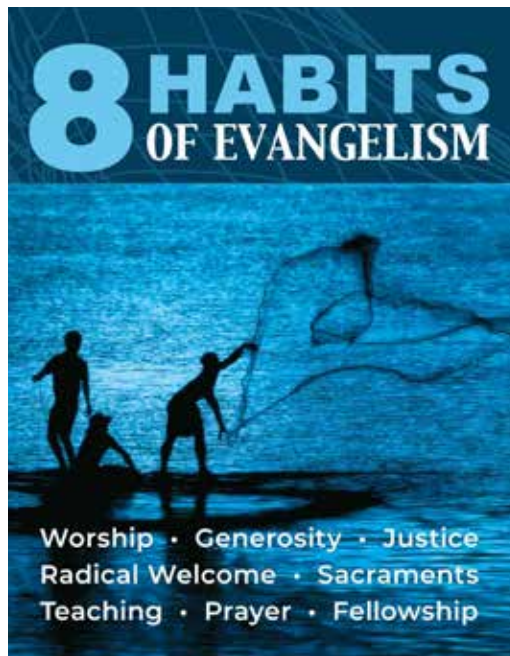
Many see evangelism as a tool to bring more people into church, so churches create committees to carry out the effort. In more extreme uses, evangelism represents "militant or crusading zeal" as defined by Merriam-Webster.

Instead, Jones urges us to look at evangelism in a new light: living life in such a way that others see Jesus in you, and because of that, they want to follow Christ. He says this is not the job of a committee, but of all Christians.

"It's about how we show up in our neighborhoods with love and justice and hope," Jones told Presbyterians

Today magazine. "It's truly going to be in meeting the needs of people around us that we will find ourselves living into what it means to be the body of Christ."

Jones is one of the creators and authors of 8 Habits of Evangelism, the first evangelism resource produced for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in more than a decade.



Through the titular habits, the resource invites readers on a journey into the love of God, the lives of our neighbors, and the transformation of creation.

The habits are:

- Radical Welcome
- Worship
- Sacraments
- Prayer
- Justice
- Teaching
- Fellowship
- Generosity

8 Habits of Evangelism is available online and as an ebook. Each habit includes an opening prayer, scriptural reference, and discussion questions. The materials are available in English, Korean, and Spanish.

Individuals and groups both will benefit from studying and living the resource.

Find 8 Habits of Evangelism at 8habits.org.

Christian Hospitality at Core of Camp Hanover's New Mission and Strategic Plan

Following a nearly yearlong process to learn from stakeholders including parents, donors, staff, and retreat organizers, Camp Hanover's board of directors affirmed the foundational pillars of the Camp's ministry and defined three core beliefs in creating a strategic plan to guide Camp Hanover's work into the future.

"As we developed our strategic plan, it was important that we honor the 65 years of ministry at Camp Hanover, while defining what makes Camp Hanover unique and how our ministry impacts the people we serve and the world we live in," said Jennifer Gwyn, president of the Board.

A Solid Foundation Built on Love, Relationships, and the Sacred Space of God's Creation

Camp Hanover's ministry is rooted in the love of Jesus Christ and the call to love one another. The time-tested, small-group model driving Camp Hanover experiences allows every child of God to answer this call and form deep relationships. The natural beauty of Camp Hanover is sacred space, an outdoor sanctuary which invites and inspires people to grow in relationship with God and each other.

Digging into this foundation—one built on love, relationships, and the sacred space of God's creation—helped the board articulate and illuminate three core beliefs.

The first belief focuses on welcome and inclusion. Since its beginning in 1957 as a racially integrated camp, welcoming and valuing all people has been key to Camp Hanover's ministry. Just as Christ tells us to love our neighbors as ourselves, Camp Hanover strives to be inclusive of everyone, with no exceptions.

Formation by shared transformational experiences is the core of the second belief. Wherever they are, people are shaped by the experience they share with one another. The community-building and leadership skills practiced in Camp Hanover's small groups are experiences like no other, molding each child of God and equipping them for the world beyond camp.



Campers enjoy quiet time together in their longhouse during a recent week of summer camp.

The third belief is about our connection to creation. As we grow in our relationships with God and others, this connection is revealed. We awake to opportunities to respond to God's call to be stewards of the earth. In turn, nature's power and beauty inspire people to grow deeper in their relationship with God and one another.

Beliefs Inspire New Mission and Goals

These beliefs inspired the new mission for the camp: to create inclusive community, inspire each other to live in God's love, and equip all people to live out God's call.

In pursuit of this mission, Camp Hanover has established four goals for the near future:

- Creating a year-round invitation to camp by expanding faith-based programming
- Developing a deeper engagement with the secular community through robust educational opportunities
- Offering transformational experiences to more people
- Investing in stewardship of our physical and human resources



Core Beliefs

- Welcome and inclusion
- Formation by experience
- Connection to creation

If successful in this mission, the Board's vision is a world where all people know God's love and embrace Beloved community: a community in which everyone is valued and cared for, free from poverty, hunger, and hate.

"This next chapter of the Camp Hanover story is an exciting one. Embarking on this mission and achieving these goals means more people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds will have the opportunity to experience the power of camp," said Doug Walters, executive director. "And transformed by God through their experience, they'll go out and change the world."

Learn more about the programs and events Camp Hanover offers to carry out its mission at camphanover.org.

Gratitude to Holbrook for Interim Service to Presbytery

Interim General Presbyter Fred Holbrook retired June 30.

This marks the end of 40 years of ordained service to the Lord and to PC(USA). After receiving a Master of Divinity from Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond, Holbrook was called to service in Kansas, North Carolina, and Virginia, including 12 years as executive director of Massanetta Springs Camp and Conference Center in Harrisonburg. He took on the call of interim presbyter in December 2018.

We are grateful for his faithful leadership to our presbytery during this time of transition. Interim periods provide opportunities for self-reflection, self-examination, and growth and can be challenging.

“Thank you for your willingness to walk this stage of the journey with us and to prepare us for what is ahead,” shared Mary Newbern-Williams, covenant pastor of First United Church. “You have helped us to appreciate how the past has shaped the present and how the present can shape the future.”



Rev. Dr. Fred Holbrook

Holbrook’s sincerity and empathy served the presbytery well as it responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, developed a strategic plan, and discerned God’s will for the way forward.

“We are blessed that he is retiring within the bounds of

this presbytery so eventually we’ll get to see him again, I hope,” said Kenna Payne, moderator of the presbytery’s Mission Council, during the June presbytery meeting.

Holbrook will be remembered for his integrity, sensitivity, exceptional knowledge of the Book of Order, willingness to provide a listening ear, and care as pastor to our pastors. His commitment to justice and equity has created opportunities for continued growth and progress.

We know that God will continue to guide and bless his life and wish him a long retirement with his family.

Presbytery Representatives Participate in 225th PC(USA) Assembly

Eight volunteers represented Presbytery of the James at the 225th General Assembly of PC(USA) which concluded July 9. We appreciate their service to the larger Church.

Minister Commissioners

- Nicole Ball, member-at-large
- Beverly Bullock, honorably retired
- Alex Evans, Second Church, Richmond

Ruling Elder Commissioners

- Lamar Lockhart, Chester Church
- J. R. Marker, Fairfield Church
- Cherry Peters, Second Church, Richmond
- Barry Parks, Westminster Church, Charlottesville (alternate commissioner)

Young Adult Advisory Delegate

- Molly Zweckbronner

Look for more information from the presbytery about the assembly in the months to come.

The 226th General Assembly will be held June 29 through July 6, 2024 in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Celebrate 65 Years of Ministry at Camp Hanover

In observance of its 65th anniversary, Camp Hanover is holding a special party-themed Homecoming for September 2 through 5. They invite everyone throughout the presbytery to come together in intergenerational fellowship to celebrate this milestone.

Bring your family and enjoy the whole weekend or come just for the day, your choice. Fun activities are planned for each day of the event. Saturday, September 3, will feature the official party, complete with birthday cake.

Register at camphanover.org/homecoming-2022.



Legacy of Closed Church Continues Through Generous Gifts

The closing of a church is not a joyful occasion. Grief and sadness weigh heavily on our hearts. However, we have faith in the power of God to create new life from loss, just as God resurrected Jesus.

As the session of New Covenant Church in Chesterfield planned their church's closing in 2020, they listened for the voice of the Holy Spirit. God inspired multiple ways to keep their ministry alive.

The 48 congregation members were welcomed to Southminster Church, a short drive from New Covenant.

The session gifted the church bell to Camp Hanover, where it was installed in May 2021 and rings three times per day to alert summer campers to mealtime.

The church sanctuary once again hosts joyful voices singing praises to God. Signs and Wonders Ministries, a non-denominational church worshipping in various locations in Chesterfield for 15 years, purchased the property in February 2022 and held their dedication in May 2022. They also plan to renovate a home on the property to serve as a temporary residence for people who need a helping hand.

In their dissolution plan, New Covenant's session recommended organizations to support with the revenue

from the sale of their property. Earlier this year, Presbytery of the James distributed the proceeds according to those recommendations.

Two thirds of the sale income, or \$400,000, funded a permanent endowment managed by the Presbyterian Foundation. Distributions from the endowment will benefit three organizations: Camp Hanover; Sunnyside retirement community in Harrisonburg; and Presbytery of the James's Disaster Relief Ministry, in conjunction with PC(USA)'s Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

The remaining amount, \$270,000, created the New Covenant Presbyterian Church Legacy Fund. The fund, managed by Southminster Church's investment group, will support mission activities.

"While New Covenant is no longer an active church within Presbytery of the James, its legacy and the vision of all who served the church will continue for years to come," shared Susan Edwards, former clerk of session.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and do not rely on your own insight.
In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.

Proverbs 3:5-6

We are grateful for the New Covenant Church congregation's faithful service for so many years and their generosity in sharing their resources. The chosen ministries will be blessed into the future by these gifts.

Beneficiaries of New Covenant Church Endowments

Presbytery of the James Disaster Relief Ministry

for aiding response to emergencies

Camp Hanover

for camperships, financial assistance for children to attend summer camp

Southminster Church

for mission activities

Sunnyside Retirement Communities

for financial assistance to residents



Making nature crafts is one of many activities kids enjoy at Camp Hanover. The endowment from New Covenant will allow more children to experience this special place.



Residents who have outlived their financial resources can continue to live at Sunnyside with dignity and respect with help from New Covenant's endowment.

Barbee-Watkins

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and members and give you time to meet her.

“My goal is to communicate with you clearly, effectively, and regularly about where [presbytery staff] are, what we’re doing, and how we’re seeking to serve the Presbytery of the James,” she remarked in a video message to the presbytery a few weeks into her role.

Her complete message is available in video and written formats on the presbytery website.

The presbytery welcomes your prayers for Flo Barbee-Watkins as she assumes this exciting new role and for our staff and committees as we seek to fulfill our mission to support leaders, congregations, and ministries in growing followers of Jesus Christ.



Flo Barbee-Watkins (right) is married to Montressa (left). Their daughter, Erin, and her wife, Leah, are expecting their first child this summer. Flo’s hobbies include cooking, grilling and smoking meats, golfing, travel, and camping in her RV. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated.

FLO’S FAVORITE SCRIPTURE

For *if you keep silent* at this time,
relief and deliverance
will rise for the Jews
from another place,
but you
and your father’s family
will perish.

Who knows?

Perhaps you have come
to royal dignity

*for just such a time
as this.*

Esther 4:14



Mission Council invited presbytery committee and ministry moderators to meet Flo Barbee-Watkins during her first week as lead presbyter. Participants enjoyed refreshments while sharing information about themselves, their role in the presbytery, and their hopes for the future. Pictured are (front row) Barbara Espigh, staff; Marilyn Johns, interim stated clerk; Mary Jane Winter, Mission and Service Team moderator; Cindy Hollingshead, accountant; Janet James, Mission Council vice moderator; Flo Barbee-Watkins; (back row) Franklin Reding, staff; Doug Walters, Camp Hanover executive director; Glenna Finnicum, Commission on Ministry moderator; Dan Jordanger, presbytery moderator; and Jess Cook, Search Committee co-moderator.

Called to Cultivate

A new garden at Chester Church has produced more than 1,200 pounds of vegetables and fruit. The harvest is shared with the community through the church’s Grace Café food ministry and Chesterfield Food Bank.





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See, the former things have come to pass,
 and new things I now declare;
 before they spring forth,
 I tell you of them.

Isaiah 42:9

Send submissions, corrections, or requests for additional copies to
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World Mission Ministry Offers Opportunities to Love Your Neighbor

The New Face of Mission

Are today's mission activities more effective at satisfying individuals' needs for personal transformation than making lasting differences? Explore the "new face of mission" through a webinar hosted August 24 by our Presbyterian mission partner in Guatemala, CEDEPCA. Learn how to lay a foundation for more faithful and effective missions through companionship, cultural humility, and co-development with other communities.

International Peacemaker Visit

PC(USA) International Peacemaker Efi Latsoudi is coming to Presbytery of the James in October to share information about her work with refugees. Latsoudi helped found Lesvos Solidarity, a grass-roots organization in Greece that runs programs for refugees and advocates for refugee rights.



Efi Latsoudi

Learn more about these events and register at presbyteryofthejames.com/world-mission.

