

Dear Friends in Christ,

I pray your summer is going well and your ministries are filled with grace and love. Your Mission Council continues to faithfully carry out its work during this time of transition. If you have any questions regarding the following, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Leadership & Staffing Transitions

With the resignation of Barry Parks, Temporary Stated Clerk, effective July 31, we recommended that, beginning August 1, Kerry Foster serve as both Temporary General Presbyterian and Temporary Stated Clerk, and Barbara Espigh take on the role of Temporary Assistant to the Stated Clerk alongside her administrative responsibilities. This interim structure will help us navigate the staffing challenges posed by our current budget and provide the necessary continuity. A formal transition plan and long-term staffing recommendations will be presented to the Mission Council by Personnel in September. Personnel will meet for an exit interview with Barry and a coordination meeting with Kerry and Barbara.

Nominations & Administrative Commissions

Several leadership roles remain open on the Committee on Nominations—Vice Moderator (RE, MAL), Region C TE, and Region D RE. Lynne Clements is helping with recruitment. The Forest Hill Administrative Commission needs at least three new members starting in September; those with experience in legal, financial, or pastoral fields would be especially helpful. Please consider how you might serve.

Policy & Manual Updates

We voted to recommend a revised Conflict of Interest Policy for approval at the October presbytery meeting. We also noted that updates to the Manual of Operations are needed to align with the Resource Management Policy. We will have this ready for review and approval at the October meeting as well.

Budget & Financial Oversight

We approved two new members for the Budget Subcommittee: Barb Young (Hebron) and John Howe (Fredericksburg). The subcommittee has begun drafting the 2026 budget. The subcommittee will present a draft budget to the Mission Council at our August meeting.

The subcommittee sent out budget request paperwork in early July with a deadline for the first week of August. With the new Resource Management Policy mandating a balanced budget, the Presbytery should expect potential reductions in many areas. As a

reminder, the POJ directed the Mission Council to plan for a full-time Stated Clerk and a full-time General Presbyter.

Support for Small Churches

We approved a \$5,000 Small Church Grant to Hebron Church to help renovate the playground used by their weekday preschool. It's a tangible way to support a congregation's outreach to young families in their community.

Other Reports

- Session Records Review compliance remains low, with only 38 of 97 churches submitting records by the deadline.
- Unplanned building maintenance expenses have arisen at the POJ office, including a failed alarm system and potential roof repairs.

As always, thank you for your faithful service across the Presbytery. These are times of transition and discernment, and I remain grateful to serve alongside you.

As fast as we can and as slow as we must, trusting in the grace of our Lord,

Joel Morgan

Moderator, Mission Council

Presbytery of the James