

Summary of 121st stated meeting of the Presbytery of the James October 18, 2025
Hybrid Meeting at the First Presbyterian Church, Charlottesville, VA

For the full details of the reports consult the links for this stated meeting.

The day began at 9:30 am with the Call to Order presided by TE Josh Andrezewski with words of welcome, housekeeping announcements, appointing RE Jim Allison as Parliamentarian. Moderator Josh Andrezewski welcomed those here in person and online.

Quorum was established by the Stated clerk and the meeting opened with prayer from the Moderator, followed with our Land Acknowledgment.

TE Joel Morgan, the Mission Council Moderator, moved the adoption of the agenda. TE Carson Rhyne requested an addition to the docket for an election for Stated Clerk but said request was ruled out of order. The agenda was adopted by acclamation.

The worship service took place, containing the Necrology Report reading and Communion.

During the break, the body was instructed to read the Sexual Harassment Policy contained in the reports.

The meeting reconvened with Stated Clerk Kerry Foster moving the Consent Agenda which was adopted without objection.

The Committee on Representation TE Crystal Varner Parker presented their report, emphasizing the ongoing need to allow all voices to speak at meetings, encouraging Ruling Elders to exercise this time.

Order of the Day at 11:00 AM. The Moderator recognized TE Nicole Ball for report of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry on page 16. TE Nicole Ball presented Chris Burton for examination for candidacy. After discussion, Chris Burton was determined to have completed all steps for this process and was voted into candidacy. Proper affirmations followed, with the Moderator, TE Robert Johnson, and TE Britt Pratt Keyes leading this portion of the process. Chris Burton's name was then enrolled in the presbytery.

A second motion was moved to waive the time requirement of candidacy for this candidate. Following a time of discussion a vote was taken, with the tally exceeding the $\frac{3}{4}$ majority vote required for this action.

The Moderator called on RE James Luckett, moderator of Examinations Committee. The committee presented Levi Bannerman for examination for ordination. The process proceeded and the body voted to approve Levi Bannerman ready to be ordained as Chaplain at UVA Health Systems Hospital. A prayer by the Moderator concluded this action.

At 12:00, Moderator Josh called on Keenan Rodgers from the Board of Pensions. He spoke briefly on the shared ministry program when two or more churches share a pastor who serves them full time. He also recognized the challenges of the ministry and the relationship with Spring Health - using the sessions with a counselor and counseling, and sabbatical resources and self-care resources. Lastly, Monday begins annual enrollment through November 7th.

The schedule of the meeting was slightly altered, with a 12:05 Lunch break and resumption of the meeting at 1 PM.

Presbytery Moderator Josh called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM to have the reports from the Stated Clerk and the Presbyter's Report presented. TE Temporary General Presbyter/Stated Clerk Kerry Foster identified the pages of each report. From these reports, these observations: If the Balancing of Commissioners was fully complied with, the smaller congregations have a larger voice in each meeting. TE Kerry Foster also wanted to "introduce" Linda Kurtz Burch, Mark Swart, Rachel Thompson Orfield, Aggie Walker, and Joel Morgan, whose names we had read but had not let them be seen. Until now!

Final portion of the report from the TGP/TSC was the need for hosting congregations for the February, June, and October 2026 meetings of the presbytery.

TE Russ Kerr gave a report for the Leadership Connections Team. Lifting up the specific ministry of PACE at VCU highlighted what a vibrant, well-funded campus ministry looks like.

Moderator recognizes TE Joel Morgan for the Mission Council, specifically noting the body that just a year ago, our meetings were not as civil. The core message from Mission Council is this: "Continue to do right by God and you in the work that comes before you; ask how we can serve, especially from our Ruling Elders; continue looking for folks to serve on some of the various committees of the Presbytery."

On November 13th, fully virtual meeting for the budget. This is a Special Called Meeting. Please come to a listening session. The budget is already posted on the POJ website.

Moderator of Presbytery and Moderator of Mission Council will appoint members to a special budget missions group to report back to the Presbytery.

First reading of the Manual of Operations is available. TE Charles Grant updated the manual to the recently adopted financial process and addressed dated formats of how we work together. Listening sessions of the manual in January and a plan to vote on it in February. Questions, please reach out to someone on the Mission Council.

Noted in the report was the selection of Trustward to handle the financial recordkeeping of the POJ, replacing Cindy Hollingswood after two decades of service.

With the resignation of the Stated Clerk, the Mission Council appointed Kerry Foster to be the temporary Stated Clerk and Barbara Espigh to be the Assistant to the Stated Clerk. A job description for the Transitional General Presbyter/Stated Clerk is now on the website and will be up for a vote in the Called Meeting in November.

Three separate overtures to the 2026 General Assembly related to the PC(USA)'s approach to how we do mission work in our new reality. Each was presented for a vote on whether to send them to the Assembly for denominational discernment. The overtures passed and will be presented to the GA. Details of overtures are in the packet.

A final exhortation from TE Joel Morgan is for us to "do less emailing and more phone calling!"

The Anti-Racism Committee co-moderators, RE Joslyn Shipman and TE Laura Sugg, first thanked TE Robert Johnson for his work with ARC and then presented a slight change in the previously adopted policy concerning who is required to take the training. The motion passed.

Moderator recognized TE Gordon Mapes for the report on the Commission on Ministry. The Pastoral Care fund is currently around \$14,000.00, and TEs were reminded this is for them to use for support when adversity arises.

Processes and programs in the works include updating the Pulpit Supply list, Listening Team protocols, shared ministry models, and the invitation for phone calls seeking further information.

Moderator recognized TE Kate Fiedler, Committee on Nominations. Be in touch with her or a member of the committee to find places to serve within the POJ.

The CON nominated CRE Peggy Fox as Moderator and TE Alex Creator as Vice Moderator for 2026. There were no nominations from the floor, and these two were elected to serve in 2026.

The slate of commissioners for GA was presented, and there were no nominations from the floor. The vote carried.

Thanks to those who are serving, and there will be a nominations report at the November meeting.

TE Mary Jane Winter brought the report from MAST, with the highlight on the mission trip to Guatemala in conjunction with CEDEPCA. This was one of the areas that POJ Hunger Funds supported. The images and storyline presented us with people managing their lives with dignity and hope, and the acceptance of help when offered, and hospitality given in exchange.

Presbytery Moderator thanked those present in the room and on Zoom for the gift of giving of their time to be present today and do the work of the POJ in community. Thanks to First Church Charlottesville and Meadows.

Completed agreed-upon business. The declared meeting of POJ is adjourned with prayer by the Presbytery Moderator at 2:14 pm.

And, by the way, thank you all who attended—here is our “statistical snapshot of the meeting:” Attendees @ First Presbyterian Church, Charlottesville, VA for October 18, 2025, POJ meeting of the Presbytery of the James:

- 85 Teaching elders (40 in person, 45 via ZOOM)
- 79 RE Commissioner (30 in person, 49 via ZOOM)
 - Of these, 70 Commissioners were from 54 of our 97 sessions –
 - (24 in person, 46 via ZOOM)
 - 3 RE moderators of POJ committees, commissions, etc. (3 in person;
 - none via ZOOM)
 - 2 RE Certified Christian Educators (1 in person, 1 via ZOOM)
 - 4 CREs commissioned to congregations (2 in person, 2 via ZOOM)
- 2 Corresponding Members (Rev. Brint Pratt Keyes from the Shenandoah

- Presbytery in person and Rev. Renita Page of UCC via ZOOM).
 - 1 POJ Staff person who is not counted in any other manner (1 in person)
 - 22 Visitors/Guests (15 in person, 7 via ZOOM)
- The total attendees were 189 people (87 in person, 102 via ZOOM)

And this from your Temporary Stated Clerk: My counting of the room just before our adjournment totaled 56 people in the room, a total “retention rate” of 64% (which is pretty good!)

Thank you all!

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Kerry Foster, Temporary General Presbyter and Stated Clerk