



*Our Mission: To support leaders, congregations, and ministries
in growing followers of Jesus Christ who joyfully live out God's mission in the world.*

121st Stated Meeting • Saturday, October 18, 2025 • Hybrid Format

Physical Location: First Church, Charlottesville/Zoom

500 Park St., Charlottesville, VA 22902

Co-hosts: First Church, Charlottesville and Meadows Church

Section II – Agenda and Reports

Agenda

- 9:15 Pre-meeting Preparation and Instructions for Hybrid Meeting
- 9:30 Call to Order, Prayer, Land Acknowledgment & Welcome
Adoption of the Agenda
Welcome of First-time Commissioners, Corresponding Members, and Guests
Welcome to New Minister Members
Recognition of Retirements
- 9:45 Worship w/ Necrology & Lord's Supper (section I of packet)
- 10:30 Break
Self-Guided Reading of [Sexual Harassment Policy](#) (pp. 20-30)
- 10:45 [Consent Agenda](#) (p.7)
- 10:50 Report of the [Stated Clerk](#) (pp. 8-9) & [Presbyter](#) (p.12) Kerry Foster
- 10:55 [Committee on Representation](#) (pp. 13-15) Crystal Varner Parker
- ORDER OF THE DAY: Examinations
- 11:00 [Committee on Preparation for Ministry](#) (p. 16) Nicole Ball
Examination for Candidacy - Chris Burton
- [Commission on Ministry](#) (pp. 16-19) James Luckett
Examination for Ordination - [Levi Bannerman](#) (pp. 30-31)
- ORDER OF THE DAY
- 11:50 [Board of Pensions Presentation](#) Keenan Rodgers
- ORDER OF THE DAY
- 12:00 Lunch
- 12:45 [Leadership Connections Team](#) (pp. 36-38) Russ Kerr
- 12:50 [Mission Council](#) (pp.38-41) Joel Morgan
[Overtures](#) (pp. 42-47)
- 1:30 [Anti-Racism Committee](#) (pp.81-85) Joslyn Shipman
Laura Sugg
- 1:40 [Commission on Ministry](#) (pp.16-19) Rosalind Banbury
- 1:50 [Committee on Nominations](#) (pp. 86-87) Kate Fiedler
- 2:00 [MAST Report](#) (pp.88-90) Guatemala Team
Guatemala
- 2:10 Adjournment and Closing Prayer

Meet Today's Leadership

- Jim Allison**: Parliamentarian, Co-Moderator of COM: Ruling Elder, Olivet
Rev. Josh Andrzejewski: POJ Moderator, 2025; Associate Pastor, First, Richmond
Rev. Annie Arvin: Zoom Host; Director of Admissions, UPSem
Rev. Nicole Ball: Moderator of CPM; Member at Large
Rev. Rosalind Banbury: Moderator, CPR subcommittee of COM; Honorably Retired
Levi Bannerman: Candidate for Ordination; Western North Carolina Presbytery
Chris Burton: Inquirer; First United
Rev. Kate Fiedler: Moderator of CON; Associate Pastor, Second, Richmond
Rev. David Forney: Pastor, First, Charlottesville
Rev. Kerry Foster: Bridge Stated Clerk/Temporary General Presbyter, POJ
Peggy Fox: POJ Vice-Moderator, 2025; CRE, Woodville
Rev. Tom Goodrich: Pastor, Meadows
Rev. Russ Kerr: LCT; Student Engagement Coordinator, The Pace Center, VCU
James Luckett: Moderator of COM Examinations; Ruling Elder, Tuckahoe
Rev. Inger Manchester: Worship Leadership; Pastor, Rockfish
Webb Moore: President, Trustees of Presbytery of the James, Inc.; Ruling Elder, Second Richmond
Rev. Joel Morgan: Moderator of Mission Council; Pastor, Campbell Memorial
Rev. Crystal Varner Parker: Moderator of COR; Pastor, Providence Forge
Rev. Kelly-Ann Rayle: Co-Moderator of COM; Laboring Outside the Bounds, Elmhurst Church
Rev. Carson Rhyne: Moderator, LCT; Honorably Retired
Keenan Rodgers: Guest Presenter, Board of Pensions
Rev. Iqmara Sánchez Prunier: Preacher; Founder and Co-Director, Duelo Latino
Joslyn Shipman: Co-Moderator, ARC; RE, Bon Air
Rev. Laura Sugg: Co-Moderator, ARC, Pastor, South Plains
Doug Walters: Executive Director, Camp Hanover
Rev. Mary Jane Winter: Moderator, MAST; Member at Large

Action Items

Report	Page	Item
Mission Council	1	Approve meeting agenda
Consent Agenda	7	Consent Agenda
CPM	16	Waive time requirement for candidacy
CPM	16	Candidacy Examination – Chris Burton
COM	30-31	Ordination Examination – Levi Bannerman
Mission Council	42-47	Three World Mission Overtures
ARC	81-85	Amendment of POJ Anti-Racism Policy
CON	86-87	Election of slate presented by CON

Presbytery of the James

Commonly Used Acronyms

Denomination-wide

PC(USA)	Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
BOC	<i>The Book of Confessions</i>
BOO	<i>Book of Order</i>
BOP	Board of Pensions
CLC	Church Leadership Connection
FDN	Presbyterian Foundation
OGA	Office of the General Assembly
PDA	Presbyterian Disaster Assistance
PEVA	Presbytery of Eastern Virginia
PHS	Presbyterian Historical Society
PILP	Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program
PMA	Presbyterian Mission Agency
POAMN	Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network
PW	Presbyterian Women

Presbytery of the James

APC	Administration & Pastoral Care Committee (a committee of COM)
ARC	Anti-Racism Committee
COM	Commission on Ministry
CON	Committee on Nominations
COR	Committee on Representation
CREC	Commissioned Ruling Elder Committee (a committee of COM)
CPM	Committee on Preparation for Ministry
CPR	Church and Pastor Relations Committee (a committee of COM)
Exams	Examinations Committee (a committee of COM)
IAG	Investment Advisory Group (a committee of the Tr)
LCT	Leadership Connections Team (8 underlying ministries)
MAST	Mission & Service Team (5 underlying ministries)
MC	Mission Council
NWCT	New Worshiping Communities Team (incl. Immigrant Communities)
Personnel	Personnel Committee of the Mission Council
PJC	Permanent Judicial Commission
SDOP	Self-Development of People (a ministry under MAST)
SMA	Synod of the Mid-Atlantic
Tr	Trustees (of the Corporation)
TRC	Transitional Relations Committee (subcommittee of the COM)

Rules for Presbytery Meetings

The Stated Clerk is available to assist anyone with the rules of order, proper motions to make to accomplish their purpose, and wording of motions. Please do not hesitate to seek help if needed.

1. Silence all electronic devices.
2. If you are attending in person, please do not log into the Zoom meeting. This will help maintain the proper internet bandwidth necessary to conduct the meeting.
3. If you are attending via Zoom, please mute your link until you are called upon to speak by the Moderator.
4. To seek recognition:
 - a. In person, go to the microphone and wait to be recognized by the Moderator.
 - b. Via Zoom, use the Raise Your Hand function and wait to be recognized by the Moderator.
 - c. Via phone, press *9 and wait to be recognized by the Moderator.
5. If you are attending via Zoom, do not use the Chat feature as a means of debating the motion.
6. Should you wish to make a motion, fill out a motion form found near the microphone. When you have completed your motion form, present it to the Stated Clerk. If you are on Zoom, use the motion form from the POJ website in the meeting information section and email it to the Stated Clerk—statedclerk@presbyteryofthejames.org. If possible, please present to the Stated Clerk prior to making your motion.
7. Debate on all debatable motions shall be limited to 3 minutes and 1 time per person.
8. The vote count will be tallied by the Zoom administrator and the Stated Clerk, with the results presented to the Moderator for announcement of the outcome.
9. Minutes of the meeting will be read and approved by a committee of four individuals who are known to have attended the meeting. These individuals will be selected by the Stated Clerk from two regions on a rotating basis. The Stated Clerk will report on the minutes at the next presbytery meeting.

Seeking to Be Faithful Together

from the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program

In a spirit of trust and love, we promise we will...

***Give them a hearing...
listen before we answer***
(John 7:51 and Proverbs 18:13)

1. **Treat each other respectfully so as to build trust, believing that we all desire to be faithful to Jesus the Christ.**
 - we will keep our conversations and communications open for candid and forthright exchange,
 - we will not ask questions or make statements in a way that will intimidate or judge others.
 2. **Learn about various positions on the topic of disagreement.**
 3. **State what we think we heard and ask for clarification before responding, in an effort to be sure we understand each other**
-

Speak the truth in love
(Ephesians 4:15)

4. **Share our concerns directly with individuals or groups with whom we have disagreements in a spirit of love and respect in keeping with Jesus' teachings.**
 5. **Focus on ideas and suggestions instead of questioning people's motives, intelligence or integrity.**
 - we will not engage in name-calling or labeling of others prior to, during or following the discussion.
 6. **Share our personal experiences about the subject of disagreement so that others may more fully understand our concerns.**
-

***Maintain the unity of the
spirit in the bond of peace***
(Ephesians 4:3)

7. **Indicate where we agree with those of other viewpoints as well as where we disagree.**
 8. **Seek to stay in community with each other though the discussion may be vigorous and full of tension.**
 - we will be ready to forgive and be forgiven.
 9. **Follow these additional guidelines when we meet in decision-making bodies:**
 - urge people of various points of view to speak and promise to listen to these positions seriously;
 - seek conclusions informed by our points of agreement;
 - be sensitive to the feelings and concerns of those who do not agree with the majority and respect their rights of conscience;
 - abide by the decision of the majority, and if we disagree with it and wish to change it, work for that change in ways that are consistent with these Guidelines.
 10. **Include our disagreement in our prayers, not praying for the triumph of our viewpoints, but seeking God's grace to listen attentively, to speak clearly and to remain open to the vision God holds for us all.**
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A Brief Guide and Reference Sheet to *Robert's Rules of Order*

Robert's Rules of Order is a guide for conducting meetings and making decisions. In order for the Presbytery to carry out its responsibilities in the most fair and orderly fashion, it is helpful for teaching and ruling elders to understand the rules of order which will be followed. Familiarity with the *Book of Order* is very helpful and, where our constitution is silent, we have the following:

“Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the most recent edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*, except when it is in contradiction to this Constitution. Councils may also make use of processes of discernment in their deliberations prior to a vote as agreed upon by the body.” [*Book of Order*, G-3.0105]

With this in mind, the following brief overview of parliamentary procedure is provided for you. It will serve as the basis for the handling of the Presbytery's business. Your familiarity with and attention to these basic rules of order will be most appreciated.

Precedence Order	Description	Second Required?	Debatable?	Amendable?	Vote Required?
Main Motions					
1	Main (Principal) - to present a recommendation for consideration by the body	No – if coming from a committee Yes – if coming from the floor	Yes	Yes	Majority
Subsidiary Motions In order of precedence					
2	Postpone indefinitely	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
3	Amend - substituting, inserting, striking out, or striking out and replacing	Yes	Yes	Yes, but only one at a time	Majority
4	Refer / Commit to a Committee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
5	Postpone - to a subsequent meeting	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
6	Limit or Extend Debate	Yes	No	No	2/3 vote
7	Call for the Previous Question - to end debate	Yes	No	No	2/3 vote
8	Lay on the table until later in the meeting - to take up more urgent business	Yes	No	No	Majority
Privileged Motions					
9	Order of the Day	No	No	No	Chair decides
10	Question of Privilege	No	No	No	Chair decides
11	To Recess	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
12	To Adjourn	Yes	No	No	Majority
13	To Fix a Time to adjourn	Yes	No	Yes	Majority
Incidental Motions					
	Point of order	No	No	No	Chair decides
	Request for Information	No			
	Parliamentary Inquiry	No	No	No	No vote taken
	Question a Voice Vote	No	No	No	No vote taken
Other Motions					
	Reconsider - can only be made by a person on the prevailing side and for a decision of the same day	Yes	Yes - if the motion being reconsidered is debatable)	No	Majority

NOTE – the above list does not include all possible motions or actions included in *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Consent Agenda

Presbytery of the James, 121st Stated Meeting
Hybrid First Church, Charlottesville/Meadows and Zoom Meeting
October 18, 2025

Any item on the Consent Agenda can be pulled for any reason. Simply make the request at the appropriate time and it will be placed under the appropriate committee report. If there are other nominees for the positions listed in the Consent Agenda, request that the particular election be pulled for nominations from the floor.

- I. **The Stated Clerk makes the following recommendation for the Consent Agenda:**
 - A. That the [2026 Balancing of Commissioners Proposal](#) be approved (see pp. 10-11)
- II. **The [Committee on Preparation for Ministry](#) (p. 16) makes the following recommendation for the Consent Agenda:**
 - A. The committee recommends inquirer Chris Burton (First United) be examined for candidacy for the ordered ministry of the Word and Sacrament.
When inquirers seek to become candidates, the presbytery examines them in person with respect to their faith in Jesus Christ and experience of God's grace, their sense of call and motives for seeking the ministry, and forms of Christian service undertaken.
- III. **The [Commission on Ministry](#) (pp.16-19) makes the following recommendations for the Consent Agenda:**
 - A. That the presbytery approve the updated Sexual Misconduct and Harassment Policy to replace the current Sexual Misconduct/Harassment Policy.
 - B. That presbytery conducts the final step of the ordination examination of Candidate Levi Bannerman (Presbytery of Western North Carolina), so that he may serve as Chaplain Resident at University of Virginia Health. See pp.30-31 for Levi's statement of faith.
- IV. **The [Mission Council](#) (pp.38-41) makes the following recommendations for the Consent Agenda:**
 - A. That Presbytery records be amended to reflect that Rev. Clay Macaulay is serving on CON, class of 2026, term 1, region C, to correct a clerical error.
 - B. That Presbytery ratify the Mission Council's appointment of RE Cherry Peters, TE Mairi Renwick, and TE Lynn McClintock to the Forest Hill Church Administrative Commission.

Please direct questions about written reports to the staff person or moderator of the committee listed at the end of each report. Thank you.

**Report of the Stated Clerk
Presbytery of the James
October 18, 2025**

Communications

1. Readers of the presbytery minutes for the stated meeting of June 10, 2025, have approved those respective minutes. The stated clerk will recruit commissioners present today from Regions A and B to read and approve the minutes of this meeting.
2. Received a [report from Synod Commissioner](#) Colleen Earp (see pp 11-12)

Commission Reports

1. **Installation of Reverend Joel Robert Morgan at Campbell Memorial Church on August 24, 2025**

A commission of the Presbytery of the James, formed to install Rev. Joel Robert Morgan as Pastor at Campbell Memorial Presbyterian Church in Weems, Virginia on August 24, 2025, was convened with prayer by Ruling Elder Dan Jordanger at 2:40 p.m.

The commission consisted of the following members, all of whom were present:

Teaching Elders:

- Noah Morgan, Hebron
- Colleen Earp, Massanetta Springs
- Derek Starr Redwine, First Church Richmond

Ruling Elders:

- Dan Jordanger, Providence Gum Spring (moderator and clerk)
- Faith Alejandro, Westminster Richmond
- Barbara Parks, New Hanover
- Scott Vaden, Campbell Memorial

A motion to dismiss the commission at the benediction of the installation service was moved by the Rev. Colleen Earp and seconded by RE Faith Alejandro. The motion was approved without objection.

The constitutional questions of Rev. Morgan and the congregation were duly asked and answered during the service. The requirements for the installation of Rev. Morgan were met, and he is now the installed Pastor at Campbell Memorial Presbyterian Church in Weems.

Respectfully submitted,
Dan J. Jordanger

2. Commissioning of Aggie Walker as CRE at Bott Memorial Church on May 4, 2025

The Commission of the Presbytery of the James, formed to install Aggie Walker to service as Commissioned Ruling Elder of Bott Memorial Presbyterian Church in DeWitt, Virginia, met at Bott Memorial on May 4, 2025 at 2:30 p.m. The Commission consisted of the following members, all of whom were present:

Ministers: Rev. Crystal Varner Parker (Providence Forge Presbyterian Church), Sermon
Rev. Stark Cauthorn (First Presbyterian Church, Hopewell), Constitutional
Questions to the Congregation and Charge to the Candidate

Commissioned Ruling Elder: Barry Parks (Byrd Presbyterian Church), Worship Leader

Ruling Elders: Paige Owen (First Presbyterian Church, Hopewell)
Susan Nye (Bott Memorial Presbyterian Church)
Dan Jordanger (Providence Presbyterian Church, Gum Spring), Constitutional
Questions to the Candidate, Moderator and Clerk of the Commission

A motion to dismiss the commission at the benediction of the installation service was moved by the Rev. Crystal Varner Parker and seconded by CRE Barry Parks. The motion was approved without objection.

The constitutional questions for CRE Walker and the congregation were duly asked and answered during the service. Pursuant to the assignment of Presbytery and the provisions of W-4.04 of the Book of Order, Aggie Walker was installed on May 4 to serve as Commissioned Ruling Elder of Bott Memorial Presbyterian Church.

Respectfully submitted,
Dan J. Jordanger

The Stated Clerk reports the following for information:

1. The review of 2024 Session Records has been completed. We are grateful for the leadership of Judy Blair, clerk of session at First Church, Charlottesville, and for the volunteers who served as readers this year: Marjolijn Bijlefeld, Judy Blair John McE. Garrett, Sandra Garrett, Madelene Greene, Bettie Guthrie, Kim Hicks, Marilyn Johns, LaVerne Johnson, Rebecca Payette, Melissa Phillips, Kathy Sestak, and Walt Weaver. Any new or existing clerks of session who would like information about how to do the expected tasks, or who would like to be set up with a more seasoned clerk as a mentor, please contact the [presbytery office](#).

The Stated Clerk makes the following recommendation for the Consent Agenda:

1. That the [2026 Balancing of Commissioners Proposal](#) be approved (see pp. 10-11).

The Stated Clerk makes the following recommendation: none

Rev. Kerry Foster, Temporary Stated Clerk: statedclerk@presbyteryofthejames.org

**The Presbytery of the James
Balancing of Commissioners
for 2026
in accordance with G-3.0301**

Ministers of the Word and Sacrament¹		
Validated, serving in a congregation	71	
Validated, serving outside of the congregation	35	
Members at Large	31	
Subtotal		137
Honorably Retired/Retired (113), of whom we count 15 for balancing	15	
Subtotal		15
Total		152

Ruling Elders		
Elected by Sessions as commissioners to presbytery (G-3.0202a)		
4 commissioners from all congregations having 900 or more members	8	
3 commissioners from all congregations having 550 to 899 members	9	
2 commissioners from all congregations having 130 to 549 members	42	
1 commissioner from all congregations having 129 or fewer members	71	
Subtotal		130
Enrolled by presbytery during terms of elected service to presbytery or its congregations (G-3.0301)		
REs who are Moderators ² of POJ, Teams, or Committees	3	
REs commissioned ³ to do pastoral work in a congregation	10	
REs who are Certified Educators ⁴ and congregation members (G-2.1103b)	9	
RE serving as Stated Clerk ⁵	0	
Subtotal		22
Total		152

This plan is subject to amendment if the Committee on Representation advises changes that will better "fulfill the principles of participation and representation found in F-1.0403 and G-3.0103" (G-3.0301, first paragraph).

¹ Following G-2.0503, we designate three categories of ministers: Validated (includes both those serving in a congregation and those serving in specialized, non-parish ministries), Member at Large, and Retired. Numbers of minister members are given as they were on September 20, 2024.

² Webb Moore (Trustees), Jim Allison (COM), Joslyn Shipman (ARC)

³ Charles Bagwell, Jerome Bennett, Patricia Carter, Marvin Daniel, Peggy Fox, Patricia Higgins, Scott Jackson, Susan May, William Seay, Agatha Walker.

⁴ Carolyn Brown, Gloria Cauthorn, Carol Dunlap, Marian English, Barbara Flynt, Marcia Hale, Bruce Harvey, Marilyn Johns, Ann Knox.

⁵ n/a

**Ruling Elder Commissioners from Each Session
January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026**

Four Ruling Elder Commissioners from congregations having 900 or more members:

First Charlottesville, First Richmond

Three Ruling Elder Commissioners from congregations having from 550 to 899 members:

River Road, Salisbury, Second Richmond

Two Ruling Elder Commissioners from congregations having 130 to 549 members:

Bon Air, Brandermill, Chester, Culpeper, Fairfield, Fredericksburg, Gayton Kirk, Ginter Park, Grace Covenant, Lord Jesus Korean, Meadows, Olivet, Providence Forge, Rockfish, Southminster, Summit, Swift Creek, Three Chopt, Tuckahoe, Westminster Charlottesville, Westminster Richmond

One Ruling Elder Commissioner from congregations having 129 or fewer members:

Aberdour, All Souls, Amelia, Ampthill, Ashland, Bethesda, Bethlehem, Blackstone, Blue Ridge, Bott Memorial, Brett Reed Memorial, Burkeville, Byrd, Campbell Memorial, Colonial Heights, Concord, Cove, Covenant, Eastminster, Ebenezer, First Chase City, First Emporia, First Hopewell, First United, Forest Hill, Genito, Gregory Memorial, Hartwood, Hawkins Memorial, Hebron, Holy Trinity, Kings Chapel, Kirk O'Cliff, Laurel, Lawrenceville, Louisa, Madison, Mattoax, Milden, Milford, Mitchells, New Hanover, Oak Grove, Ogden, Orange, Overbrook, Pine Grove, Praise The Lord, Providence Gum Spring, Providence Powhatan, Pryor Memorial, Rennie Memorial, Rivermont, Rosewood, Salem, Sandston, Scottsville, Second Petersburg, South Hill, South Plains, St Andrews, St James, Tabor, Tappahannock, Thyne Memorial, Village, Waddell Memorial, Westminster Petersburg, Woodlawn, Woodville, Zion Hill

Report of Commissioner to Synod of the Mid-Atlantic

I recently completed my service as our Synod Commissioner from the Presbytery of the James. Synod Assembly gathers twice a year and always covers a lot of business. Connections abound at these meetings, where 14 presbyteries gather to worship, learn, and work together. At our meeting in September, we thanked outgoing moderator, The James' own Commissioned Ruling Elder Barry Parks; welcomed incoming moderator Teaching Elder Leah Epps, who is serving in Western North Carolina Presbytery but was educated here in The James at Union Presbyterian Seminary; and elected the new Synod Executive and Stated Clerk for the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic, Rev. Dr. Flo Barbee-Watkins, who also previously served here in our presbytery.

One part of the meeting I am still thinking a lot about was a workshop with Rev. Dr. Vanessa Hawkins and Ruling Elder Jerry Slaymaker, both of New Hope Presbytery. They shared "Tools for Constructive Conversations," which feels more important every day as our world continues to divide itself. They reviewed the basic emotional needs every person has (security, identity, empowerment) and even connected it to our Trinitarian theology (security in God's love, identity in Christ's life and ministry, empowerment in the Spirit's call to be generous and hospitable). They shared strategies for getting and maintaining these things both positive (good communication, seeking common ground) and negative (bullying, gaslighting, triangulation).

Building up community is always important, but feels incredibly critical right now. What's really stuck with me was when Rev. Dr. Hawkins connected spiritual practices to having difficult conversations—that our own centeredness will help us stay present in conflict. Spiritual practices bring self-awareness and personal growth that can ground us when we're faced with difficult things. I think I already knew this, but it was so helpful to hear it framed like this.

So, keep praying, keep singing, keep walking, keep writing, keep doing all the things that make you YOU and make us CHURCH. It's going to help us be strong enough to work through all of the brokenness of the world.

Rev. Colleen Earp: colleen@massanettasprings.org

Report of the Temporary General Presbyter

October 18, 2025

We have been in this journey for eleven months now. We being myself and the presbytery, and the journey being a change in staffing models. It is my belief that these past eleven months have been a time of healing, breathing, changing and renewal of many aspects of the life of, and within, the presbytery.

My data? Twenty-four Sunday mornings with our sister congregations. Being a moderator with eight sessions. Attending three meetings of the presbytery in this role. Working with thirteen congregations in their search for pastoral leadership and celebrating with seven of them as the Holy Spirit provided their next pastor. Resourcing and supporting three administrative commissions. Learning the ropes within our committees, serving alongside our Commission on Ministry, the Committee for Preparation for Ministry, New Worshiping Communities, Mission Council, the Trustees, and the Anti-Racism Committee. Celebrating the retirement of our long-term treasurer and then being a participant in establishing a relationship with our new accounting firm. Traveling to visit with pastors in their congregations and communities during the work week and having time to be supportive of pastors here in my office. Becoming a person that our ruling elders feel like they can call for support. Working with a dedicated staff of three others, then two, in the office of the POJ.

In each moment of these and many other events, I encounter people and conversations focused on accomplishing something good. Have there been “complaints?” Sure, there have. If I might share a bit of vital knowledge with you, from the secular world of commerce, it would be this: In that world, “complaints” are considered valuable because a valued “customer” has experienced something less than good, and rather than just taking their business somewhere else, they prefer to work this out, because they value the service/commodity/relationship that your business has with them. A negative that is actually a positive? A novel thought, this “something negative (foolish) being made positive (wise).” This concept might exist elsewhere, I think.

What do I see in the next, unknown number of months ahead of us? My calendar is full of Sunday worship and visits with other congregations of this presbytery. There is a new budgeting model and financial management tool being putting into play. There are congregations out there with active search committees, meaning there will be new faces within our presbytery, bringing in different ways of seeing this presbytery. Just beyond today's horizon is a deep dive into who we truly are as told by what we honestly support, a task of a few for the many. There are opportunities just outside the doors of each congregation; some obvious, some hidden. I am hopeful that I will be there when the hidden ones are found. Not that I will find them, but that I might be a part of the searching that brought light into a shadowy place.

Yes, a hopeful report, but this is what I am feeling as your temporary general presbyter and bridge stated clerk. For me, despite my business background, a good story beats a spreadsheet every time.

Until our next meeting or my time in your church, blessings.

Rev. Kerry Foster, a sibling in Christ with you all, and a humble servant of this presbytery

tempgp@presbyteryofthejames.org

Report of the Committee on Representation

for the October 18, 2025 Meeting of the Presbytery of the James

Members: Crystal Varner Parker, moderator; Todd Davidson, Donna Kelley, and Nate Taylor

- I. The Committee Reports the Following Actions:** none
- II. Recommendations:** none
- III. Report:**
 - A. We received word that Zamaita Melendez is having to resign for personal reasons from COR. We are grateful for her service on the Committee on Representation.
 - B. We have begun reviewing nominations from and sending recommendations to the Committee on Nominations. Our next task is seeking demographic information for committees within the presbytery and would be interested in that information for your congregations. All of this we are keeping in confidence, but aids in making recommendations for what representation looks like in the POJ. What type of demographic information are we looking for? Great question, we'd love to tell you. We are looking for the breadth and depth of diversity on your committees and churches, whether it is gender, racial/ethnic, ability, or the like. As we've shared, inclusion is so much more than a male/female or Black/white binary, but the rich diversity and inclusion that can and does exist in the presbytery.
 - C. We also have some observations from the June stated meeting of the Presbytery. Please keep in mind, this is based on observations to the best of our knowledge or understanding. Of those who spoke at the meeting, here is what it looked like:
 1. 8 ruling elders and 20 teaching elders
 2. 11 females, 17 males, and 1 non-binary individual
 3. 25 white/Caucasian individuals and 4 BIPOC individuals

Based on this observation, we encourage teaching elders to allow space for our ruling elders to speak and for ruling elders to feel empowered to speak. Both ruling and teaching elders have voice and vote at presbytery meetings, so use your voice as the Holy Spirit is moving you. In the PC(USA) we believe in the priesthood of all believers, which means we all bring various gifts to the work of ministry to the Presbytery of the James. Let us use those gifts for the glory of God in all that we say and do

Rev. Crystal Varner Parker: Pastor@pfpc.org

PRESBYTERY REPORT TO SYNOD

2025 Form for Year 2024

Presbytery of the James

I a. If you have a COR:

how often does it meet? monthly to bi-monthly

does it meet with the Presbytery Nominating Committee? no

how does it report to Presbytery? yes.

b. If you do not have a COR, please state how you handle oversight of appropriate representation? n/a We are still in the early stages of re-constituting our presbytery's COR. We are reviewing current presbytery open nominations and sharing recommendations to CON. One of the things we are also working on is better information tracking on representation. It is hard to identify gaps in representation with the information lacking.

II. What is the size of your presbytery? Churches 97 Members 247

What percentage of members are minorities? unsure

III. Of the leadership positions within your presbytery (Leadership includes all Presbytery level committee members) :

How many are filled by women? 52 How many are filled by men? 46

IV. In the past 5 years, have you had a non-majority Moderator?

Yes _____ No X

V. What actions or initiatives has your COR taken to try and improve your record of representation on committees?

We are working on suggestions for the presbytery for obtaining this information, perhaps through registration at presbytery meetings.

VI. What might the Synod COR do to assist your efforts to be more effective in your work?

Share resources and information on how you are doing this work well with us.

Report submitted by Crystal Varner Parker

Phone # 804-420-2287 e-mail pastor@pfpc.org

This document will be part of COR's report to Presbytery for the October 18, 2025 stated meeting.

Stated Clerk Rev. Kerry Foster

Date: 8/4/2025

Presbytery of the James COR report to the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic (cont.)

Committee	Total	Male Clergy	Male Laity	Female Clergy	Female Laity	Asian Amer.	African	African Amer.	Hispanic Latino	Native American	Multi-Cultural	Middle Eastern	White	Other Self Ident	Person With Disability	Youth 25/ Under	Young Adult 26-35	Adult 36-64	Senior Adult 65+
Budget & Finance	7	3	2	0	2			1					6						
Church Development (New Worshiping Communities Team)	5	1	1	2	1			1					4						
Committee on Ministry	20	4	4	8	4			3			1		16						
Presbytery Officers Mod/VM/SC	3	2	0	0	1			1					2						
Presbytery Council	9	3	2	2	2			1					8						
Nominating Committee	5	1	0	2	2			1					4						
Commissioner to 226 GA	*																		
Commissioners to 253 rd SOMA Assembly	1			1									1						
Committee on Preparation	16	5	3	5	3	1			2			1	12						
Committee on Representation	5	2	0	1	2			1	1		1		2						
Mission and Service Team	5	0	2	2	1			1					4						
Leadership Connections Team	4	2	0	0	2			1					3						
PJC	7	3	0	2	2			1					6						
Anti-Racism Committee	10	5	0	3	2		1	2				1	6						
TOTAL	97	31	14	28	24	1	1	14	3	0	2	2	74						

* To be elected at October 2025 stated meeting of presbytery

Report of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry

Presbytery of the James

September 18, 2025

The report includes information from committee meetings held from June 2025-September 2025.

- I. The committee reports the following for information:
 - A. Of the 16 persons under care on January 10th, 9 are inquirers, and 7 are candidates. Of the candidates, 2 are certified ready pending a call.
- II. The committee reports the following actions:
 - A. Interviewed Chris Burton (First United) for candidacy and approved him to be interviewed by presbytery for candidacy.
 - B. Interviewed Wendy Steeves (Blue Ridge) for readiness and approved her certified ready, pending a call.
 - C. Distributed \$7,800 in Financial Aid to 6 inquirers and candidates.
 - D. Voted to approve LeaderWise as primary psychological evaluation site.
- III. The committee makes the following recommendations in the Consent Agenda:
 - A. The committee recommends inquirer Chris Burton (First United) be examined for candidacy for the ordered ministry of the Word and Sacrament.
When inquirers seek to become candidates, the presbytery examines them in person with respect to their faith in Jesus Christ and experience of God's grace, their sense of call and motives for seeking the ministry, and forms of Christian service undertaken.
- IV. The committee makes the following recommendation:
 - A. The committee requests the Presbytery to waive the time requirement for the candidacy period outlined in G-2.0602 for Chris Burton. Per G-2.0610, this request requires a three-fourths vote of the Presbytery.

Respectfully submitted by Rev. Nicole Ball, CPM Moderator: cpm@presbyteryofthejames.org

Report of the Commission on Ministry

Presbytery of the James

October 2025

(Meetings of May, June, July, August, September)

I. The Commission Reports the Following Actions:

- A. Received Ministers Into the Presbytery:
 - a. from North Alabama Presbytery, retired [Rev. Dr. Thomas E. Lovell](#).
 - b. from Whitewater Valley Presbytery, [Rev. William Christians](#).
 - c. from Whitewater Valley Presbytery, [Rev. Sara Dorrien-Christians](#)
 - d. from Transylvania Presbytery, [Rev. Linda Kurtz Burtch](#)
- B. Received Ministers from another denomination into Temporary Membership according to the Formula of Agreement:
 - a. from the Reformed Church in America, [Rev. Mark Swart](#)
- C. Dismissed Members to Other Presbyteries:
 - a. Rev. Joseph Taber to Presbytery of East Tennessee

- D. Approved Terms of Call for Incoming Pastoral Relationships:
 - a. Terms of call for the Rev. Christopher Tweel to the Brandermill Church
 - b. Terms of call for the Rev. Sara Dorrien-Christians to Westminster Presbyterian Church (Charlottesville)
 - c. Terms of call for the Rev. Mark Swart to Summit Presbyterian Church
 - d. Terms of call for the Rev. Linda Kurtz Burch to Cove Presbyterian Church

- E. Approved Validated Minister Outside of a Congregation:
 - a. William Christians as Associate Organizer at IMPACT in Charlottesville
 - b. Levi Bannerman as [Chaplain, UVA Health Systems](#)

- F. Approved the Following Commissions:
 - a. Installation commission for the Rev. Joel Morgan to Campbell Memorial Presbyterian Church on August 24, 2025.
 - b. Installation commission for the Rev. Rachel Thompson Orfield to First Presbyterian Church, Charlottesville on October 5, 2025.
 - c. Installation commission for the Rev. Linda Kurtz Burch to Cove Presbyterian Church on November 16, 2025.

- G. Approved Member at Large status:
 - a. William Christians
 - b. Levi Bannerman

- H. Received Covenant of Closures:
 - a. Barry Parks as Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of the James
 - b. Albert Connette and Providence Powhatan Presbyterian Church
 - c. Christopher Tweel and Three Chopt Presbyterian Church
 - d. Jess Cook and Westminster (Richmond) Presbyterian Church
 - e. Tom Coye and Campbell Memorial Presbyterian Church
 - f. Judy Thompson and Campbell Memorial Presbyterian Church

- I. Completed Exit Interviews:
 - a. Three Chopt Presbyterian Church and Christopher Tweel
 - b. Culpeper Presbyterian Church and Joseph Taber
 - c. Westminster Presbyterian Church (Richmond) and Jess Cook
 - d. Campbell Memorial Presbyterian Church and Tom Coye and Judy Thomson
 - e. Westminster Presbyterian Church (Charlottesville) and Jewell Ann Parton, Diana Brawley, Steve Brown, David Garth, Gene Locke, and Mark Ramsey.

- J. Approved Retired Status:
 - a. Janet James, 6/12/25

- K. Approved Dissolution of the Pastoral Relationship:
 - a. Joseph W. Taber IV and Culpeper Presbyterian Church, effective 6/15/25
 - b. Dorothy Piatt-Esguerra and Westminster Church (Charlottesville), effective 3/31/25
 - c. Steve Starzer with Fairfield Presbyterian Church, effective 12/31/25
 - d. Keith M. Curran, Parish Associate, with Fairfield Presbyterian Church, effective 9/30/25

- L. Approved Interim Pastor/ Associate Pastor Agreements:
 - a. Interim Pastor Covenant between Rev. Johan O’Connell and Southminster Presbyterian Church, 7/31/2025-7/30/2026
 - b. Interim Pastor Covenant between Rev. Clay Macaulay and River Road Presbyterian Church, 5/12/2025 - 5/12/2026
 - c. Interim Pastor Covenant extension between Rev. Carson Rhyne and Summit Presbyterian Church, 5/01/2025 - 6/30/2025

- M. Approved Covenant Pastor Agreements :
 - a. Rev. Josh Andrzejewski and First Presbyterian Church, Covenant of Employment during Head of Staff absence, Richmond, 4/01/2025 - 12/31/2025
 - b. Rev. Derek Starr Redwine and First Presbyterian Church, Richmond, 5/01/2025-4/30/2026
 - c. Rev. Kelly Kaufman and Tabor Presbyterian Church, Covenant of Employment during Sabbatical, 5/04/2025 - 8/02/2025
 - d. Rev. Ed Kross and Amphill Presbyterian Church, 5/31/2025 - 11/30/25
 - e. Rev. Ulysses Payne and Westminster Presbyterian Church, Petersburg, 6/28/2025 - 12/27/2025
 - f. Rev. Eric Amoah and Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church, 7/01/2025-6/30/2026
 - g. Rev. John Grotz and Kirk O’Cliff Presbyterian Church, 7/01/2025- 12/31/2025
 - h. Rev. Dr. James Goodloe IV and Mattoax/Pine Grove Presbyterian Churches, 7/01/2025 - 12/31/2025
 - i. Rev. Mark Grussendorf and Salem Presbyterian Church, 7/01/2025 - 9/30/2025
 - j. Rev. Faye Cooper Baldwin and Salem Presbyterian Church 7/01/2025 - 9/30/2025
 - k. Rev. Shelly Barrick Parsons and Forest Hill Presbyterian Church, 7/05/2025 - 10/05/2025
 - l. Rev. Donald Denton and Rennie Memorial Presbyterian Church, 7/10/2025-5/12/2026

- N. Approved Bridge Pastor Agreements:
 - a. Rev. Tom Lovell and Summit Presbyterian Church, 6/22/2025 - 9/30/2025

- O. Approved Covenant Pastor Parish Associate:
 - a. Rev. Mark Ramsey and First Presbyterian Church, Richmond, 3/24/2025 - 3/23/2026
 - b. Rev. Colleen Earp and Tuckahoe Presbyterian Church, 6/1/2025 - 5/31/2026
 - c. Rev. Hal Brientenberg and Tuckahoe Presbyterian Church, 7/2025 - 7/2026

- P. Approved Termination of Covenant: None

- Q. Appointed Session Moderators:
 - a. Rev. Katherine Jackson, for Gregory Memorial Presbyterian Church
 - b. Rev. Patrick Lane, for Culpeper Presbyterian Church
 - c. Rev. Clay Macaulay, for Three Chopt Presbyterian Church
 - d. Rev. Diane Prevary, for Three Chopt Presbyterian Church
 - e. Rev. Kerra English, for Providence Presbyterian Church, Powhatan
 - f. Rev. Tom Coye, for St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, through 12/31/2025

R. Approved Request to form a PNC or APNC after review of submitted Mission Study:

- a. Southminster Presbyterian Church
- b. The Gayton Kirk Presbyterian Church
- c. Meadows
- d. River Road Presbyterian Church

S. Approved Ministry Discernment Profile:

- a. Meadows Presbyterian Church
- b. Southminster Presbyterian Church
- c. Second Presbyterian Church, Richmond (Covenant Pastor)

T. Approved Commissioned Ruling Elder agreements: none

U. Certified Ruling Elder Ready to receive a Commission:

- a. Barbara Flynt

V. Recognized completion of work as Commissioned Ruling Elder: none

W. Pastoral Care Fund:

- a. As of August 31, 2025 the Pastoral Care Fund has a balance of \$13,876.12. The procedures for requesting help from this fund may be found here [Pastoral Care Fund](#).

II. Consent Agenda Recommendations:

- a. That the presbytery approve the updated [Sexual Misconduct and Harassment Policy](#) to replace the current Sexual Misconduct/Harassment Policy.
- b. That presbytery conducts the final step of the ordination examination of Candidate [Levi Bannerman](#) (Presbytery of Western North Carolina), so that he may serve as Chaplain Resident at University of Virginia Health. See pp.30-31 for Levi's statement of faith.

III. Recommendations:

- a. none

IV. For Information:

- a. For churches that want to join with other churches to save money or who would like to explore sharing a pastor, there are some guidelines to help get you started with the document, "[Spiritual and Service Parishes](#)." The Board of Pension launched the new [Shared Ministry program](#) this year, which offers a subsidy toward benefits for 2+ churches that partner to support a full-time pastor.
- b. Churches undergoing some difficulty can ask for help from objective, trained teams from the Commission on Ministry. Listening Teams can help congregations listen well to each other and help sessions to find productive solutions. [Appendix W - Listening Teams Guidelines 2024](#)
- c. Interim Pastor Reporting: Note all Interim Pastors serving in the POJ are required to submit quarterly reports to the COM, as per Manual of Operations revised in June 2025. You can find that [form](#) on the POJ website, under COM forms and documents.
- d. [Commission on Ministry Supply List Guidelines](#)

Presbytery of the James

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AND HARASSMENT POLICY

Approved June 14, 2016
Revision Approved October 19, 2019
Updated Draft Pending [Insert Review Date]

Presbytery of the James
3218 Chamberlayne Avenue
Richmond, VA 23227
Web: presbyteryofthejames.com
804-262-2074

*All references to the Book of Order (BoO) are from the **2025–2027 edition** unless otherwise noted.*

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Presbytery of the James, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (“Presbytery”) that all church members, officers, employees, and volunteers within its jurisdiction treat one another as members of the Body of Christ—equal in dignity and called to mutual respect. This oneness calls us to model all relationships in the Church after the self-giving love of Jesus Christ.

As Christians, caring for one another in the Spirit of our Lord precludes the objectification, victimization, or oppression of others—whether through sexual misconduct, harassment, abuse of power, or other degrading behavior. This includes conduct that is physical, verbal, emotional, or digital in nature.

The Presbytery affirms that healthy ministry requires clear boundaries, a commitment to safety, and the honoring of vulnerability and trust in every professional and ministerial relationship. Harassment and sexual misconduct are violations of Scripture, of Christian ethics, and of the sacred trust inherent in these relationships. They are never permissible.

B. Purpose

The purposes of this policy on sexual misconduct and harassment are:

1. To set and enforce standards of behavior consonant with Scripture and secular law;
2. To serve and advance the peace and purity of the Church;
3. To develop procedures for the enforcement of these standards, fully consistent with the Book of Order (“BoO”) and to ensure the confidentiality of issues and individuals as may be necessary;
4. To promote the understanding of what sexual misconduct and harassment are, and what the Presbytery expects of those covered by this policy;
5. To minimize occurrences of misconduct and harassment, and to ensure prompt and faithful responses to all allegations and reports; and
6. To demonstrate pastoral concern for alleged victims and their families, as well as for those accused of misconduct and harassment, and their families.

C. Scope of Policy

This policy applies when the Presbytery has jurisdiction over at least one of the individuals involved in allegations of misconduct. It addresses both sexual misconduct and harassment, including online and digital forms of communication.

Individuals Covered:

- Ministers of the Word and Sacrament actively serving in any form (G-2.0503)
- Retired ministers (G-2.0503)
- Inquirers and Candidates for Ordination (G-2.0603)
- Commissioned Ruling Elders and Pastors (G-2.1002)
- Candidates for Commissioned Ruling Elders and Pastors (G-2.1002)
- Certified Christian Educators (G-2.1103)
- Ruling Elders during elected Presbytery service (G-3.0301)
- Members serving on Presbytery committees, commissions, ministry teams, task forces, or other appointed entities
- Non-ordained Presbytery staff (under Personnel Policy)

Each church belonging to the Presbytery must adopt its own boundary training and sexual misconduct/harassment policy to protect the congregation, employees, volunteers, and visitors. If no such policy exists, this policy shall apply to the extent feasible. Persons with questions about this policy should contact the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery.

II. DEFINITIONS

Accused: The person against whom a claim of sexual misconduct or harassment is made.

Accuser: The person claiming knowledge of misconduct covered by this policy. The accuser may be someone other than the alleged victim of alleged sexual misconduct.

Child/Vulnerable Adult Sexual Abuse: includes, but is not limited to, any unlawful contact or interaction between a child/vulnerable adult and an adult where the child/vulnerable adult is being used for sexual purposes or the sexual stimulation of the adult or some third person. The prohibited behavior does not necessarily require touching. Sexual activity between a child/vulnerable adult and an adult shall always be considered as forced since the child/vulnerable adult is deemed not legally capable of consenting. The Presbytery intends to follow:

- Virginia Code §1-204 which defines a “child” as anyone under eighteen years of age and
- Virginia Code § 18.2-369 a “vulnerable adult” is any person aged 18 or older who is impaired by mental illness, intellectual or developmental disability, physical illness or disability, or other causes (including age), to the extent the person lacks sufficient decision-making capacity, or has significant limitations in self-care or safeguarding their person or property.

Church: when spelled with the initial letter capitalized (“*Church*”) refers to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Church when spelled with the initial letter in lowercase (“*church*”) refers to a local congregation. The word “congregation” shall include both members and participants in a church.

Complaint: A written statement outlining alleged misconduct and requesting a remedy.

Council: is a representative body in the Church composed of ruling and teaching elders; these are sessions, presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly. A Council may establish

entities such as day-care centers, conference centers, camps, or homes for the aged. A Council may have both church members and non-members as employees.

Employee: is the comprehensive term used to cover all individuals hired or called to work for the Church, a Council, a local member church, or any other institution or entity formally related to the Church or one of its constituent bodies, who are paid a salary or wages for their services.

Entity: Entity/General Assembly Entity An entity is a body created by and accountable to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), including but not limited to the standing committees of the General Assembly, the agencies of the General Assembly, and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation. (see *Manual of the General Assembly 2024-2026*, Standing Rule Part 5.A).

Harassment: Harassment is unwelcome conduct — whether verbal, physical, written, or visual — that is based on an individual’s race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, or any other legally protected status, and that:

- Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work or participation in ministry, or
- Creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment, or
- Is intended to demean, threaten, or harm another person’s dignity or wellbeing.
- Harassment may be a single serious incident or a pattern of behavior, and it can occur between peers, across power dynamics, or by third parties. Examples include but are not limited to:
 - Verbal abuse or epithets
 - Derogatory jokes, slurs, or name-calling
 - Physical intimidation or interference
 - Unwelcome comments about someone’s body, identity, or background
 - Display of offensive materials (e.g., posters, emails, memes)
- All forms of harassment are prohibited in the Presbytery’s work and ministry environments.

High Risk Occupation: Any role that works with vulnerable populations, such as children, the elderly, the incapacitated, or those receiving counseling. (Pastoral care of four sessions or fewer is not considered counseling.)

Inquiry: is the term used in Church Discipline in the *BoO* for the process to be followed by an investigating committee to determine whether charges should be filed based upon allegations received by a Council that an offense has occurred (see *BoO* D-7.0501).

Investigation: The process by which a Council investigates allegations.

Mandated Reporter: A mandated reporter is a person required by civil law to report all suspected incidents of child abuse, including child sexual abuse, as well as abuse of vulnerable adults (including adults lacking mental capacity). As of July 1, 2019, Virginia law designates clergy as mandated reporters of suspected child abuse or neglect (Code of Virginia §63.2-1509). This includes ministers, priests, rabbis, imams, and other duly accredited practitioners of any religious organization or denomination. The law removed prior exemptions that had shielded clergy from mandatory reporting requirements. One exception remains: when the information is received in a confidential

communication and disclosure is prohibited by the tenets or practices of the clergy's religious tradition (e.g., sacramental confession or pastoral privilege). Outside of such protected communications, clergy are legally obligated to report suspected abuse or neglect to the appropriate civil authorities. In implementing this policy, the Presbytery shall adhere to the requirements of the Code of Virginia and the BoO G-4.03, as amended at the time of the alleged incident. The relevant sections of the BoO state:

“Any member of this church engaged in ordered ministry and any certified Christian educator employed by this church or its congregations, shall report to ecclesiastical and civil legal authorities knowledge of harm, or the risk of harm, related to the physical abuse, neglect, and/or sexual molestation or abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity when (1) such information is gained outside of a confidential communication as defined in G-4.0301, (2) she or he is not bound by an obligation of privileged communication under law, or (3) she or he reasonably believes that there is risk of future physical harm or abuse.”(G-4.0302)

And further:

“In the exercise of pastoral care, ministers of the Word and Sacrament and ruling elders who have been commissioned by a presbytery to limited pastoral service (G-2.10) work to create communities of trust, accountability, and confidentiality while protecting the vulnerable. Confidentiality creates safe and sacred space for individuals to share concerns, questions, and/or burdens and seek spiritual guidance. Confidentiality should not be an excuse to hold secret the knowledge or risk of harm especially when related to the physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse of a minor or an adult who lacks mental capacity. Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and commissioned ruling elders shall hold in confidence all information revealed to them in the course of providing care and all information relating to the exercise of such care except:

When the person whose confidences are at issue gives express consent to reveal confidential information, then a minister of the Word and Sacrament or a commissioned ruling elder may, but cannot be compelled to, reveal confidential information, or when a minister of the Word and Sacrament or commissioned ruling elder reasonably believes that there is risk of imminent bodily harm to any person. ” (G-4.0301)

All others who are aware of or suspect an incident of abuse of a minor or a vulnerable adult must report their suspicion to the appropriate civil authorities and to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery.

Under the BoO D-7.0201a:

“No written allegation shall be filed later than five years from the time the alleged offense was discovered except in cases of sexual abuse of another person as defined in D-7.0901, in which case the five-year time limit shall not apply. There is also no time limit to file an allegation that a person who knew or reasonably should have known of the reasonable risk of sexual abuse of another as defined in D-7.0901 failed to take reasonable steps to minimize the risk.”

Persons Covered: Includes church leaders, staff, and volunteers in any Presbytery-related role.

Reasonable Suspicion: A belief based on credible facts that warrants further investigation.

Response: The actions taken by a Council or entity when allegations arise. It may include:

- Inquiry into facts and circumstances;
- Disciplinary action (administrative, judicial, or both);
- Pastoral care for involved parties;

- Exoneration and pastoral care for those falsely accused;
- Pastoral care and rehabilitation for the perpetrators and care for their families; 6. Administrative leave (with or without pay) for the accused during the investigation.
- If the body receiving the report considers the alleged act to be criminal in nature, it shall refer the report to the appropriate authorities.

Response Panel: Trained members of the Presbytery prepared to serve on Response Teams.

Response Team: is a group of four or more persons from the Response Panel appointed by the co-moderators of the Commission on Ministry (“COM”) to provide assistance and pastoral care to the appropriate parties after an allegation is presented to the presbytery.

Secular Authorities: are the governmental bodies—whether city, town, county, state, or federal—responsible for investigating, criminally prosecuting, and/or bringing charges against individuals accused of sexual crimes or sexual misconduct offenses against other adults or children.

Secular Law: Applicable federal, state, and local laws.

Sexual Abuse: Any sexual conduct with a minor or non-consenting adult.

Sexual Harassment: unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual’s employment, pastoral relationship, or participation in Presbytery-sponsored programs or activities.
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment, pastoral, or programmatic decisions affecting the individual.
- Such conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual’s work, volunteer service, or pastoral experience, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.
- Sexual harassment may occur through **physical, verbal, written, visual, or digital means**, and may involve persons of the same or different genders.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Unwanted physical contact (touching, patting, blocking movement)
- Sexually suggestive comments, jokes, or gestures
- Requests for sexual favors linked to work or ministry roles
- Display or distribution of sexually explicit materials, images, or media
- Persistent unwanted invitations, texts, social media messages, or emails with sexual content
- Sexually charged humor, stories, or remarks in ministry or workplace settings

Sexual harassment can be particularly harmful in the context of ministry, where there may be a power imbalance between clergy, educators, ruling elders, or leaders and congregants, students, staff, or volunteers. It undermines Christian community and violates the sacred trust of ministerial and professional relationships.

Sexual Misconduct: A broad term including sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and other related offenses.

Sexual Malfeasance: Sexual conduct within a ministerial or professional relationship that crosses ethical boundaries.

Victim: The person subjected to alleged misconduct.

Volunteer: is anyone who provides services for Councils and entities of the Church and who receives no benefits or remuneration. Volunteers include persons elected or appointed to serve on boards, committees, and other groups. For purposes of this policy, volunteers are treated the same as employees. Responsibilities of the Council or entity are the same for volunteers as for employees.

III. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Members of the Presbytery and its congregations are entrusted with the care, nurture and well-being of others. This is a sacred trust and is based implicitly and explicitly on Scripture, the Confessions of the Church, the ordination vows for the Church officers (*BoO* W-4.0404), and the traditions of the Church. In trying to follow the model of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are directed to remember:

*As God who called you is holy,
be holy yourselves in all your conduct.*

*Tend the flock of God that is your charge,
not under compulsion but willingly, not for sordid gain but eagerly,
do not lord it over those in your charge but be examples to the flock.*

You know that we who teach shall be judged with greater strictness.

1 Peter 1:15; 5:2; James 3:1, NRSV

The ethical conduct of all who minister in the name of Jesus Christ is of vital importance to the Church. Through these representatives an understanding of God and the Gospel's good news is conveyed. Their manner of life should demonstrate the Gospel in the Church and the world (*BoO* G-2.0104a). Thus, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Presbytery, to uphold the honor of the Church and the Christ it is pledged to serve, has every biblical, ecclesiastical, and pragmatic right to expect of its servants a life and general behavior consonant with the above principles.

Sexual misconduct and harassment violate trust, misuse power, and cause real harm. These behaviors are antithetical to the Gospel.

IV. RESPONSE TEAM

Purpose:

The purpose of the Response Team is to provide assistance and pastoral care to anyone making an allegation of sexual misconduct, or any alleged victim(s) of sexual misconduct by anyone covered by this policy, and to anyone who is so accused. The Team is not to investigate any allegation, nor is it to take any part in the disciplinary process of the Church, save for assisting the accuser, or the alleged victim(s) address the disciplinary process through the filing of an allegation (D-7.02). The Team shall meet within seven (7) days of being appointed.

1. Response Panel

The Response Panel is a group of individuals trained by the Presbytery to serve on Response Teams in cases involving harassment or misconduct.

- **Training Requirements:** All panelists must be trained in this policy and the guidance found in the *Book of Order*, particularly D-7: *Disciplinary Process*.

2. Response Team Composition and Appointment

A Response Team is assembled from the trained Response Panel to provide support and guidance when an allegation is reported.

2.1. Team Size and Makeup

- Each Response Team must include at least four (4) members, with representation from both men and women.
- The Co-Moderator of the COM appoints the members of each team and designates a Team Moderator.

2.2. Roles and Assignments

- Two members of the Team will be assigned to provide support to the accuser and/or alleged victim(s).
 - At least one must be the same gender as the accuser.
- Two members will be assigned to provide support for the accused.
 - At least one must be the same gender as the accused.
- Confidentiality Requirement:
 - Team members supporting the accuser must not discuss the case with those supporting the accused.

2.3. Avoiding Conflicts of Interest

- The Co-Moderators of COM must avoid appointing individuals with a potential conflict of interest. (See Appendix A for conflict-of-interest guidelines.)
- If the Co-Moderators are unable to serve, or are personally involved or implicated in the case, the Stated Clerk shall appoint a member of the Response Panel to assist with team formation.

2.4. Duties and Limitations (Appendix B)

V. GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING A COMPLAINT

All reports of suspected abuse or misconduct shall follow the procedures outlined in the *Book of Order*, specifically **G-4.03** and **D-7**.

- Mandated reporting requirements for those in ordered ministry and certified Christian educators are described in Section III: Definitions under *Mandated Reporter*.
- Allegations involving sexual abuse are not subject to any statute of limitations (*BoO D-7.0201a*).
- Complaints should be made in writing and submitted promptly to both:
 - the appropriate civil authorities (e.g., Child Protective Services or local law enforcement), and
 - the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery (via email or sealed written statement).
- In any instance of criminal behavior, civil authorities must be notified immediately.
- The Presbytery shall follow the procedures for reporting and response outlined in *Church Discipline (BoO D-7)*.
- In accordance with *BoO G-4.0301*, ministers and commissioned ruling elders must maintain trust and confidentiality in pastoral care. However, when a person gives express consent, or when there is reasonable belief of imminent bodily harm, confidentiality may be broken in the interest of safety and legal obligation.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION

The Presbytery shall implement this policy in alignment with the *Book of Order (BoO)* and in cooperation with secular authorities. Key responsibilities include:

- **Cooperation with Civil Authorities:** The Presbytery must act in coordination with secular legal systems, particularly in cases of child sexual abuse or criminal behavior. Reporting obligations outlined in Section II Mandated Reporting apply.

- **Prompt and Respectful Action:** Allegations of sexual misconduct must be addressed promptly, respectfully, and in accordance with legal and ecclesiastical standards.
- **Use of Investigating Committees:** When disciplinary procedures are required, the Presbytery will form Investigating Committees under the Rules of Discipline (BoO D-7.0501). These committees shall conduct inquiries and reach one of three conclusions per BoO D-7.13.
 - “D-7.13 Investigating Committee Conclusion
 - The investigating committee may determine:
 - a. Not to file charges (D-7.14),
 - b. To file charges and proceed to trial (D-7.15), or
 - c. To file charges together with an alternative resolution (D-7.16).”
- **Disciplinary Action:** If charges are filed and taken to trial, and a church member or minister is found to have committed sexual misconduct, the consequences may include temporary or permanent removal from membership or office. (BoO D-9.0101)
- **Pastoral Care Coordination:** Appropriate pastoral care for individuals and congregations impacted by misconduct shall be provided or coordinated by Presbytery leadership.

VII. COMPLIANCE

A. Employment Practices

The Presbytery shall uphold stringent and thoughtful hiring practices. If an applicant is unknown to the employer, photographic identification (e.g., driver’s license or passport) shall be required to confirm identity. Pre-employment screening shall include specific inquiries related to prior complaints or accusations of harassment and/or sexual misconduct. Employment decisions must reflect a commitment to safeguarding all persons involved in the ministry of the church.

B. Public Access

The Presbytery shall maintain public access to this Sexual Misconduct Policy by providing a downloadable copy on its website. Each year, all Presbytery employees, congregations, ministers, certified Christian educators, and commissioned ruling elders will be reminded of their responsibility to review this policy and certify, in writing, that they have done so. Certifications shall be submitted to the Stated Clerk.

C. Training and Education

In accordance with the Presbytery of the James Boundaries Training Mandate Policy (adopted February 17, 2024), the following training guidelines apply:

1. **Applicability:**
Boundary training is mandatory for the following individuals:
 - Ministers (active and retired)
 - Commissioned Ruling Elders
 - Certified Christian Educators
 - Inquirers and Candidates for Ordination
 - Ruling Elders serving on Presbytery entities
 - Members of Presbytery committees, commissions, ministry teams, and task forces
 - Presbytery staff (per Personnel Policies)
2. **Frequency and Deadlines:**
 - Boundary training must be completed every 36 months (BoO G-3.0106).
 - Individuals will receive an initial 60-day window to complete the training once notified.
 - A deadline of May 1, 2024 was set for compliance with the current mandate.
3. **Curriculum and Format:**

- Training shall include education on maintaining healthy boundaries, recognizing power dynamics, abuse prevention, and ethical ministry practices.
 - Approved curricula include:
 - *Clergy Ethics and Congregational Boundaries* by CONGREGATIONU (7 modules, ~2 hours, \$29, self-paid)
 - In-person sessions offered by COM
 - All training includes case studies, role-playing, and discussion.
4. Certification and Records:
- A certificate of completion must be submitted within 14 days to: certificate@presbyteryofthejames.org
 - The Presbytery Office will maintain a central database tracking completion dates and compliance.
5. Exemptions:
- Honorably retired ministers, certified Christian educators, and commissioned ruling elders who are not currently serving in an official capacity may request exemption by applying to the COM.
6. Noncompliance:
- Failure to complete boundary training is considered a chargeable offense under Church Discipline (BoO D-2.0302) and will be addressed by the Stated Clerk.

D. Volunteers

While these guidelines primarily govern ordained leadership and employed personnel, volunteers must also be considered. Each local church is encouraged to establish screening and supervision procedures for volunteers in high-risk roles (e.g., youth advisors, children’s ministry, camp leaders, lay counselors). Though the Presbytery does not mandate screening of all volunteers, it strongly recommends that every congregation adopt policies consistent with this document and ensure training is provided as appropriate.

VIII. POLICY REVIEW CYCLE

This policy shall be reviewed every three years by the Stated Clerk and COM and updated as needed to reflect best practices and current law.

Appendix A

Conflict of Interest Policy for Response Teams

To maintain the integrity and impartiality of the Response Team process, all individuals assigned to serve must be free of actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

Disclosure and Avoidance

The Co-Moderators of the COM shall take care to avoid appointing individuals with conflicts of interest. Anyone asked to serve should immediately disclose any potential conflict. If a conflict exists, they must decline the invitation to serve.

Conflict of Interest Criteria

A conflict of interest exists if any of the following conditions apply:

1. **Prior Knowledge:** The individual has, or may have, relevant information about the alleged misconduct and may be interviewed or called as a witness in a formal proceeding.
2. **Personal Relationships:** The individual is related by blood or marriage (current or former) to either the accuser or the accused.

3. **Close Associations:** The individual has or had a significant pastoral, social, professional, or financial relationship with the accuser or the accused that could reasonably call their impartiality into question. Simply serving on a committee with, or being casually acquainted with, a party does not necessarily constitute a conflict.

Reporting Concerns

If the accuser or the accused believes a Response Team member has a conflict of interest, they may raise the concern with the Co-Moderators of COM. Any questionable situations should be resolved in favor of avoiding the appearance of conflict.

Appendix B Response Team Duties and Limitations

Upon receiving notice of a sexual misconduct allegation, the Stated Clerk shall direct the Co-Moderators of COM to form a Response Team within 72 hours. This team serves a pastoral and support role, not a judicial or investigative one.

Primary Responsibilities

The Response Team shall:

1. **Contact the Accused**
Notify the accused that an allegation has been received and that they are to refrain from contacting the accuser or alleged victim(s).
2. **Pastoral Support**
Provide emotional and spiritual care to:
 - The accuser and/or alleged victim(s) and their families
 - The accused and their family
 - The affected congregation or ministry context
3. **Information & Resources**
Offer appropriate, non-confidential information about the process and connect individuals with counseling or other support services as needed.
4. **Referrals and Next Steps**
Explain available next steps to the accuser. If they wish to move forward formally, refer them to the Stated Clerk to initiate the process under the PC(USA) Rules of Discipline.
5. **Advocacy Support**
Encourage individuals involved to secure an advocate for emotional support. The Response Team may help identify potential advocates but does not serve in this capacity.
6. **Confidentiality**
Maintain strict confidentiality. Response Team members shall only discuss the case with authorized individuals as permitted by church process and law.

Limitations of the Response Team

The Response Team **shall not**:

- Advocate for or against any party involved
- Serve as legal counsel or give legal advice
- Intervene in or direct any Investigating Committee processes
- Determine the truth or falsehood of the allegations
- Impose or recommend specific disciplinary action

The Response Team shall continue to serve until formally released by the Commission on Ministry.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

Acknowledgment of the Sexual Misconduct, Harassment, and Boundary Training Policy: Presbytery of the James [Date]

As part of my certification to serve within the Presbytery of the James, I acknowledge that:

- I have received, read, and understand the Presbytery of the James' Sexual Misconduct and Harassment Policy
- I understand the boundary training requirements outlined in the policy
- I will complete all mandatory training and comply with all reporting and conduct expectations

Printed Name

Date

Signature

Statements of Faith

Levi Bannerman

I believe in God the Creator and Provider. In everything, throughout time and history God has created life and provided love.

I believe in the omnipotent and mysterious nature of God who surpasses all human understanding yet chooses to grant creation the opportunity to know, feel, and experience God's inviting presence. While questions may linger about the mysterious nature of God, I unwaveringly believe in the timeless revelation that God is love and that God is good.

I believe that God the redeemer is a God of abounding grace who actively participates in a covenantal relationship with creation. I believe that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of that covenant of grace. Jesus Christ who is of two natures, fully human and fully God, who is like humanity in every way except for sin.

I believe in an enlivened and mischievous Holy Spirit who inspires, transforms, and draws us in to the ways that God is at work in the world. The Spirit has been at work throughout history and is evidence of God's desire to be an active participant with creation and the larger church. I believe that the Spirit played a crucial role in the inspiration and canonization of God's word through scripture while also recognizing that scripture was written by human hands within particular historical and cultural contexts that must be considered when interpreting.

I believe in Jesus of Nazareth who resisted assuming a position of dominating power but instead assumed a radically relational status where he embraced the poor, broke bread with tax collectors, offered guidance through parables, and embodied a life lived in service of God and others. Jesus emphasized that his followers were to pay particular attention to the marginalized and oppressed and resist systems of injustice. It is through the teachings of Jesus Christ that we come to know the grace-filled nature of God. Jesus, as the head of the church, invites us to a life lived in worshipful community, that seeks to challenge and inspire as we seek to live a life of discipleship. As the church, we embrace the sacraments of baptism and communion as a divinely ordained invitation to experience the grace-filled nature of God. These sacraments are sacred opportunities for followers participate in God's covenantal relationship.

At the core of my being is a belief that we are all made in the image of God and are therefore all inextricably connected to God. I believe in the necessity of connection and that through our engagement with others we are able to know more about God. I believe that humans are sinful and must rely only on God's grace, which may not be earned or denied but is freely given to all.

I believe that faith may be found through quiet contemplation and worship and also through the joyful practices of play, dance, art, and laughter. I believe that faith may be experienced within the walls of the church or in the far-reaching corners of creation. While I subscribe to the tenets of the Presbyterian Church, I believe that God may be found in myriad ways and that my own faith tradition is not the only way to experience God's unending love.

I believe that God has called me by name and that I am a child of the covenant. Called to turn towards the world, caring for my neighbors, both known and unknown to me, embodying the grace and love of God wherever I may go, trusting in God's call on my life.

William Christians

I believe in a holy and everlasting God; the One in whom we live and breathe and have our being and who creates out of pure loving kindness. Entrusted with the image of God, we are invited into a co-creating relationship with the Divine, yet in our freedom, we trust in ourselves and the paths of our own making. The God of justice and righteousness never gives up and never stops pursuing lost children.

I trust in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who continues to save me and is the savior of the world. In Christ, God was emptied into human form. Through a life lived for all people, Christ is our witness to the power of redemption. In a sacrifice of love, Christ died that we might live. Through Christ's resurrection, we are assured that death is defeated and nothing can separate us from God's love.

I rely upon the Holy Spirit, who gives and sustains all life. This Spirit lives in and among us, enlivens us in body, mind, and spirit, and leads us in the way of love. The Spirit, active in all of creation, is the breath of life and the well-spring of creative wisdom. Like a burning fire, the Spirit goes where it wills, within and outside the walls of the church. She is, cannot and will not be contained.

The revelation of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, is witnessed through Holy Scripture. These holy stories are a unique testimony to the Living God and teach us God's purposes for humankind. Guided by the Holy Spirit, Scripture illuminates our path and grounds our lives in a new way of being in loving relationship with God and neighbor.

Our purpose in this world is to love - God, neighbor, self - with our whole being. Though we are unable to fully glorify God, we are gifted an unconditional love and grace, upon which humanity is wholly reliant. It is in this amazing grace that we find wholeness, the promise of reconciliation, and the peace that passes all understanding. It is in gratitude for these gifts that we offer ourselves to God in life, labor, and worship.

I serve the Church that is the covenanted body of Christ, who is the head of the Church. As a servant community of believers, the Church is empowered to stand against injustice, to expose the inequities of this world, to stand with the poor and the oppressed, to comfort the sick and dying, and to be peacemakers in a world that insists upon war. We, as the Church, give witness to God's goodness and grace through our endless pursuit of justice, reconciliation, and freedom for all creation.

Together, we are claimed and sustained by sacraments; the physical sign that we are radically loved and accepted by God. We follow Christ to the waters of baptism where we are marked forever as God's own. The Spirit leads us to the Table, set for us by God, where we partake in a feast that transcends time and space. The bread of life and cup of salvation nurture and feed us as we encounter our Risen Lord and lift our prayer unending - 'Come, Lord Jesus.'

Sara Dorrien-Christians

I trust in the Triune God who creates, redeems, and sustains the cosmos and all that has breath.

Our God is known in the beauty of nature, through the love that binds humans across the distance and the days, by the order and intelligence of the universe, and most especially through God's covenant relationship with the Hebrew people and incarnation in Christ Jesus.

It is through scripture that we confirm not only God's existence, but God's character. Our God makes us in the divine image, expects us to live into that image, is faithful to us when we miss the mark, gives us a Law out of love and parental concern, insists through the prophets that we treat the most vulnerable with compassion, and makes us co-creators of a world that is just— where our own welfare is inexorably linked to the welfare of all.

I trust that in Jesus Christ, redemption was won. In Christ, God was made flesh—making that which was omnipotent something that could be seen, held, accompanied, and anointed.

In Jesus, the way of God was revealed, and it was not a way embraced by the present powers and principalities. Jesus was put on a cross, and left to die as an enemy of state and tribe. In his death he absorbed the world's sin and reconciled that which was estranged, and in his resurrection we are promised that death—*especially the death with inflict on one another*—does not have the final word. As God raised Jesus, God will raise us to new life.

I trust that by the power of the Holy Spirit, the gift of faith in Christ is granted, empowering us to live not in anxious striving for a perfection we cannot achieve, and not in paralyzing fear of death, but in the joyful freedom that enables genuine and courageous service to a world in need. I trust that by the power of the Spirit, the Church's faith in Christ is experienced and sealed through the Sacraments—baptism and the Lord's Supper. It is through them that we are sustained and empowered to live as a reflection of Christ: feeding the multitudes, healing the sick, comforting the afflicted, and witnessing to God's vision for our world.

I trust that in God's time, Christ will come again and complete the redemption of our bodies and our world. In the meantime, we live with a hope born of revelation: love is stronger than hate, forgiveness is stronger than sin, and life is stronger than death.

Amen

Linda Kurtz Burch

I believe in God, Jesus, and Holy Spirit; a relational, mysterious Trinity I will never entirely understand. Our God models the very kin-dom of heaven in mutuality between God, Christ, and Spirit. Our Creator made human beings in God's own image in a diversity that reflects the expansiveness of God. All that God makes is good; sin, then, is a departure from this goodness. All humans are complicit in sin, even before we can choose to be. As those made in God's image, humans live utterly dependent on God and serve as partners in God's work. To be in partnership with God requires nothing less than open, honest communication through word and deed. God hears us and reveals the Divine self to us, perhaps not in ways we expect or desire, but in ways God sees is right.

Jesus walked this Earth and revealed to humanity how to be people of God, emphasizing love for God and neighbor above all else. Jesus was the Word incarnate, fully human and fully divine; through his life, death, and resurrection we are redeemed and reconciled to God. We can therefore be assured of our salvation. However, humans do not decide who is saved or limit God's abounding grace – thanks be to God.

The Holy Spirit moves in moments of grace, wonder, and worship – and every moment in between. This relational Trinity calls us to live with one another in community that encourages and shapes our faith. Within this community – the Church – we lift each other up in happiness and in sorrow, celebrating and comforting one another. Sometimes, perhaps often, we even reveal God to one another. This community also seeks justice, drawing on the equality of the Trinity to work towards equality in the world. We share the love and forgiveness of Christ, often through the sacraments that convey the gift of grace and remind us of God's covenant. In our participation in these sacraments, we offer our lives to God. Through baptism, God claims us as God's own and connects us to the generations. Through the Lord's Supper, we remember Christ's sacrificial love for us and give thanks to God.

What we receive in the Church – in addition to the love and grace of Christ – is one another. The Church holds together people from a variety of experiences and opinions, creating a Spirit-filled tension that invites the faithful into a deeper understanding of scripture. Christian community is essential to the interpretation of the Word – guided by the Spirit. Scripture was inspired by God, its most powerful meanings are found in context, and the rule of faith and love in interpretation is essential.

We trust in Christian hope for the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. We are confident that God's freedom and righteousness will overcome unjust human structures when creation is renewed and restored. We live into hope, knowing death does not have the final say over our almighty, all-powerful, all-loving God. Indeed, we are an Easter people, called, as one hymn puts it, to "see what Love can do and dare."

Thomas Lovell

I believe there is only one Living and True God who is revealed in the Trinity of Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer. These three members of the Trinity which the church has known as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are joined together in such a way that they are at all times united in one substance, power and eternity.

I believe that God is the creator of all that exists, the source of all good and the ground of all being. God created the world in a perfect, sinless state, and pronounced it good. However, from the very beginning, we human beings have rejected God's control over our lives, rebelled against God's will, and disobeyed God's command. In short, we have sinned and have destroyed our relationship with God.

I believe that God has responded to our rejection, rebellion and disobedience with love and grace, and has revealed that love and grace to us in Jesus Christ. In his full humanity, Jesus endured the same trials and temptations we confront, but did not yield to them. Yet, he was crucified as a common criminal and buried in a borrowed grave. But death could not hold the Christ captive, for God raised him from the dead on the third day. Through his life, death and resurrection, Jesus Christ effected the salvation of all humanity. In his suffering and death, atonement for our sin has been given. In his resurrection, we are given the possibility of new and eternal life.

I believe that the Holy Spirit is the Lord and Giver of Life, sent to lead women and men to a saving faith in Jesus Christ, and to sustain, encourage and comfort those who profess such faith. It is the work of the Spirit to convict us of our sin and to lead us to a life of faith in accord with the model Christ has set before us.

I believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God, and that it is to serve as the only authoritative rule for our faith and life. I believe that as we read, study, pray over and discuss God's Word that the Holy Spirit moves within us and enables us to discern God's will for our lives.

I believe the church is a gathering of those who believe in Christ, called together to worship and serve God. The Christian Church is to be a witnessing and believing community which comes together as a supportive fellowship to be Christ's agents of welcome and reconciliation as it works for the establishment of justice and peace throughout the world.

I believe that there are two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which have been instituted by Christ as visible expressions of God's invisible grace. In conjunction with the reading and proclaiming of the Scriptures, the sacraments demonstrate, in dramatic and moving ways, the grace of God. In Baptism, we are initiated into the Body of Christ, the family of faith, and are reminded of God's promise of forgiveness and cleansing. In the Lord's Supper, we are reminded of the ultimate sacrifice Christ made on our behalf and of the communion we share with one another. Through our faith and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, these sacraments become a means by which God's grace is bestowed upon us.

I believe that the Christian life is a never-ending pilgrimage with God. It is to be a life of constant seeking and searching after God's will for our lives and answering God's call as we strive to model our life after the example set before us in Jesus Christ. In agreement with ***A Declaration of Faith***, I believe that ***“Jesus is Lord! He was Lord at the beginning. He will be Lord at the end. Even now he is Lord.”***

Mark Swart

I believe in one God revealed through the Bible and other historic, faithful witnesses as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the triune God existing in perfect community from the beginning to this day. God desired to share this perfect communion and created all things, including humankind to tend and care for everything else that had been made. However, the creation was not satisfied with not being supreme, and this ill-founded temptation repeatedly manifests itself to this day. Yet, God does not give up on nor abandon the creation. God continues to reign sovereign, to save, and to pursue relationship with humankind, forming a covenant with them that they might be an example to the rest of the world and bless the world as God has blessed them. This people, initially Israel, has their shortcomings, yet God provides them instruction and visible ways by which they might be made right with God and one another. God continues to send them messengers, prophets, who speak on God's behalf to call them back, and God will remain faithful to this covenant forever.

The shortcomings and inability to do what is right in the eyes of God by the people of Israel leads to God's greatest act of love in sending God's own Son, Jesus, to earth to be the ultimate sacrifice on the cross for the sin of the whole world. This Jesus, fully God and fully human, could identify with all the joys and struggles of humankind except he was without sin. His death and subsequent resurrection offer us all the victory over sin that leads to death. His followers, empowered by the Holy Spirit, the Helper who Jesus said would come after him, would expand this understanding of God's people to graft in not only those who would follow the ways of the old law but would live with a new understanding that could be boiled down to loving God and loving neighbor. This “new” people of God would be known as the Church whose charge would be the same as those from the beginning, to care for and bless all of creation, and to testify of the grace and salvation that God offers all through Jesus, until He comes again.

Not unlike Israel, this people have had their shortcomings. While intending to serve the best interests of the Church, power and money became temptations in denying access to the Bible to all and offering indulgences for financial contributions. These missteps led to the splintering of the Church through the Protestant Reformation and the introduction of some new tenets of understanding such as the Five Solas, which included “sola scriptura,” scripture as being the sole rule for faith and life. Additionally, the Church witnesses of this inward grace that God offers through visible signs called sacraments. The Protestant church generally only recognizes the two that Jesus himself engaged in, baptism and communion. That is not to say that the other five recognized in the Catholic church (confession, confirmation, ordination, marriage, and last rites) should be seen as entirely insignificant.

**Position Description – Levi Bannerman
Chaplain, University of Virginia**

Responsible for providing and coordinating pastoral care with patients, families, visitors, and staff; teaching chaplain residents, chaplain interns, medical students, community clergy, and community groups; and serving with special initiatives of the Medical Center such as with the bereavement committee and the critical incident committee.

- Provides empathic resourceful pastoral care.
- Ability to teach effectively.
- Ability to work as a member of the pastoral care team and interdisciplinary team.
- Values and practices the highest standards of professional and personal ethics.
- Participates in special initiatives and religious services within the Medical Center.
- Reaches out to community clergy and groups to provide educational support and coordination with medical center care.
- In addition to the above job responsibilities, other duties may be assigned.

Minimum Requirements

Education: Master of Divinity or similar seminary degree required. Completed Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) residency at an ACPE-certified center (minimum of four units of CPE). Experience: One year of relevant experience. Licensure: Ordination and endorsement by a religious community;

- Board Certification or eligibility for Board Certification by one of the following chaplain cognate groups:
 - The Association of Professional Chaplains
 - The National Association of Catholic Chaplains
 - Neshema: Association of Jewish Chaplains
 - If not board certified but board eligible, certification must be completed with two years of hire date.

Physical Demands

Job requires frequent traveling (distance: 500 yards). Proficient communicative, auditory and visual skills; Attention to detail and ability to write legibly; Ability to lift/push/pull < 20lbs. May be exposed to blood/body fluids and infectious disease.

Report of the Leadership Connections Team

Black Caucus

Our generation has been handed the torch for the Civil Rights struggle now and like the Jim Crow era of the past, the members of the Black Caucus Ministry stand emboldened against the scourge it represents today. We stand firm and will not ‘submit again to a yoke of slavery’ (i.e., white extremism, racial bias and revisionist history). We will trust and rely on the word of God ‘to uproot and tear down, to destroy and demolish, to build and plant’ for God’s glory. In order to consecrate ourselves as worthy before God, the Black Caucus is planning a covenant renewal celebration in the form of a Thanksgiving Revival Service for all churches in our Presbytery. It is our hope to build a cadre of covenant witnesses and plant the seed for spiritual unity on common ground as we receive God’s anointing grace. The Thanksgiving Revival Service is tentatively scheduled for November 15, 2025, 3:00 p.m., a church site to be determined by the end of October.

Rev. Ulysses Payne, Moderator

Older Adult Ministry

The Older Adult Ministry has created three videos to assist churches and individuals to examine a person's health in our "golden years." The three videos may be found on the Presbytery's website under the tab of "Ministries" and the further tab of "[Older Adult Ministry](#)." The three videos are under the heading of "Blessings of the Heart: Spirit, Mind and Body." We are grateful for the help of retired cardiologist Dr. Sheldon Thomas as he helps viewers explore the heart and its changes as we age. We are grateful for Physical Therapist from Westminster Canterbury, Taryn Young as she helps viewers explore simple procedures to provide some relief from stress and physical exercise that can be done from a chair. We are also grateful for Rev. Jay Morgan, Chaplain from Westminster Canterbury who explores aspects of spiritual life as we age. These videos are about 30 minutes in length and can be viewed as a group for discussion or simply for personal edification. We will be working on three more videos to add to our ministry.

Several of our members attended a Zoom webinar on "Ageism Awareness Day" which was October 9. The webinar was sponsored by VCU's Department on Gerontology and with the support from the RRF Foundation for Aging and The Old School Hub for Age Equity + Ageism Awareness. The program, Leading Change in Aging: Expanding Age Advocacy with American Society on Ageism with their ASA Rise program, explored opportunities and ways to expand ageism awareness.

The Older Adult Ministry is available to explore ways to help you with your ministry to older adults within your congregation. We also invite you to join us as we explore ways to expand our ministry and develop programs. We often meet via Zoom once a month. Contact George Whipple (gandjwhipple@aol.com) who will send you an invitation to our next meeting.
Rev. George Whipple, Moderator

Resource Center

Greetings, Friends, from The Resource Center! We are your resource connection, working in partnership with local theological schools and their libraries, as well as judicatories, local congregations, and affiliated organizations. Nearly 16,000 volumes await your exploration: a wide variety of curricula for all ages, books on Christian education, spiritual formation, and related topics in theology, media resources, art, artifacts, and so much more! Check out our newly updated searchable online catalog to explore the possibilities:
<http://www.resourcingchurches.com> (there is a link at the bottom of the main page).

Advent is coming! We have resources to help!

Advent is a time when congregations frequently plan special studies or times of gathering. The Resource Center has dozens of options for Advent studies, whether you prefer to read a book together, use a video series, or want to try something new. We will work with you to find and adapt tools and resources to design a strategy that is just right for your congregation! The Resource Center staff are just a phone call or email away!

A Plan for Ministry Going Forward

In partnership with the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology where we are physically located, The Resource Center will serve as the resourcing partner for the \$1 million Thriving Congregations grant from the Lilly Endowment. A small portion of the grant budget has been designated to acquire and provide resources in support of the grant's work. We hope to share very soon some of the great new resources we are able to provide through this grant! We keep innovating to serve you better with the thriving of your congregation as our first priority.

How to Get Involved

Every POJ congregation has access to The Resource Center free of charge to the congregations through the funding provided through the POJ budget! You are invited to contact Dr. Denise Janssen, executive director, at 708.955.8913 (cell) or REVDLJ@att.net. Even when we cannot gather, the staff of our Resource Center is here to help for consultation and resourcing virtually!
Denise Janssen, Executive Director

New Offering from LCT: Elder And Deacon Training

In conjunction with the PSCE (Presbyterians Supporting Christian Education) Program at Union Presbyterian Seminary, a new four session training opportunity is available for the Presbytery. The first offering will be on Tuesday and Thursday nights late October through November. The four classes will focus on (1) Spiritual Leadership as an Elder or Deacon; (2) Congregations and Property; (3) Ordered Ministries (Pastors, Elder, Deacons); and (4) Councils: Session, Presbytery, Synod, General Assembly.

Watch for more information and publicity. Cost will be \$50 per congregation with any number of Elders per congregation. Classes will be limited to 25 participants.
Rev. Carson Rhyne, LCT Moderator: carsonrhyne48@gmail.com

Report of the Mission Council

May – September 2025

The Mission Council of the Presbytery of the James (POJ) met on May 21, June 19, July 16, August 20, and September 17, 2025

Governance & Administrative Actions

- **Special Called Meeting — 2026 Budget:**
 - Mission Council approved the Budget Committee's report **and recommended that Presbytery vote on the 2026 budget at a called meeting on Thursday, November 13, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. (Zoom)**. The budget report will be posted on the POJ website by **October 18, 2025**. Two listening sessions have been scheduled for **October 29** and **November 3**.
 - Mission Council approved that **20% of the draw on investments** be used for Operations (authority for this draw is provided in the Resource Management Policy).
- **Manual of Administrative Operations:**
 - The revised Manual (updated to align with the Resource Management / Resource Management Policy) was approved for **presentation as a first read at the October 18, 2025 stated meeting**.
- **Conflict of Interest Policy:**
 - Previously reviewed by moderators, the updated Conflict of Interest Policy remains slated for Presbytery consideration (Mission Council had earlier recommended adoption; see prior reports).
- **Camp Hanover Covenant:**
 - RE Dan Jordanger, RE Cherry Peters, and TE Lynne Clements are meeting with representatives from Camp Hanover.

Budget & Finance

- **Trustward / Financial Services:** After a search process, Mission Council contracted with Trustward to provide our accounting services. Trustward provided regular financial reports (2025 Budget-to-Actual; Net Assets). Trustward is continuing the onboarding and transition to a new bill-pay software to increase accountability and streamline processes.

- **Montrose proceeds & investments:** Previously transferred to RBC per Mission Council direction (see earlier reports).
- **Small Church Grants:** Mission Council continued approving Small Church Grants (examples: Praise the Lord Church — accessibility work; Hebron Church — \$5,000 for playground renovation).

Personnel & Staffing

- **Staffing model & transitional roles:**
 - Effective August 1, 2025, Mission Council confirmed Rev. Kerry Foster as Temporary General Presbyterian and Temporary Stated Clerk, and Barbara Espigh as Temporary Assistant to the Stated Clerk / Associate for Administration, with adjusted compensation to be finalized by Personnel/Budget subcommittees.
 - The Personnel and Budget subcommittees continue their work on a sustainable staffing model.

Nominations & Administrative Commissions

- **Committee on Nominations (CON):**
 - Appointments made earlier in the summer: **Rev. Kate Fiedler** — Moderator (MAL), class of 2027; **Rev. Clay Macaulay** — (appointment corrected per Sept action; see note).
 - **Clerical correction:** Mission Council identified a clerical error: **Clay Macaulay** should be recorded as **Region C, class of 2026** (correction to be reflected in CON records).
 - **Open positions:** Vice-Moderator (RE, MAL), Region B TE (correction/clarity pending), Region C TE, and Region D RE remain to be filled. Mission Council continues recruitment.
- **Committee on Representation:** A ruling elder vacancy (class of 2027) was reported. Mission Council will seek nominees.
- **Forest Hill Administrative Commission (AC):**
 - Mission Council appointed **RE Cherry Peters, TE Mairi Renwick, and TE Lynn McClintock** to the AC in September; one or two additional ruling elders are still needed. The AC's membership continues to be bolstered to replace members rotating off in September.

Mission Priorities & Grants

- **Union Presbyterian Seminary:** Mission Council approved the transfer of **\$3,120.54** to Union Presbyterian Seminary to continue work begun by the POJ's Community of Ministry and Worship. UPSem is taking over this project.
- **Mission Priorities Task Force:** Mission Council authorized Joel and Josh to appoint members to a **Mission Priorities Task Force** charged to bring a recommendation for prioritizing POJ mission funding back to Mission Council by **May 2026**.

Communications, Connections & Task Forces

- **Communications Task Force:** Working on a communications survey to establish audience segments and needs (staff: Leah Tweel; Associate for Communications).
- **Connections Task Force:** Listening sessions continue across regions; early feedback emphasizes the importance of strengthening community, improving meeting formats, and right-sizing committee expectations.
- **Anti-Racism Committee request:** The Anti-Racism Committee requested (and Mission Council agreed) 15–20 minutes at each stated meeting in 2026 to provide education that will fulfill the training aspect of the Anti-Racism policy for those in attendance.

Upcoming / Action Items for Presbytery

- **October 18, 2025 (Stated Meeting):** Presbytery will receive:
 - First read — **Revised Manual of Administrative Operations.**
 - The three overtures from the World Mission Ministry (added to the agenda by Mission Council).
- **Special Called Meeting (Budget): November 13, 2025, 7:00 p.m. (Zoom)** — Presbytery will be asked to vote on the 2026 budget
- Listening sessions (Oct 29 & Nov 3 via Zoom).

The Mission Council makes the following consent agenda recommendations:

1. That Presbytery records be amended to reflect that Rev. Clay Macaulay is serving on CON, class of 2026, term 1, region C, to correct a clerical error.
2. That Presbytery ratify the Mission Council's appointment of RE Cherry Peters, TE Mairi Renwick, and TE Lynn McClintock to the Forest Hill Church Administrative Commission.

The Mission Council makes the following recommendations:

1. That Presbytery approve the agenda for the 121st Stated Meeting.
2. That the Presbytery affirm the "On Prohibiting Non-Disclosure Covenants in Employee Relations" Overture to be submitted from the Presbytery of the James to the 227th General Assembly.
3. That the Presbytery affirm the "A Call for Investigation of the Restructure of PC(USA) World Mission" Overture to be submitted from the Presbytery of the James to the 227th General Assembly.
4. That the Presbytery affirm the "Calling for a New Missiological Statement for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)" Overture to be submitted from the Presbytery of the James to the 227th General Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Morgan, Moderator, Mission Council: joelmissioncouncil@gmail.com

Mission Council Connections Taskforce Listening Sessions Summary

In May and June, RE Dave Thomen and TE Colleen Earp hosted 8 listening sessions, 6 in person and 2 on Zoom:

Wednesday 5/7: Bethlehem Presbyterian Church, Mechanicsville, VA

Monday 5/12: Zoom

Thursday 5/15: Milford Presbyterian Church, Milford, VA

Monday 5/19: Bon Air Presbyterian Church, North Chesterfield, VA

Thursday 5/22: Ebenezer Presbyterian Church, Kenbridge, VA

Tuesday 5/27: South Plains Presbyterian Church, Keswick, VA

Thursday 5/29: Zoom

Tuesday 6/3: First United Presbyterian Church, Richmond, VA

These sessions included 50 unique people total (not including the hosts or repeat visits). We had 31 congregations represented– almost 1/3 of the presbytery! We also welcomed 6 participants serving outside of congregational ministry/members at large/retired and not affiliated

Some had overlapping roles, and some are retired from these roles, but participants included:

- 18 Ruling Elders
- 28 Teaching Elders
- 2 Directors of Christian Ed
- 1 Inquirer
- 3 Mid-council staff
- 1 CRE

We had the same plan for each meeting: facilitate a bit of getting to know each other by comparing and contrasting our ministries and worshiping communities in pairs, and then discussing the following questions:

1. How do you define “presbytery,” both as a community and an institution?
2. What do we hope for in the Presbytery of the James?
3. What did we learn new about God, our neighbors, or ourselves in this gathering?

Some of the big themes we noticed:

- People like getting together and getting to know other Presbyterians!
 - Folks acknowledged that we can do a better job of this ourselves, and take initiative...
 - And also had great appreciation for having it facilitated sometimes-- people are tired, with little spare bandwidth to organize things
- Zoom options for meetings remain important, with an acknowledgement that being in the room is always better. Distance and accessibility are big factors in people attending on Zoom. Most people are not choosing Zoom over in-person out of personal convenience, but actual needs.
- We could use a little reorganization. Committee sizes and the arrangement of our regions reflect the way our presbytery looked decades ago, not our current state.
- We remain hopeful for the presbytery as an institution and a community!
 - We have lots of different ideas about how that can and should look.
 - We have an appreciation for presbytery as a source of resources (people, ideas, support) and accountability (boundaries/an organization to operate within).

Overtures

On Prohibiting Non-Disclosure Covenants in Employee Relations

The Presbytery of _____ overtures the 227th General Assembly (2026) of the PC(USA):

- 1) To direct staff to rewrite employee policies concerning the use of non-disclosure covenants with all employees, and to re-establish the authority of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in hiring and employee relations, making clear that when state law contradicts the Constitution, the Constitution holds primary authority in employee relations with staff of all agencies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at all levels;
- 2) To report on revisions in employee policies to the 228th General Assembly (2028).

Rationale

The 226th General Assembly approved an overture that was subsequently passed by the presbyteries, which operates to prohibit the use of non-disclosure agreements in pastoral calls (POL-08, On Dissolution of Pastoral Relationships). The rationale for that overture reminded commissioners of the vows people take at ordination to serve one another, God, and God’s church with love, citing W-4.0404. The overture noted that non-disclosure agreements move people in congregations and other bodies of the church to the opposite of this, and to “engender speculation rather than truth-seeking,” inviting “speculation that is typically a disservice to all parties.”

Mission co-workers employed by PC(USA) World Mission found themselves in a like position to those who have served under non-disclosure agreements in and with the councils of the denomination. When the decision was made to terminate all mission co-worker positions in March 2025, those serving in these positions served under a non-disclosure covenant, which staff of the Interim Unified Agency (IUA) have labored since the plan to terminate mission co-workers was made public to define as *not* a non-disclosure agreement. However, mission co-workers who chose to share their sense of what was happening received threats and warnings from supervisory IUA staff, who reminded them of the covenant under which they served, and raised the possibility of losing severance if mission co-workers continued sharing about their experiences.

Additionally, the law of the state of Kentucky was brought to bear in the mission co-worker firing process. Mission co-workers served under appointment for a set term of years. So, they understood—as did the global partners with whom they served—that their employment was secure for at least the terms of their appointments. However, Kentucky has “at-will” employment, and this was referenced to mission co-workers who brought up the issue of their appointment terms. Mission co-workers were advised by IUA staff that they would not receive an answer to questions about why their positions were being terminated, and the right to fire employees at will and without cause was also referenced.

It has become clear that non-disclosure covenants and non-disclosure agreements are an example of a distinction without a difference. It has also become increasingly clear that the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has the capacity to lead the denomination toward more faithful relationships between all in the church and the world, and between employer and employee, and should be thus used to do this faithful work. It is crucial, then, that those who serve the IUA and our global partners be accorded the respect and love outlined in the Constitution of the PC(USA). This overture seeks to employ and build upon the wisdom of the 226th General Assembly in prohibiting non-disclosure agreements to prohibit non-disclosure covenants as well, and to expand this prohibition in hiring, termination, and employee relations with all IUA staff (and the staff of any future agency leading the denomination), wherever they may serve in the world.

A Call for Investigation of the Restructure of PC(USA) World Mission

The Presbytery of _____ overtures the 227th General Assembly (2026) of the PC(USA):

1. To direct the Moderator or Co-Moderators to form a commission tasked with the following:
 - a. To investigate decision making processes employed and actions taken that resulted in the elimination of the PC(USA) World Mission and the termination of all appointed Mission Co-Worker positions of those who were serving in March 2025, and the formation of a new model of global engagement;
 - b. To determine the extent to which the decision making processes employed and actions taken by the Unification Commission and the Interim Unified Agency conformed to or violated policy mandates of the General Assembly including (but not limited to) *Presbyterians do Mission in Partnership, Gathering for God's Future*, CR-08 On Maintaining the International Presence of Global Mission Personnel to Embody Our Christian Witness, and Reformed theological understandings of church found in the Constitution of the PC(USA);
 - c. To review comments, advice, and guidance that the former Presbyterian Mission Agency, the Interim United Agency, and the Unification Commission solicited or received from global partners concerning the revision of the PC(USA)'s model of global engagement during the period 2018-2025 (including but not limited to the series of global partner consultations held in 2018-2019, the consultations held in connection with the development of "Reflecting, Reimagining, and Making Space for Rebuilding" prepared by CounterStories Consulting in September 2021, consultations with the Global Partner Roundtable, and responses to the survey the Interim Unified Agency sent to global partners in December 2024) and to assess the extent to which partner input was or was not accommodated; and
 - d. To report to the 228th General Assembly the findings of the commission, and to recommend appropriate actions of acknowledgement, confession, repentance, and reparation.

Rationale Summary

The actions of the Interim Unified Agency (IUA) of the PC(USA) in dissolving PC(USA) World Mission in February 2025, terminated the ministries of all Mission Co-Workers. Such a drastic step does not seem to have been taken with due care or thorough investigation. Plus, this decision was made without consulting global partners or following the mandate of the 226th General Assembly, thus violating our missiological principles and weakening the bond between the PC(USA) and its global partners. This overture calls for an investigation into the decision-making process with a report to be made to the 228th General Assembly.

Rationale

Citing its commitment to redress the "historical harms of missionaries" and "help the church better engage," the Interim Unified Agency (IUA) of the PC(USA) announced the dissolution of PC(USA) World Mission in February 2025 and terminated the ministries of all Mission Co-Workers the following month. Without posting new positions, and specific skills sought, the IUA hired some Mission Go-Workers as global and domestic ecumenical liaisons, positions that have yet to be defined, to take part in a new model of global engagement that violates the missiological principles of prior GA actions. Such appointments cause division between those Mission Co-Workers who were offered a position in the new model and the majority of Mission Co-Workers, who were not.

For almost 200 years, Presbyterian World Mission provided the denomination, local congregations, and mid councils opportunities to connect with the global church, participate in God's mission around the world, learn from the faith and experiences of our siblings abroad, and receive leaders, such as the Rev. Syngman Rhee and the Rev. Jihyun Oh, and thus live out the church's calling to be connectional and apostolic. Stories about what God is doing among our siblings abroad, mission interpretation from mission co-workers, and the work of PC(USA) Mission Networks formed and informed the denomination's understanding of God, God's people, and God's world. The dissolution of PC(USA) World Mission has deprived the denomination of opportunities to connect with, to learn from, and to be led by the global church.

In its enthusiasm to cut costs, IUA's firing of the mission co-workers follows neither the mandate of the 226th General Assembly nor facilitates the denomination's global engagement. Instead, subcontracting our mission work to ecumenical agencies headquartered in Europe has weakened the bond between the General Assembly, local congregations, mid councils, and mission networks with our global partners.

By not communicating with local congregations, mid councils, and the Mission Networks engaged in many global regions, the IUA left much of the PC(USA) ignorant of decisions being made and how Presbyterians could respond. Congregations and mid councils who have faithfully donated funding for specific ministries, trusting PC(USA) World Mission as a reliable partner in mission, now find themselves betrayed by the denomination.

Ironically, in its eagerness to "decolonize" the denomination's "theology, missiology, and practical engagement," the IUA employed colonial, top-down strategies. 20 years of discernment in which global partners and Presbyterians engaged about mission theology and modalities was not consulted and the voices of our global partners were not heard. Surveys sent to global partners in December 2024, inquiring about the relevance of the current model of mission and the ministry of mission co-workers laboring with them, were responded to. But these were not received by the IUA before decisions were announced by the IUA about the withdrawal of all mission co-workers and a turn from incarnational ministries of appointed mission personnel living in community and solidarity with our partners. This created significant ministry disruption for many global partners and was received as completely insensitive to the relationship between the PC(USA) and our partner churches. Written communications sent to global partners announcing the termination of mission co-worker positions did not name those whose positions were eliminated, identify the ministries in which they were invited to take part, or thank the partners for hosting our mission co-workers. The decision to terminate mission co-workers was unilateral, and the communication about it proved to be paternalistic. By not consulting our global siblings and communicating very late, the IUA did not present itself as an equal ally, but as a dominant partner in a position of power, speaking to subordinates whose opinions were not needed for decisions to be made.

The process of eliminating this critical aspect of the church's calling culminated in the termination of the position of Mission Co-Worker in March 2025. Mission co-workers not only lost their jobs but were restricted from openly grieving their loss to continue the ministry to which they felt called by God. By employing them, PC(USA) World Mission had affirmed their calling and gifts for this ministry. Congregations and mid councils also affirmed their calling and gifts, as did our global partners by inviting and hosting them. In response to their call, mission co-workers identified themselves with and advocated for the least of our siblings abroad. They joined our global partners and represented the denomination's commitment to justice, reconciliation, and holistic transformation. Characterizing mission co-workers as vestiges of colonialism not only demonstrates the IUA's ignorance of the history of Presbyterian mission but also insults those mission workers who allied with the colonized communities in their latter's freedom struggles against the colonial powers.

This overture calls for the processes by which these decisions were made to be investigated, to determine how the decisions conform with or violate PC(USA) GA actions, to review the years of global consultations and study results, and to report to the 228th General Assembly with appropriate recommendations.

Calling for a New Missiological Statement for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

The Presbytery of _____ overtures the 227th General Assembly (2026) of the PC(USA):

1. To direct staff, accompanied by an advisory group to be named by the Moderator or Co-Moderators, to develop a new missiological statement on which the global engagement of the PC(USA) will be founded, answering at minimum these questions, and other questions as they emerge:
 - a. What is the missiology of the PC(USA), and how does this guide the church to serve God and neighbor and inform the global engagement of the church?
 - b. How does this missiology relate to past statements and mission work, and how does it serve the contexts of the mission of God undertaken by the PC(USA) nationally and internationally?
 - c. Who engages in the global mission of the PC(USA), and how are each group or individual engaging?
 - d. What new and renewed models are in place or emerging to serve God's mission through the PC(USA) and its members and member entities, agencies, networks, mid-councils, and congregations
 - e. What is the PC(USA) sending body framework or frameworks for mission, and what protections and safeguards for those sent and those with whom they serve are in place or need to be developed?
 - f. What funding models are in place or need to be developed?
2. Staff and the advisory group are directed to ensure meaningful consultation with representatives of the following groups in their work:
 - a. Missiological scholars who are members of the PC(USA)
 - b. Former staff members of PC(USA) World Mission who have served internationally with and under the supervision of global partners
 - c. PC(USA) Mission Networks
 - d. PC(USA) mid councils engaged in global mission
 - e. Congregations engaging in global mission
 - f. PC(USA) global partners
3. To report to the 228th General Assembly

Rationale Summary

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s decision to close Presbyterian World Mission (PWM) in 2025 disregards the Reformed tradition's commitment to global partnerships and egalitarianism. The move, justified by concerns about colonialism and financial instability, violates the church's missiological principles and partnerships. Financial sustainability should not override theological commitments. Our new situation, our historic commitment to incarnating the Gospel in our world and our dedication to ministry with our partner churches (not just ecumenical institutions) necessitates that we clarify our current missiology for ourselves, our partners and our world.

Rationale

The termination of Presbyterian World Mission (PWM) by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in 2025 exposes a profound lack of understanding by the denomination's leadership concerning a Reformed missiological framework. Since its inception, the Reformed theological tradition has distinguished itself as an ecumenical and transnational church, developing and funding partnerships at home and abroad as part of its evangelical* mission. In the sixteenth century, Calvin's Geneva became a haven for Protestant refugees fleeing persecution throughout Catholic Europe. Himself a displaced political refugee, John Calvin's ministry in Geneva became a beacon for refugees throughout Europe, who came to Geneva to learn under Calvin to then replicate his successes back home. The Genevan church not only supported the repatriation of Protestant refugees in Europe, but it also funded the first Protestant mission in the New World with the establishment of a French Huguenot colony in Brazil in 1555.

However, not only is the closure of PWM a betrayal of the global scope of Presbyterian ministries, but it comes at the expense of our most foundational ecclesiological commitments. Protestant reformers in the sixteenth century were careful not to replace one clerical hierarchy with another, as evidenced by the representational church order described in the fourth book of John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559). Given every Christian is subject to Christ's lordship, from the lowliest laborer to the highest ruling monarch, the communion of saints (*communio sanctorum*) is ultimately an egalitarian fellowship (*koinōnia*), a shared life together in which all believers are responsible for and accountable to one another. This, above all else, is the basis on which ecclesiastical and civil policies are founded. Therefore, the kind of unilateral decision-making that led to the closure of PWM without adequate dialogue and consultation reflects a careless disregard for our most foundational Reformed theological commitments.

One of the reasons given by the Interim Unification Agency (IUA) to justify the closure of PWM was the inherent coloniality of missions. When we refer to the coloniality of missions, we are referring to a way of doing missions such that usually Western missionaries impose Western ideas of "gospel," "civilization," and "progress" onto local cultures. Historically, missions often marched in lockstep with colonial projects and for that reason the document, "Presbyterians Do Mission in Partnership," presented a model of partnership in which Presbyterian mission co-workers established partnerships with local communities, allowing themselves to be guided by their wisdom and guidance. Instead of perpetuating a colonial attitude marked by a one-sided relationship in which the missionary party holds the power and resources and could, therefore, dictate to the local mission partners what they should do, Presbyterian mission workers have followed this more egalitarian and contextual missiological model assiduously and, in the process, become valuable colleagues for local churches around the world.

If colonialism is marked by a one-sided relationship in which one party holds the power to dictate or compel the other party or parties, then the actions of the Interim Council fit that bill. If PC(USA) global partners were indeed partners, then they would have been consulted before engaging in the radical reconfiguring of PC(USA) World Mission. Based on the reactions of many global partners, it appears that this consultation did not happen, and the unilateral action came as a surprise to them. This not only violates the missiology of "Presbyterians Do Mission in Partnership" but also treats our global partners like expendable mission co-workers who could be terminated unilaterally and without consultation in order to preserve the financial viability of the PC(USA).

Second, if the PC(USA) is not adhering to its official missiological statements, what missiology then drives this move to eliminate PC(USA) World Mission? In statements on the matter, the leadership has moved to transition PC(USA) World Mission into a ministry called Global Ecumenical Partners.

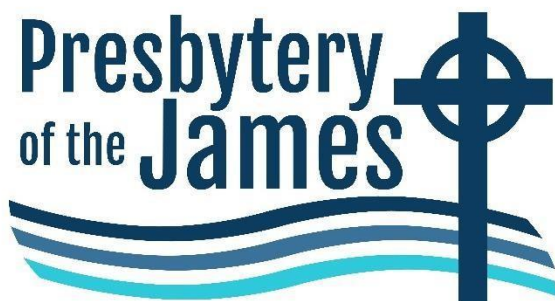
The rationale given by IUA staff for this abrupt restructuring was a desire to increase interconnectedness in the global church while addressing the financial instability of the PC(USA). With regards to the former, interconnectedness does not reduce the need for mission. Conservative denominations are doubling down on their missionary work, filling the void where the PC(USA) has withdrawn, advancing theological, ecclesiological, and missiological ideas that differ from our own. Furthermore, the work of PC(USA) World Mission was already ecumenical on a local level. Many mission co-workers participated in ecumenical partnerships locally to engage justice issues. However, what the IUA is referring to is not these local ecumenical efforts but supranational organizations such as the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC). There is no evidence that the PC(USA) will increase its financial support to the WCRC while it presses the WCRC to take over the work of PC(USA) World Mission, which makes the decisions by IUA leadership look like an effort to outsource world missions to the WCRC. In other words, leadership has failed to demonstrate how the move toward increasing the interconnectedness of the world church translates to the drastic action of eliminating PC(USA) World Mission.

Sadly, this leaves financial sustainability as the only plausible rationale for the elimination of PC(USA) World Mission. Financial sustainability motivated by the fear of a declining denomination cannot serve as a theological “state of exception” that allows the PC(USA) to violate its own theological/missiological statements. We worship the God who sends the church into the world, not the Mammon who seeks its own self-preservation. In the end, there was no justifiable missiological justification for the termination of PC(USA) World Mission and the unjust firings of its mission co-workers. Granted, the closure of PC(USA) World Mission comes at a time when global ministries are struggling to make up for funding deficits after the Trump administration cut funding for programs the US Agency for International Development (USAID). But the PC(USA)’s fiscal worries cannot be allowed to constitute a state of exception that allows the denomination to act against its own doctrinal and polity statements. Such a “missiology” is neither a theology of missions nor is it decolonial in any sense of the term. This theological lacuna, which has already unjustly upended the work of 79 mission co-workers and thrown a curveball at so many partnerships around the world, needs to be addressed in a properly Reformed manner. This overture aims to produce a missiological statement that can guide the PC(USA)’s mission policy now and in the future.

* The term “evangelical” is here used in the original sixteenth century meaning to refer to the Gospel-centered reformations that came to differentiated Protestantism from the Roman Catholic Church. In our day and age, the capitalized form of this term (“Evangelical”) is used to refer to various conservative religious movements in the United States informed by the publication of *The Fundamentals* (1910-1915), a series of tracts that provide "a new statement of the fundamentals of Christianity" in response to the Social Gospel and Protestant Liberalism.

Presented as a first Read:

Manual of Administrative Operations



Presbytery of the James 3218 Chamberlayne Avenue Richmond, VA 23227 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

WORKING DRAFT August 15, 2025

SECTION ONE DEFINITION AND ORGANIZATION OF THE PRESBYTERY OF THE JAMES

A. Definition of the Presbytery; Mission and Vision Statements

This council shall be known as the Presbytery of the James (“presbytery”) of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The presbytery shall consist of all teaching elders who have been received into membership and all member churches within the geographic bounds of the presbytery.

The presbytery is established by the authority of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic and has those duties, authorities, powers, and responsibilities specified by the *Book of Order*.

We declare our dependence upon God, reliance upon God’s revealed will in Scripture, the grace of Christ in our individual and corporate lives, and the life-giving breath of the Spirit. We reaffirm the *Book of Confessions* as faithful expressions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do.

Therefore, as part of the Church universal, we, the Presbytery of the James, in the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic, of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), hereby declare our *mission* as disciples of Jesus Christ:

The mission of the Presbytery of the James is to support leaders, congregations, and ministries in growing followers of Jesus Christ who joyfully live out God’s mission in the world.

The presbytery strives to bring the rich history, tradition, faith, and hope of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to Central Virginians through its congregations and ministries. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Holy Scripture, the Reformed Tradition, and our Confessions, we commit ourselves personally and communally to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. God calls individuals, groups, and congregations to fulfill the Great Commission. God also provides talents and opportunities for people and congregations to fulfill the Great Commission. The presbytery is called to provide ways and means by which individuals and congregations can be faithful beyond their own selves or their own congregation. Our calling is to enable God’s mission to be understood and fulfilled where an individual, a group, or a single congregation cannot fulfill that mission.

To that end, our *vision* as disciples of Jesus Christ focuses on:

- **Christ-centered Spiritual Growth:** specifically as this relates to presbytery leadership staff resourcing and supporting church leaders, pastors, and ministries.
- **Communication and Coordination:** specifically as these relate to connecting churches and ministries with one another and creating vital partnerships.

The presbytery ~~will~~ fulfills its obligations and responsibilities under the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and ~~be~~ is guided by our vision. The following are ways through which we will be faithful:

~~Mission and Service: seeking ways to be involved in mission and service to Jesus Christ as a presbytery.~~

~~**Leadership Connections:** seeking ways to develop leaders in our congregations and in our presbytery to be more faithful disciples.~~

~~**Communication and Collaboration:** seeking ways to share among our congregations and members the rich resources God has provided and empowering people and congregations to network with one another in our common mission.~~

Constitutional Committees: seeking ways to fulfill constitutional responsibilities in accordance with the *Book of Order* through a Commission on Ministry (COM), A Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM), A Committee on Nominations (CON), A Committee on Representation (COR), and the Permanent Judicial Commission (PJC).

A Mission Council (MC) the purpose of which is to facilitate effective and efficient communication between and among the various entities and members of the presbytery and to provide coordination of the operations of the presbytery.

Other Entities – committees, commissions and teams as the Presbytery establishes from time to time to advance its mission and express its vision.

(See section Five – D and the appendix)

B. Policies and Guidelines

1. **Policies:** A *policy* shall be considered to establish future courses of actions and would apply to all entities of the presbytery. Committees, commissions, constitutional committees, and teams (“entities”) of the presbytery may develop policies. Such policies shall be approved by a majority vote of the presbytery, and may be revised or eliminated with a majority vote of the presbytery.
2. **Guidelines:** A *guideline* shall be considered to be operational in nature and would apply only to the entity of the presbytery that develops it. Each committee, commission, constitutional committee, or team (“entity”) may develop operational guidelines consistent with the requirements of the *Book of Order*. Such guidelines do not require presbytery approval. The presbytery shall be informed of the creation of or substantive changes to any entity’s guidelines.

C. Articles of Agreement

As a member presbytery of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic, the presbytery is subject to the covenant commitments of the “Articles of Agreement” for the Presbyteries of Blue Ridge, Fincastle, Hanover, Norfolk, and Southern Virginia approved on February 20, 1988 (see Appendix).

SECTION TWO MEETINGS OF THE PRESBYTERY

A. Time and Date of Meetings

The Presbytery of the James will hold its three stated meetings on the third Saturday in February, ~~third~~ **second** Tuesday in June (this date shall be adjusted to avoid conflict with meetings of the General Assembly), and third Saturday in October. Special meetings may be called in accordance with the *Book of Order* G-3.0304. The moderator shall call a special meeting at the request of three teaching elders and three ruling elders from three different congregations.

B. Location of Meetings

Invitations from sessions to host the presbytery should be sent to the stated clerk for presentation to the Mission Council (MC) (for duties, see Section Five, D.1.). Additionally, the MC will solicit physical locations and host churches, if necessary. Virtual meetings are permitted using a platform accessible to the majority of the members and commissioners. Hybrid meetings (simultaneously in-person and virtual) are permitted and shall be hosted at a location with strong internet connectivity.

C. Voting Commissioners

The stated clerk shall propose each year the number of ruling elder commissioners required to ensure parity with the number of teaching elder members of the presbytery. Where there is an imbalance between the number of resident teaching elders who are members of the presbytery and the number of ruling elders which the churches are entitled to send as commissioners to presbytery meetings, the presbytery will give priority to sessions of racial/ethnic congregations in the invitation to elect additional elder commissioners (F-1.0403, G-3.0103, G-3.0301).

The voting commissioners for each presbytery meeting shall be:

1. Teaching elders who have been received into membership in the Presbytery;
2. Ruling elders who are:
 - a. Elected by each member congregation's session in accordance with the *Book of Order* G-3.0301;
 - b. Certified Christian educators who are members of a presbytery congregation;
 - c. Serving as moderator or vice moderator of the presbytery or as moderator of a presbytery committee, commission, team, or constitutional committee;
 - d. Commissioned ~~pastors~~ Ruling Elders (CREs) serving a presbytery congregation or ministry; and
 - e. The stated clerk.

Voting commissioners must be in attendance (either physically or virtually) at the meeting to cast a vote.

D. Other Participants

Other participants shall consist of the following, all of whom shall have voice but no vote:

1. Other certified lay employees;
2. Corresponding members (ecumenical representatives, ruling elders who are former presbytery moderators, and teaching elder members of other presbyteries or denominations who are supplying churches of the presbytery), who are invited and encouraged to attend presbytery meetings;
3. Ruling elders and other lay people who are members of entities of the presbytery but not commissioners to the presbytery meeting.

E. Quorum

A quorum shall be twelve teaching elders and twelve ruling elders, assembled at the time, place, and platform appointed, provided that ruling elder commissioners from at least ten congregations are present.

F. Agenda

The agenda for meetings of the presbytery shall be prepared jointly by the MC and stated clerk. The proposed agenda with reports and recommendations of entities shall be distributed to teaching elders, ruling elder commissioners, and Christian educators at least two weeks before the presbytery meets.

G. Overtures

Overtures to the presbytery from sessions shall be submitted to the stated clerk in writing at least eight (8) weeks prior to a stated meeting of the presbytery for inclusion on the agenda. The MC shall consider each overture and recommend action to be taken on the overture by the presbytery at its next stated meeting.

If a session presents an overture to the stated clerk less than eight (8) weeks prior to a stated meeting, the overture may be submitted by the stated clerk and the moderator of the MC to the presbytery for its consideration as an “Overture of the Day” at its next stated meeting. In order for the overture to be added to the agenda as new business, a two-thirds vote of the presbytery is required. Ordinarily the MC shall meet to consider such an overture prior to action by the presbytery.

Requests from other presbyteries to concur with an approved overture of the other presbytery to the General Assembly shall be considered in the same manner as described in the previous paragraphs.

H. Presbyterian Order

The presbytery shall be governed in its meetings by the *Book of Order*, the *Manual of Administrative Operations (“Manual”)*, and where neither of these applies, by the latest edition of *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised*.

SECTION THREE OFFICERS OF THE PRESBYTERY

The officers of the presbytery, elected by the presbytery, shall be the moderator and the stated clerk. The presbytery may also elect a Vice Moderator.

A. The Moderator

A moderator shall serve for one calendar year and may concurrently serve on an elected team, commission, or constitutional committee. The moderator shall perform duties according to the *Book of Order* and the *Manual* of the presbytery. The moderator shall be responsible for conducting the meetings of the presbytery. In the absence of the moderator, the vice moderator shall moderate. In the event that both moderator and vice moderator cannot serve, the most recent past moderator being present shall moderate. While serving as moderator, the moderator shall also sit on the MC with voice and vote.

B. The Vice Moderator

A vice moderator shall serve for one calendar year and may concurrently serve on an elected team, commission, or constitutional committee. The vice moderator may perform any duties delegated by the currently serving moderator. While serving as vice moderator, the vice moderator shall also sit on the MC with voice but not vote.

C. The Election of the Moderator and Vice Moderator

At the October stated meeting of the presbytery, the Committee on Nominations (“CON”) shall announce nominees for moderator and vice moderator for the following calendar year. After the nominees are announced, the floor shall be open for other nominations. Any person being nominated shall have been notified prior to nomination and shall have given consent to such nomination. The moderator and vice moderator elected at the October stated meeting shall be installed and begin serving at the February stated meeting. The vice moderator will ordinarily be nominated for election to the office of moderator for the following year.

D. The Stated Clerk

The presbytery shall elect a stated clerk for a term of office not to exceed three (3) years. The MC shall receive applications and present a nominee to the presbytery for election. The stated clerk shall be eligible for re-election by the presbytery upon nomination by the MC. The stated clerk shall perform duties according to the *Book of Order*, the *Manual* of the presbytery, and the approved position description. These duties shall include responsibility for the annual review of the session records and the annual re-balancing of ruling elder commissioners. The presbytery may elect a recording clerk whose duties shall be performed according to the *Manual* of the presbytery and under the supervision of the stated clerk.

Should an unexpected vacancy occur in the Stated Clerk position between stated meetings of the presbytery, the Mission Council is granted authority to elect a Temporary

Stated Clerk to fulfill the duties of the Stated Clerk and to serve until the election of a Stated Clerk by the presbytery. The Mission Council shall begin a search for the Stated Clerk position as soon as is practicable, for recommendation to and election by the presbytery at a meeting of the presbytery.

SECTION FOUR THE CORPORATION AND TRUSTEES

A. The Corporation

The name of the corporation is Trustees of Presbytery of the James, Inc. The presbytery shall elect trustees to the corporation which is incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Its charter shall be subject to approval and modification from time to time by the presbytery. The members of the Mission Council (MC) shall serve as the trustees of the presbytery.

B. Membership

The trustees shall be the same members as the current membership of the MC. The trustees shall elect their own officers at their annual meeting held in January. The stated clerk will generally serve as the secretary, and the ~~lead~~ **general** presbyter shall generally serve *ex officio* and shall ordinarily be elected as treasurer of the Board.

C. Duties

1. The trustees shall act in accordance with their corporate By-Laws, Manual of Operations and the Resource Management Policy.
2. The trustees oversee the management of property, investments, and financial matters of the presbytery.
3. The trustees are empowered by the presbytery to act as a commission between presbytery meetings with the powers of section G-4.0206a and G-4.0206b of the *Book of Order*. The commission powers

granted to the trustees shall not include authority to authorize the presbytery's trustees to incur new debt (as guarantor, co-obligor, or otherwise) for amounts in excess of \$50,000 or to sell or encumber presbytery assets not held by particular churches. Such authority is reserved to the whole presbytery. The commission powers granted to the trustees shall only be exercised by the trustees if at least two-thirds of the trustees voting agree that postponing action until the next meeting of the presbytery would negatively affect a congregation's property needs significantly and unavoidably.

4. The trustees shall give annually a written account of all assets entrusted to them at a stated meeting of the presbytery.

5. [The trustees shall annually secure an independent financial review in accordance with G-3.0113 and the presbytery's RMP IV.C.](#)

6. The trustees may establish committees and task forces as may be necessary to discharge their duties, such as an Investment Advisory Group and a Property Committee.

SECTION FIVE THE WORK AND STRUCTURE OF THE PRESBYTERY

The work and mission of the presbytery shall be planned and carried out through entities (e.g., committees, commissions, teams, and [other entities](#)) which shall be directly responsible to and report directly to the presbytery at regularly stated meetings. Each entity may establish sub-committees and/or task forces to help plan and carry out its work.

A. Election, Quorum, Membership, and Term on Entities

All members of entities [except CON and Committee on Representation (COR)] shall be placed in nomination by CON and elected by the presbytery. Each person nominated to serve on any entity of the presbytery must be a member in good standing of a presbytery congregation or a teaching elder member of the presbytery. Moderators and vice moderators of entities shall be members-at-large on that entity and not representing specific nominating regions. [All members of presbytery entities shall have fulfilled the presbytery's requirements for boundary training and child and vulnerable persons protection and any other constitutional requirements before beginning service.](#)

Members of the CON and COR shall be nominated by the MC and elected by the presbytery.

Unless otherwise stated, a quorum for entities of the presbytery shall be a majority of its members.

Election to an entity of the presbytery is viewed as a call to service in the church. Elected members are expected to carry out their responsibilities in faithfulness. If a member has an unexcused absence from three (3) consecutive meetings, CON may nominate a replacement if requested by the moderator of the entity.

Each member of an entity of the presbytery shall serve, unless otherwise provided herein, a term of three (3) years and may not serve more than six (6) consecutive years. Service for a part of a calendar year shall be counted as a full year of service. Ordinarily the vice moderator shall succeed the moderator of an entity.

CON shall stagger the terms of entity members so that ordinarily no more than one third of the membership of the body will be required to rotate off at the same time. CON shall be guided by the principle that ensure that all nominating regions are should be represented on the entities.

Where commission powers are granted to an entity by the presbytery, the entity shall be composed of ruling elders and teaching elders “in numbers as nearly equal as possible” (*Book of Order* G-3.0109b).

Entities may elect co-opted members to assist in their work. Such members will serve one-year terms which may be renewable and are limited to six (6) consecutive years. Coopted members shall have voice but not vote at the entity level. They may have vote at the subcommittee level.

B. Conflict of Interest Policy

All entities of the presbytery are entrusted by the members of the presbytery with responsibilities which affect the whole of the presbytery. Therefore, it is important that all people honor that trust. This requires honesty, competence, and care in managing the financial and ethical arrangements of the entities. No elected or appointed member of any entity shall accept any gift, gratuity, service, or any special favor from any person or persons, agents, or businesses which provide or receive goods and services or which seek to provide or receive goods and services to or from the entities of the presbytery.

~~Teaching elders and certified Christian educators who are members of the presbytery will be paid “expenses only” for presbytery sponsored events that are in the normal course of duties as a teaching elder and Christian educator. Non-certified Christian educators and employed professionals within congregations of the presbytery and outside presenters will be paid through negotiations with the appropriate entity.~~

Anyone who has a personal interest in a matter before the presbytery – or any entity of the presbytery – shall be understood to have a conflict of interest. Anyone with a close family member (e.g., spouse, parent, sibling, or child) who has such a personal interest shall also be understood to have a conflict of interest. “Personal interest” shall be construed to mean a unique and individual interest not common to other members. Any person who might derive benefit from a decision of a presbytery entity shall not be a member of that entity. During meetings of the presbytery and any of its entities, persons regarded as having a conflict of interest shall disclose this before speaking about, advocating for, or participating in debate regarding the subject of the conflict.

Members of presbytery and its entities should not vote on subjects in which they have a direct personal interest not common for other members of presbytery; however, no member can be compelled to refrain from voting in such circumstances. This guidance should not be construed to mean that a member may not vote for themselves for an office or other position for which other members generally are eligible.

No member of an entity of the presbytery shall be eligible during the term for which they are elected or appointed to become employees of or otherwise render compensable services to that entity unless approved by the MC and the presbytery. However, members of presbytery entities may apply for staff positions that come open within the presbytery. If hired, they shall resign from service to that entity.

C. Nominating Process

The presbytery shall be divided into six (6) nominating regions for the purpose of electing people to entities.

Each committee, commission, team, and other elected entities shall be an expression of the variety and rich diversity of the presbytery and ordinarily should have at least one representative from each of the six nominating regions.

At all times, nominations to committees, commissions, teams, and other entities shall take into consideration appropriate representation of elder status (teaching / ruling), age, gender, ethnicity, race, etc., in filling vacancies and terms of any committee, commission, team, or entity of the presbytery.

D. Entities of the Presbytery

The core functions of the presbytery are performed by the Mission Council (MC), the Commission on Ministry (COM), the Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM), the Committee on Nominations (CON), the Committee on Representation (COR) the Permanent Judicial Commission (PJC) and the Board of Trustees.

From time to time the presbytery establishes other entities to advance its mission and express its vision in light of changing needs and circumstances. Ordinarily, these entities will be filled by the Committee on Nominations. In cases where another group or person is empowered to establish the entity's membership, subsequent vacancies will be filled by the Committee on Nominations. The entities currently active are listed in the appendix..

~~The structural design of the presbytery provides for the following entities: Mission Council (MC), Leadership Connections Team (LCT), Mission and Service Team (MAST), Commission on Ministry (COM), and Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM). In addition, there are mandated constitutional committees: Committee on Nominations (CON), Committee on Representation (COR), and Permanent Judicial Commission (PJC).~~

1. Mission Council (MC)

The purpose of the MC is to facilitate effective and efficient communication between and among the various ~~teams, ministries, and members~~ entities of the presbytery and to provide for coordination of the operations of the presbytery.

Members are elected by the presbytery and may serve two 3-year terms.

Ordinarily the MC consists of a representative from each nominating region, a moderator (“at large” position), a vice moderator (“at large” position), and the presbytery moderator, all of whom shall have voice and vote.

Other participants on the MC shall include the ~~lead~~ general presbyter, the stated clerk, ~~and~~ the presbytery vice moderator, and a designated recording secretary. ~~the presbytery's associate for~~

~~financial accounting, and a representative from Camp Hanover.~~ The presbytery's associate for financial accounting serves as staff to the MC. These persons shall have voice but no vote.

The responsibilities of the MC include:

- a. Oversight of the presbytery personnel and office operations
- b. Developing budgets, monitoring financial performance, recommending policies, and communicating approved and ratified decisions.
- c. Determining the site and other arrangements for presbytery meetings
- d. Preparing the agenda jointly with the stated clerk for the presbytery meetings
- e. Nominating to the presbytery members of the CON and the COR
- f. Nominating to the presbytery the stated clerk
- g. Receipt and forwarding of overtures to the presbytery
- h. Arranging for votes on matters referred to the presbytery by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
- i. Granting to congregations a waiver from the limitations on terms of service for ruling elders and deacons (G-2.0404)
- j. Giving permission for the celebration of the Lord's Supper for events or programs sponsored by the presbytery and reporting such action to the next stated meeting of the presbytery
- k. Granting approvals for the expansion of presbytery committees, commissions, ~~and~~ teams and other entities.
- l. Nominating to the presbytery members of administrative commissions in response to congregations' request for dismissal or dissolution and recommending the particular powers to be granted to the commission (NOTE – in no case shall those powers include the sale of real property or the final decision on dismissal or dissolution) See further comments at Section 5 – G.

MC may establish committees and ~~task forces~~ sub-committees as may be necessary to discharge their duties, including a Budget Committee, a Personnel Committee and a Gifts Advisory Committee.

The members of the MC shall also serve as the trustees of the corporation: Trustees of Presbytery of the James, Inc.

~~2. Leadership Connections Team (LCT)~~

~~—The LCT will encourage, support, and review progress of ministries that develop leadership skills among people in the presbytery including: teaching elders, lay people, and recognized ministries that are part of the presbytery's strategic plan. The LCT shall consist of a representative from each region and a moderator and vice moderator.~~

~~3. Mission and Service Team (MAST)~~

~~—The purpose of the MAST is to inspire, equip, and connect individuals and congregations with missional ministries, working within all areas of the presbytery, the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world. The MAST shall consist of a representative from each region and a moderator and a vice moderator.~~

~~4. 1,001 Worshipping Communities Team (WCT)~~

~~—The 1,001 Worshipping Communities Team provides guidance and oversight to those ministries established by the denomination's '1,001 Worshipping Communities' program and other non-chartered communities within the presbytery.~~

~~—Proviso: Until the Worshipping Communities Team is elected by the presbytery, oversight of this Team will be provided by the MC.~~

2. Commission on Ministry (COM)

The Presbytery utilizes a Commission on Ministry (COM) to perform some of its responsibilities delineated in G-3.0303. The COM shall maintain a *Manual of Operations* which shall contain all duties and powers delegated to it by the presbytery. It shall consist of a ruling elders and a teaching elders in equal numbers, including a moderator and vice or co-moderator. Each nominating region shall be represented.

3. Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)

The function of the CPM is set forth in G-2.06 of the *Book of Order*. It shall consist of a ruling elders and a teaching elders in equal numbers; a moderator and vice moderator; ~~and as many as two ruling elders and two teaching elders serving as members at large.~~ Each nominating region shall be represented.

4. Committee on Nominations (CON)

The purpose of the CON is to nominate people for election by the presbytery to the various entities of the presbytery. The responsibilities of the CON shall include, but are not limited to, nominating to the presbytery, for election: moderator and vice moderator of the presbytery; members of entities of the presbytery; moderators and vice moderators of entities of the presbytery; commissioners to the Synod and General Assembly; and other nominations as may be requested by the presbytery from time to time. The CON shall consist of a representative from each nominating region and a moderator and vice moderator.

Members of the CON are nominated to the presbytery by the MC.

5. Committee on Representation (COR)

The purpose of the COR is to ensure that the principles of inclusiveness as outlined in the *Book of Order* G-3.0103 are implemented. The COR shall be made up of at least 5 members (a moderator, vice moderator, and members-at-large) and shall give full expression to the rich diversity of the church's membership, not limited by the nominating regions. Members of the COR are nominated to the presbytery by the MC.

The COR shall:

- a. Study and review patterns of participation and inclusiveness on committees, commissions, boards, and agencies in the presbytery.
- b. Advocate with the CON to ensure "diversity in leadership" (G-3.0103).
- c. Advise the presbytery on matters of diversity and inclusion.

6. Permanent Judicial Commission (PJC)

The purpose and role of the PJC and its organization are provided for in the *Book of Order* "Church Discipline" and in G-3.0301c and other relevant sections of the *Book of Order*. The commission shall consist of nine members whose term of office shall be for six (6) years, and they will

be nominated by the CON. The PJC shall elect its own moderator and clerk as provided for in the *Book of Order* D-5.0201.

The presbytery's stated clerk shall serve as the staff liaison to the PJC.

E. The Presbytery Budget

The presbytery's budget committee is a standing ~~sub-~~committee of the MC. It shall consist of the MC's moderator, the presbytery's moderator, the ~~lead general~~ presbyter, ~~the presbytery associate of finance and accounting,~~ and three members at large. ~~The presbytery's associate for financial accounting serves as staff to the committee.~~

Each year, the budget committee of the MC shall develop a consolidated line-item budget with underlying line-item details, for review, amendment, and action by the presbytery. The budget process is outlined in the presbytery's *Resource Management Policy*.

F. Commissioners to the General Assembly and the Synod

~~Commissioners to the General Assembly and the Synod are elected at the Fall meeting of the presbytery preceding the next meeting of the higher council. Ordinarily people elected as alternate commissioners shall be nominated as commissioners to the following meeting of the higher council.~~

G. Administrative Commissions (AC)

Administrative commissions elected by the presbytery shall consist of at least three teaching elders and three ruling elders from three different congregations and shall be authorized by the presbytery with specific powers from the *Book of Order* G-3.0109.

In the event of an extraordinary and urgent need to create an administrative commission between meetings of the presbytery, the Mission Council is authorized to form and otherwise authorize the work of the AC ~~until the next meeting of the presbytery.~~

SECTION SIX PRESBYTERY STAFF

In accordance with the *Book of Order* G-3.0110, the presbytery may ~~authorize the administrative services of presbyters a general presbyter and other~~ employ such executive and administrative staff as needed to ensure that the presbytery's adopted mission, vision, and programs are fulfilled, consistent with the principles of unity in diversity. ~~The role of staff people shall be to~~ Staff members shall facilitate and enable the entire work of the presbytery. Assignment of staff roles and duties are determined by executive staff and overseen by the MC through its Personnel Committee. Executive staff shall be nominated by a search team and elected by the presbytery. Administrative staff are hired by the MC through its personnel committee. Compensation and benefits for all staff are determined by the MC through its personnel committee. Staff are expected to serve in ways that shall enable the parts of the connectional system to work together.

Pursuant to and in the spirit of the "Articles of Agreement" (1988; see Appendix), the presbytery shall employ and maintain an inclusive and diverse staff. If there is more than one staff person at the executive level, there shall be one or more persons of color included in a position at that level. If there is more than

one staff person at the office support level, there shall be one or more persons of color included in a position at that level.

Policies and procedures related to the employment, classification, work, supervision, rights, and benefits of all staff members are defined in the *Personnel Handbook: Policies and Procedures* of the presbytery. These policies and procedures can be amended by a majority vote of the MC upon recommendation from the Personnel Committee. Changes are to be reported to the next stated meeting of the presbytery.

SECTION SEVEN AUTHORITY DELEGATED BY THE PRESBYTERY

From time to time, the presbytery delegates authority to various people or entities:

- 1. Appointment of an Investigating Committee ~~Between Meetings of the Presbytery~~** Working in conjunction, the stated clerk, the moderator of the presbytery, and the immediate past moderator of the presbytery are authorized to appoint an Investigating Committee (“IC”) (D-~~10.0200~~ 7.0501a) and announce the formation of the IC at the next meeting of presbytery. ~~whenever the time before the next stated meeting of the presbytery is so great as to hinder the process of investigating an alleged offense.~~ If one of the persons appointing the IC is being investigated, any past moderator of the presbytery shall take that person’s place in the appointment process.

~~2. Appointment of a Counselor (D-14.0203)~~

~~The COM moderator, the COM vice or co-moderator, and the moderator of the presbytery are each authorized to appoint counselors in disciplinary cases when necessary.~~

Note: The Sexual misconduct/harassment policy of the presbytery has provisions for counselors for victims and others in these kinds of cases. This is not a BOO requirement.

~~3.~~ **2. Appointment of a Committee of Counsel (D-6.0302a) (D-4.0204)**

~~Between meetings of the Presbytery~~ Working in conjunction, the stated clerk, the moderator of the presbytery, and the immediate past moderator of the presbytery are authorized to appoint a Committee of Counsel responding to a remedial case brought against the presbytery ~~shall be appointed by the following people: the moderator of the presbytery, the COM moderator, the MC moderator, and the stated clerk.~~

4. Discernment Process when Considering Restructure of the Presbytery

Before taking any action that would result in a substantial restructuring of its programs and staffing model, the presbytery must complete a period of discernment. This discernment period shall include a consultative process for developing mission priorities, as well as at least one open hearing ~~or listening session~~ that has been initiated by the MC or the presbytery’s elected strategic planning team.

SECTION EIGHT AUTHORITY, AMENDMENTS, AND SUSPENSIONS

The *Manual* establishes the basic organization of the presbytery for its functions both during and between meetings of the council.

The *Manual* may be amended as follows: A proposed amendment shall be presented in writing to the stated clerk of the presbytery who shall in turn refer it to the MC which shall submit its recommendation in writing to the next meeting of the presbytery. Proposed amendments shall be approved by two-thirds of those present and voting. Any particular provision of the *Manual* may be suspended for a meeting of the presbytery by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting at that meeting of the presbytery.

APPENDICES

Presbytery of the James Health Expectations

It is important to prioritize the health and safety of all attendees at any meeting of the Presbytery, committees, commissions, teams, workshops, etc. By adhering to these health expectations, we can help mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the flu, or any other airborne or contagious illnesses, and create a safe and welcoming environment for all participants.

1. Participation in the meeting includes possible exposure to and illness from COVID-19 and other illnesses. Following recommendations for being vaccinated and attending to healthy practices may reduce the risk, but the risk of serious illness and death does exist. By attending the meeting, you knowingly assume the risks.
2. Please do not attend the in-person meeting if you feel sick or if you have tested positive for COVID-19 anytime 7 days prior to the meeting. If someone comes in your stead, please let the Presbytery staff (office@Presbyteryofthejames.org) know who that person is before the meeting starts.
3. If you experience any of the symptoms associated with COVID-19 and other illnesses while attending the meeting, please notify the stated clerk immediately and avoid contact with other persons attending the meeting.
Even if you are vaccinated, you are invited to wear a mask and keep a comfortable distance from others if you choose to do so for any reason.
4. Please bring a mask to the meeting. If requested by the POJ moderator for health reasons for any of the group, we ask that you agree to wear the mask.
5. Frequent hand washing is highly recommended. All attendees are strongly encouraged to wash their hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, hand sanitizer should be used.

Following public health guidelines such as wearing masks and getting tested can feel inconvenient or uncomfortable at times, but they are important measures to protect ourselves and those around us from the spread of infectious diseases. By taking these actions, we are showing empathy and consideration for others, and doing our part to keep our communities safe and healthy. It is important to remember that we are all in this together, and small actions can have a big impact on the health and well-being of our families, friends, and neighbors.

Adopted by the Mission Council, May 17, 2023; Approved by Presbytery June 20, 2023

Currently Active Entities and dates established

Leadership Connections Team (LCT)

The LCT will encourage, support, and review progress of ministries that develop leadership skills among people in the presbytery including: teaching elders, lay people, and recognized ministries that are part of the presbytery's strategic plan. ~~The LCT shall consist of a representative from each region and a moderator and vice moderator.~~ (June 15, 2010)

Mission and Service Team (MAST)

The purpose of the MAST is to inspire, equip, and connect individuals and congregations with missional ministries, working within all areas of the presbytery, the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world. ~~The MAST shall consist of a representative from each region and a moderator and a vice moderator.~~ (June 15, 2010)

New Worshipping Communities Team (WCT)

The New Worshipping Communities Team provides guidance and oversight to those ministries established by the denomination's '1,001 Worshipping Communities' program and other non-chartered communities within the presbytery.

(February 18, 2023)

~~Proviso: Until the Worshipping Communities Team is elected by the presbytery, oversight of this Team will be provided by the MC.~~

Anti Racism Committee (ARC) (October 21, 2023)

Robert's Rules Guidance on Voting in situations where there may be a conflict of interest

Robert's Rules of Order offers guidance on voting in situations where there may be a conflict of interest: "No member should vote on a question in which [they have] a direct personal or pecuniary interest not common to other members of the organization...However, no member can be compelled to refrain from voting in such circumstances" (45.4). The rule on abstaining from voting on a question of direct personal interest does not mean that a member should not vote for [themselves] for an office or other position to which members generally are eligible, or should not vote when other members are included with [them] in a motion" (45:5)

ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT

(Approved 2/20/88)

For the
Presbyteries of Blue Ridge, Fincastle, Hanover, Norfolk,
and Southern Virginia

PREAMBLE

The Articles of Agreement embody the contractual commitments of five presbyteries: Blue Ridge, Fincastle, Hanover, Norfolk, and Southern Virginia, concerning the means by which the members, officers, institutions, property and mission responsibilities of the five presbyteries shall be and become the members, officers, institutions, property, and mission responsibilities of new presbyteries formed in accordance with Article Seven of the Articles of Agreement of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). These new presbyteries shall be in all ecclesiastical, judicial, legal and other respects the continuing entities of the former presbyteries.

The Articles of Agreement set forth in this document seek to embody the theology and polity of the Book of Order as well as the "Articles of Agreement" adopted by the 195th (1983) General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and by the Synods forming Synod D. We affirm the Life and Mission Statement of the PCUSA (adopted 1985 General Assembly) as the basis for the mission of these new presbyteries and the Book of Order (G-11.0103) as the description of the responsibilities of these new presbyteries.

Each of the presbyteries of the former United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. and the Presbyterian Church, U.S. bring a rich heritage to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This heritage is expressed in unique and diverse ways. There are particular concerns in common for all presbyteries and all want to protect, honor and embrace the participation of all constituencies of the preceding governing bodies as they seek to be expressions of the integrity of our new church and to bring that integrity to bear on presbytery boundaries, identities, mission structures and staff models.

ARTICLE I – HISTORICAL INTEGRITY

1.1. The new presbyteries will require understanding, recognition and appreciation of differences which involve cultural, social and economic systems and a whole history of separate existences. We must preserve, enhance and learn from the richness of the former presbyteries, honor and build upon their special gifts, and renounce that which was sinful in our pasts.

1.2. Each preceding presbytery (Blue Ridge, Fincastle, Hanover, Norfolk and Southern Virginia) shall record its history before the beginning date of the new presbyteries approved by the General Assembly. The legal successor presbytery shall preserve the history and the new presbytery will be guided by the history of the preceding presbyteries out of which it was formed as it develops its own mission.

ARTICLE II – THE INTEGRITY OF THE NEW

2.1. Forming new presbyteries is a response to God's call to be a new creation. These new presbyteries will affirm this call for a new creation in at least the following ways:

1. Design for Mission

2.1.1. Each new presbytery in consultation with its sessions and Synod, shall define its mission and then determine a structure, staff model and office location to carry out that mission. Each new presbytery shall be structured, in accordance with the Book of Order, Chapter XI, with sufficient officers, committees and/or divisions to do mission in orderly and effective ways.

2. Name of Presbytery

2.1.2. Each new presbytery shall be responsible for choosing its own name, descriptive of its identity and mission. The name shall be new and may contain the historical name of a current presbytery. The name may either express the traditions of the former presbyteries that are a part of the new presbytery or be a completely new name satisfactory to the new presbytery. The process of selecting a name shall include consultation with sessions and members of the new presbyteries.

3. Representation

2.1.3. In accordance with the Book of Order G-4.0400, G-9.0105 and Articles of Agreement 8.2 and 9.1 of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), each new presbytery shall implement the principles of participation and inclusiveness in the life and work of the presbytery including commissioners to presbytery, synod and General Assembly and membership on committees, divisions, and councils. Where there is an imbalance between the number of resident ministers who are members of the presbytery and the number of elders which the churches are entitled to send as commissioners to presbytery meetings as described in the Book of Order G-11.0101c., each new presbytery will give priority to sessions of racial/ethnic congregations in the invitation to elect additional elder commissioners.

ARTICLE III – RACIAL ETHNIC COORDINATING COMMITTEES AND CAUCUSES

3.1. Racial Ethnic Coordinating Committees are to be a part of the official structure of the new presbytery with the chair being a member of council. The purpose of these coordinating committees shall be to provide support for their respective Racial Ethnic churches within each new presbytery (i.e. Black, Korean, Other Asian, Hispanic, Native American).

3.2. Each new presbytery shall elect a Black Coordinating Committee and shall establish any other Racial Ethnic Coordinating Committee(s) that seem advisable.

3.3. Each new presbytery shall, in addition, allow for the organization and funding of racial/ethnic caucuses. These caucuses, when they exist, shall be responsible for recommending to Presbytery's Nominating Committee, the members and chairs of their respective Racial Ethnic Coordinating Committee (i.e. The Black Caucus would recommend persons to be nominated for the Black Coordinating Committee).

3.4. In addition, the purposes of any racial/ethnic caucus shall include but not be limited to:

3.4.1. advising and assisting presbytery in determining priorities for racial/ethnic churches and ministers;

3.4.2. advising on strategies for racial/ethnic church development;

3.4.3. advising presbytery on ways to insure funding for church colleges which historically have served racial/ethnic groups;

3.4.4. advising and assisting in providing persons to serve in the structures of the new presbytery in cooperation with the Committee on Representation.

3.5. Racial Ethnic Caucuses shall report to presbytery through their respective Racial Ethnic Coordinating Committee. Presbytery structures should seek the advice of any racial/ethnic caucus on the matters in 3.4. above.

ARTICLE IV – SUPPORT FOR CONGREGATIONAL MINISTRY

4.0. The new presbyteries shall encourage each congregation to share person and material resources for the upbuilding of all congregations and the Body of Christ. The new presbyteries will organize the structures for mission in such a way that both larger and smaller membership congregations shall receive support and challenge from presbytery. The

flow of solicitation of financial and material resources shall be through the presbytery and not congregation to congregation. (See the Book of Order, G-11.0103 a,b,f, and g.)

1. Smaller Membership Congregations

4.1.1. Each new presbytery will include many smaller membership congregations. The small church continues faithful service to a community of people, offering Christian worship, education and programs of mission outreach, often far beyond its numerical strength. The small church is often the only Presbyterian witness in a given locale or area.

4.1.2. The new presbyteries will develop staffing patterns, program and leadership development resources, and equitable financial resources to strengthen and enhance the unique gifts and witness of smaller churches. The new presbyteries shall insure the full participation of lay and clergy leaders from smaller membership congregations in the decision-making process of presbytery, especially those which affect the life and mission of these congregations. The presbytery shall celebrate the unique contributions smaller membership congregations make to the mission of the whole church.

2. Larger Membership Congregations

4.2.1. The new presbyteries shall work with larger membership congregations in order that they may more effectively respond to opportunities for ministry wherever they exist. In addition, they will work with these congregations to help them see the opportunities for supporting the whole church in its mission, both financial and with personnel.

3. New Church Development

4.3.1. The new presbyteries will seek to establish new congregations including racial ethnic congregations in areas of rapid population growth and where feasible in areas where there is not a Presbyterian church. The new presbyteries shall work with appropriate governing bodies, including ecumenical partners whenever possible, in developing strategies and criteria for location and development of new congregations, with emphasis on racial/ethnic churches. Any new church development already in progress shall be guaranteed the same funding policy it had under the former presbytery following annual review and evaluation of the development by the new presbytery.

4. Church Redevelopment and Revitalization

4.4.1. The new presbyteries shall work with existing congregations to strengthen their ministry and mission and church membership growth where that is possible.

ARTICLE V – SUPPORT FOR CHURCH PROFESSIONALS

5.1. The presbytery shall develop a system of care and support for its ministers and other church professionals who work with its congregations. This shall include pastoral care for these persons and their families as well as challenging and supporting their participation in the mission of the presbytery and the larger church.

5.2. Each new presbytery shall have in its staff model, responsibility for care and support for church professionals as part of the system mentioned in 5.1. above.

ARTICLE VI – SUPPORT MINISTRY BEYOND THE CONGREGATION

6.1. Each new presbytery in consultation with its sessions shall coordinate the work of its member churches, guiding them and mobilizing their strength for the effective witness to the broader community. Each presbytery shall initiate mission through a variety of forms in light of the larger strategy of the synod and the General Assembly. Each new presbytery shall be involved in mission ecumenically wherever possible.

ARTICLE VII – TRANSITIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE

7.0. Each new presbytery shall have a Transitional Steering Committee to develop plans for the presbytery. This committee shall function until the adjournment of the first stated meeting of the new presbytery. (See 15.3 below.)

1. Organization

7.1. Members of Transitional Steering Committees shall be elected by each of the current presbyteries according to the following formula: Presbytery I – 6 from Blue Ridge, 6 from Fincastle and 6 from Southern Virginia; Presbytery II – 6 from Blue Ridge, 6 from Hanover and 6 from Southern Virginia; Presbytery III – 9 from Norfolk and 9 from Southern Virginia.

7.1.1. The Transitional Steering Committees shall be convened as follows: Presbytery I by the chair of the Hanover Boundaries Committee; Presbytery II by the chair of the Southern Virginia Boundaries Committee; Presbytery III by the chair of the Fincastle Boundaries Committee. Each Convener will preside until the Transitional Steering Committee elects its own chair from their membership.

2. General Responsibilities

7.2. Each Transitional Steering Committee shall be responsible for developing a mission statement, design and organizational pattern for mission, staffing model based on design, budget and finance patterns, office location, calling transitional conventions, and the new name. It shall consult with sessions and synod in the development of mission statements, organization patterns and staffing patterns in accord with the Book of Order G-9.0404.

7.2.1. It is empowered to organize itself in the most efficient way to accomplish its task, including appointing additional persons to serve on ad-hoc task forces, employing consultants, and requesting the services of existing staff through the appropriate channels in existing presbyteries. It is understood that existing staff will be responsible for maintaining existing programs during this time of transition.

7.2.2. Each Transitional Steering Committee shall design and implement a plan for helping congregations and ministers get to know one another and appreciate one another with particular emphasis on congregations and ministers who have not previously been together in a former presbytery.

3. Fiscal Matters

7.3.1. Each Transitional Steering Committee shall develop a funding plan for the new presbytery which shall include every attempt to honor existing patterns of funding directly bearing on the viability of smaller congregations.

7.3.2. Each Transitional Steering Committee shall develop recommendations on funding patterns, fiscal procedures and budgeted mission giving, including "per capita," to General Assembly, Synod and Presbytery. It shall recommend the first fiscal year budget for the presbytery.

4. Transitional Nominating Committee

7.4. Each Transitional Steering Committee will nominate to the first meeting of their Transitional Convention a Transitional Nominating Committee composed of 12 persons; 1/3 ministers (2 male and 2 female), 1/3 laywomen, 1/3 laymen, one half from the former PCUS Presbytery(ies) and one half from Southern Virginia Presbytery.

5. Staff for New Presbytery

7.5. Each Transitional Steering Committee shall nominate to their Transitional Convention a Staff Search Committee with a designated chair. The committee shall have representation from all previous presbyteries in the new presbytery. In the process of

nomination, the Transitional Steering Committee shall consult with nominating committees of the current presbyteries.

6. Office Location

7.6. Each Transitional Steering Committee shall recommend to its Transitional Convention a location for presbytery's office or offices. Office location will be determined after definition is given to the nature and function of the office(s) and its purpose in carrying out the mission of the presbytery. Care will be taken to provide adequate working conditions for the size of staff required by the staffing pattern and the work they are asked to do. Office location should be determined prior to the selection of staff.

7. Calling of Transitional Conventions

7.7. Each Transitional Steering Committee shall issue the call for Transitional Conventions and have the authority to set the date, time and place.

8. First Meetings of new Presbyteries

7.8. Each Transitional Steering Committee shall recommend to its Transitional Convention the date, time and place for the First Stated Meeting of the new presbytery.

9. Cost of Transitional Committees, Conventions, etc.

7.9. The cost of the work of the Transitional Steering Committee, its ad-hoc committees and task forces, other Transitional Committees including the Staff Search Committee and Transitional Conventions shall be borne by funding sought from the whole PCUSA and by the current presbyteries on a proportional basis of active membership in the new presbytery.

ARTICLE VIII – TRANSITIONAL COMMITTEE ON REPRESENTATION

8.1. Each new presbytery shall have a Transitional Committee on Representation elected by the current presbyteries at the same time that they elect their representatives to the Transitional Steering Committee.

8.2. Each Transitional Committee on Representation will be composed of 12 persons of which 6 shall be women and 6 shall be men and a majority will be from racial ethnic groups. (See Book of Order G-9.0105.)

8.3. The current presbyteries shall use the following formula in selecting the persons they elect: Presbytery I – 3 from Blue Ridge, 3 from Fincastle and 6 from Southern Virginia; Presbytery II – 2 from Blue Ridge, 4 from Hanover and 6 from Southern Virginia; Presbytery III – 6 from Norfolk and 6 from Southern Virginia.

8.4. The Transitional Committee on Representation shall be responsible for reviewing all nominations for transitional bodies selected by the Transitional Steering Committee, all nominations for leadership positions in the new presbytery as well as staff for the new presbytery and shall report its review to the Transitional Convention and new presbytery, as appropriate.

ARTICLE IX – STAFF IN THE NEW PRESBYTERY

9.1. All staff in the new presbytery shall be called or employed on the basis of a staff model designed in light of the approved mission statement and design for mission, and approved by the Transitional Convention.

9.2. Each new presbytery shall employ and maintain an inclusive, pluralistic, and diverse staff. In the instance of multiple staff there shall be one or more black persons included in staffing positions at the administrative/executive and administrative/office support levels.

9.3. After giving priority interviews to present staff of all five presbyteries and for any staff positions not filled after that time, each staff search committee shall advertise Executive, Program and Professional Staff positions on a church-wide basis.

9.4. Staff of current presbyteries shall be eligible and encouraged to apply for permanent staff positions in the new presbytery and shall be granted an interview if they apply. A high priority will be given to keeping experienced administrative/support staff.

9.5. Each Staff Search Committee shall be informed and guided by the Articles of Agreement of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 5.7 and the General Assembly's Transitional Personnel Guidelines.

ARTICLE X – TRANSITIONAL CONVENTIONS

10.1. Each new presbytery when meeting prior to the official date of formation of that presbytery for the purpose of approving the mission, organization, staffing model and budget for the new presbytery, shall be known as a Transitional Convention.

10.2. The Transitional Convention shall consist of all ministers serving congregations to be included in the new presbytery, ministers whose primary work is in the bounds of the new presbytery and others as assigned by agreement of the various Committees on Ministry and elder commissioners from sessions in accord with the Book of Order, G-11.0101.

10.3. The first meeting of the Transitional Convention shall be called by the Transitional Steering Committee as soon as feasible following approval by the higher governing bodies of the church.

10.4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRANSITIONAL CONVENTION: Transitional Conventions shall consider for approval:

10.4.1. A mission statement

10.4.2. An organizational plan for mission including structure and by-laws

10.4.3. The next year's funding process and budget

10.4.4. A staffing model with job descriptions and terms of employment

10.4.5. A staff search committee, nominated by the Transitional Steering Committee. This committee shall organize itself and begin its work as soon as feasible in conformity with these Articles of Agreement and shall consult with the Synod as set forth in the Book of Order G-9.0701 and G-9.0702.

10.4.6. Office location or locations

10.4.7. The name of the presbytery

10.4.8. Reports from the Transitional Committee on Representation

10.4.9. Elect a Transitional Nominating Committee

10.4.10. Reports of the Transitional Nominating Committee and election of persons representative of the constituency to fill elected positions in the proposed structure and the moderator-in-nomination and clerk for the first stated meeting of the new presbytery

10.4.11. All other actions that are deemed wise to provide for an efficient transition into a new presbytery

10.5. Transitional Conventions which are called by the Transitional Steering Committee with adequate notice to insure full representation, shall meet as often as necessary to accomplish the work to be done.

ARTICLE XI – TRANSITIONAL NOMINATING COMMITTEE

11.1. The Transitional Nominating Committee shall place in nomination at an appropriate Transitional Convention, a slate of persons to fill the elected leadership positions in the organizational structure of the new presbytery.

11.2. The Transitional Nominating Committee shall place in nomination at the last Transitional Convention, a person to serve as moderator-in-nomination and a clerk for the first stated meeting of the new presbytery.

ARTICLE XII – POLICIES REGARDING STAFF OF CURRENT PRESBYTERIES

12.1. Current staff includes all Executive Staff, Professional and Program Staff, Office (support) Staff, Camp and Conference Staff with the exception of seasonal and "weekend type" hourly employees.

12.2. Current staff of the present presbyteries shall continue working under the personnel policies of their respective presbyteries and/or terms of call until the new presbyteries are formed on the date established by the General Assembly. The current staff are expected to maintain the present programs of their respective presbyteries until their presbytery ceases to exist.

12.3. Current staff shall be involved in the planning and implementation of the new presbyteries only at the request of the Transitional Steering Committee as negotiated through appropriate channels.

12.4. The Transitional Steering Committee will recommend to the Transitional Convention the date for termination of each current staff position and person. The termination date shall not be prior to the beginning date of the new presbytery. Any staff who were employed and enrolled in the Benefits Plan of the Board of Pensions two years prior to their termination will have their dues paid on the effective salary at the time of termination until they are vested in the Pension Plan (three years after employment) including continuation in the major medical plan and its options.

12.5. All permanent Executive/Professional staff terminated will be given up to six months full compensation including benefits and allowances until that person begins work in another position whether on the staff of a new presbytery or in some other work. Persons resigning prior to termination of position will be given one month's compensation including benefits and allowances. Payment of this compensation will be by the legal successor of the presbytery which employed or called that particular person.

12.6. All permanent Office/Support Staff and Camp/Conference Staff will be given up to three months full compensation including benefits and allowances until that person begins work in another position whether on the staff of a new presbytery or in some other work. Persons resigning prior to termination of position will be given one month's compensation including benefits and allowances. Payment of this compensation will be by the legal successor of the presbytery which employed or called that particular person.

12.7. "Shared Ministry" staff persons (i.e. those persons who work part-time for Presbytery and part-time in a congregation or other occupation) or "adjunct staff persons" (i.e. those persons who work part-time for presbytery) who are employed under special arrangements shall be considered by the Transitional Steering Committee as they consider new staff models. If any of these special staff persons are involved with "aid receiving"

congregations and they are not incorporated in the new staff models, then equitable termination compensation will be paid in line with 12.5 above.

12.8. Interim Executive Presbyters shall not be eligible to apply for the permanent position except when this interim position is filled by a staff person who is serving as an Executive Presbyter or Associate Executive in one of the current five presbyteries (i.e. Blue Ridge, Fincastle, Hanover, Norfolk or Southern Virginia).

ARTICLE XIII – POLICIES REGARDING CORPORATE AND FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

13.1. All trustees of the five presbyteries (Blue Ridge, Fincastle, Hanover, Norfolk and Southern Virginia) and any other officer or officers possessing fiduciary responsibilities shall continue in office and shall be responsible for their trusteeships and corporate responsibilities as applicable until successors in the new presbyteries have been duly and regularly elected or appointed. Concurrently, procedural steps and applications for any new corporate charters for the corporations of the new presbyteries or amendments to current charters shall be taken.

13.2. When the current presbyteries cease to exist, cash and other assets and liabilities shall be distributed to the new presbyteries. Real property owned by current presbyteries shall be transferred to new presbyteries according to the geographical location of the real property. Other assets and liabilities held by current presbyteries shall be distributed in a fair and equitable manner based upon some legally acceptable basis.

13.3. Any assets accruing to Southern Virginia Presbytery pursuant to its relationship as one of the presbyteries of the Catawba Inter-Presbytery Program Agency shall be allocated to the new presbyteries according to the number of former Southern Virginia congregations in each new presbytery.

ARTICLE XIV – LEGAL SUCCESSORS AND CONTINUATION OF POLICIES AND STATEMENTS

14.1. Presbytery I shall be the full and legal successor of the Presbytery of Blue Ridge and the Presbytery of Fincastle. Presbytery II shall be the full and legal successor of the Presbytery of Hanover and the Presbytery of Southern Virginia. Presbytery III shall be the full and legal successor of the Presbytery of Norfolk.

14.2. Each policy statement or directive adopted by or issued at the direction of one of the present presbyteries shall have the same force and effect in the presbytery which is their successor until rescinded, altered or supplanted by action of the new presbytery.

ARTICLE XV – FIRST MEETINGS OF THE NEW PRESBYTERY

15.1. The first stated meeting of each new presbytery shall be held after the beginning date of the new presbyteries as approved by the General Assembly. The time and place of this first stated meeting shall be set by the transitional convention which shall also elect a moderator and clerk for this meeting.

15.2. Each new presbytery, at its first stated meeting, shall approve actions taken in its transitional convention and admit these actions to record. It shall take any other necessary actions to facilitate the continuing development and strengthening of the new presbytery.

15.3. All transitional structures with the possible exception³ of the Staff Search Committee shall cease to exist as of the adjournment of the first meeting of the new presbytery.

ARTICLE XVI – AFFIRMATIONS

16.1. These Articles of Agreement shall not be amended after being adopted by each current presbytery and after all the overtures establishing the new presbyteries in the area have been forwarded to the General Assembly. These articles are binding until the new presbyteries are established and all provisions of these articles have been fulfilled and provisions for sustaining them have been included in the new presbytery's Manual and have been instituted in the new presbyteries.

16.2 During the transition period, each current and new presbytery will exercise good stewardship of human and financial resources.

16.3. Each new presbytery is urged to affirm the result of its organizational work in worship to God, giving thanks for our unity and mission in Christ.

(Approved by the Virginia 5 Boundaries Committees on February 20, 1988 and submitted to the Presbyteries of Blue Ridge, Fincastle, Hanover, Norfolk and Southern Virginia for approval or disapproval without amendment.)

APPENDIX TO ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT (Approved 2/20/88)
for the
Presbyteries of Blue Ridge, Fincastle, Hanover, Norfolk,
and Southern Virginia

NOTE: All items in this appendix are suggestions to the Transitional Steering Committee and/or other transitional groups as they lay plans for the new presbyteries.

I. MISSION DESIGN (related to Article 2.1.1.)

A. Mission and Structure

1. Mission Statement (who, what, when, where, and how)
2. Role and function of presbytery in agreement with the constitution
3. Determination of what will be continued from former presbyteries
4. Mission programs that stimulate and unite various constituencies of former presbyteries
5. Goals, responsibilities, priorities
6. Structures that are visible, functional and open in light of mission statement
7. Manuals of Operation in line with the Book of Order G-9.0405
8. Budget and broad strategy for mission and funding including financial policies
9. Partnership agreements with other governing bodies and international partners
10. Communications, including minutes, newsletters, two-way information between local church and presbytery
11. Review and evaluation
12. Duties of Stated Clerk
13. Nominations Guidelines and Committee on Representation
14. Ecumenical relationships and covenants
15. Possibility of locating resources and staff in various geographic areas of Presbytery in order to be closer to ministers and congregations.
16. Possibility of utilizing college or other institutional facilities for Presbytery meetings to allow for more space and possible overnight meetings.

B. Program

1. Evangelism
2. Christian Education
3. Worship
4. Institutions (homes for older adults, children, etc.)
5. Ministry to/with racial ethnic populations
6. New church development and redevelopment
7. Global issues and global awareness
8. Biblical stewardship
9. Vocational counseling
10. Leadership development
11. Spiritual life development
12. Camps and Conferences
13. Continuing Education for Church Professionals
14. Public schools and institutions of higher education
15. Concern for smaller churches
16. Urban Ministry
17. Develop, in cooperation with Synod, a strategy for camp and conference centers and programs across presbytery lines.

C. Oversight

1. Accountability and evaluation
2. Inclusiveness
3. Diversity
4. Care, nurture, and oversight of church professionals, inquirers, and candidates
5. Consultation with congregations

Articles of Agreement Appendix – page 2 (approved February 20, 1988)

D. Staff

1. Inclusive staff models
2. Job descriptions
3. Personnel policies (EEO, benefits, etc.)

II. OFFICE LOCATION (related to Article 7.6)

Questions to be considered in determining recommendations for office location:

1. What is to happen in the presbytery office?
2. Will the presbytery office be the primary location for meetings?
3. If so, how much and what kind of meeting space will be needed?
4. What will be located within the presbytery office?
5. Will the presbytery office house a materials resource center?
6. Where are there available facilities?
7. What are contractual relationships for current presbytery offices?
8. What kind of facilities are needed?
9. How large a facility will be needed in order to carry out mission?
10. How does it need to be furnished?
11. What kinds of equipment will be needed?
12. How many offices will be needed?
13. What will be the projected cost for office operation?
14. What will be the initial start-up costs?
15. Should there be regional offices to better resource the congregations of presbytery?
16. Should there be an interim office for a time period before permanent offices are established?
17. Should presbytery own its own office facility or should it lease a facility?
18. How is the office location an outgrowth of presbytery's mission statement, goals and priorities and staff model?
19. What will it cost to "phase out" the existing office or location and how will this cost be paid?
20. Where should the office or offices be located?
21. What will be the travel distances to the office or offices from the farthest points in the presbytery?
22. How difficult will it be to get to the office?
23. How will these travel distances affect the usefulness of the office?
24. What resources are needed in order for the office to function (maintenance persons, supplies, printers)?
25. Are these resources available?
26. Does the chosen area have a population that would supply the support staff that are needed in order to enable the office to function effectively?
27. How will the location of office affect the staff that may be continued as a part of the new staffing model?
28. Is adequate parking space available?

(ARTAGAPX.BOU)

Budget to Actual – August 2025

**Statement of Sources and Uses of Funds
For seven months ending August 31, 2025**

DESCRIPTIONS	CY 2025			%
	Jan - Aug	Budget	Variance	Budget Variance
<i>SOURCES OF FUNDS</i>				
<u>Congregational Intents -</u>				
Undesignated Support (POJ, Synod Per Capita, and G.A.)	265,355.35	450,000.00	(184,644.65)	41.0%
Designated Giving to POJ Only	16,279.98	17,217.00	(937.02)	5.4%
Per Capita (\$1.15 for Synod; \$8.98 for G.A.)	6,212.13	13,000.00	(6,787.87)	52.2%
Designated Giving to Validated Missions thru G.A.	6,741.51	25,000.00	(18,258.49)	73.0%
Intents / total	<u>294,588.97</u>	<u>505,217.00</u>	<u>(210,628.03)</u>	41.7%
Checking Account Interest	10.39	15.00	(4.61)	30.7%
Other income	8,550.00	8,000.00	550.00	-6.9%
NWC Funding/NCD	0.00	93,100.00	(93,100.00)	100.0%
TOTAL - SOURCES OF FUNDS	<u><u>303,149.36</u></u>	<u><u>606,332.00</u></u>	<u><u>(303,182.64)</u></u>	50.0%
<i>USES OF FUNDS</i>				
<u>Synod and General Assembly</u>				
Synod Per Capita	8,300.00	16,600.00	(8,300.00)	50.0%
GA Per Capita	78,237.70	156,475.00	(78,237.30)	50.0%
GA Shared Mission Support	3,712.42	25,000.00	(21,287.58)	85.2%
Synod & GA / total	<u>90,250.12</u>	<u>198,075.00</u>	<u>(107,824.88)</u>	54.4%
<u>Constitutional Committees</u>				
Committee on Representation (COR)				
COR - Committee Administration	0.00	0.00	0.00	

Committee on Nominations (CON)				
CON - Committee Administration	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Permanent Judicial Commission (PJC)				
PJC - Committee Administration	21.00	0.00	21.00	
All Constitutional Committees / total	<u>21.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>21.00</u>	

Mission Council (MC)

Staff				
Salaries	146,963.50	230,364.00	(83,400.50)	36.2%
Housing Allowances	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Payroll Taxes	7,875.36	14,314.45	(6,439.09)	45.0%
Lead Presbyter Discretionary Expense	1,070.71		1,070.71	
Auto Expense (Lead Presbyter)	1,362.06		1,362.06	
Auto Expense (Stated Clerk)	0.00	3,000.00	(3,000.00)	100.0%
Pension/Medical	13,093.19	25,003.00	(11,909.81)	47.6%
MC Staff / sub-total	<u>170,364.82</u>	<u>272,681.45</u>	<u>(102,316.63)</u>	37.5%
Presbytery Office				
Utilities	11,801.07	11,000.00	801.07	-7.3%
Insurance	25,861.66	26,000.00	(138.34)	0.5%
Office Supplies	2,482.00	4,200.00	(1,718.00)	40.9%
Postage	464.21	700.00	(235.79)	33.7%
Telephone/Internet	655.29	10,023.00	(9,367.71)	93.5%
Grounds/Building Maintenance	12,700.10	11,000.00	1,700.10	-15.5%
Remote Bank Fees	235.69	250.00	(14.31)	5.7%
Audit	18,138.75	17,275.00	863.75	-5.0%
Payroll Expense	2,354.96	2,905.00	(550.04)	18.9%
MC Presbytery Office / sub-total	<u>74,693.73</u>	<u>83,353.00</u>	<u>(8,659.27)</u>	10.4%

Presbytery Operations

Conferences/Retreats	(1,515.28)	2,000.00	(3,515.28)	175.8%
Communications & IT Support	15,339.91	15,000.00	339.91	-2.3%
Presbytery Meetings	2,436.00	3,000.00	(564.00)	18.8%
Administration	2,138.36	600.00	1,538.36	-256.4%
Camp Hanover, Inc. (per Covenant Agreement)	68,000.00	102,000.00	(34,000.00)	33.3%
Capital Replacement Transfer	0.00	2,500.00	(2,500.00)	100.0%
MC Presbytery Operations / sub-total	86,398.99	125,100.00	(38,701.01)	30.9%
MC totals	331,457.54	481,134.45	(149,676.91)	31.1%

Commission on Ministry (COM)

COM - Committee Administration	(161.22)	500.00	(661.22)	132.2%
COM - First call ministry Support	100.00	7,000.00	(6,900.00)	98.6%
COM - Psych Evaluations for CLP candidates	0.00	1,200.00	(1,200.00)	100.0%
COM - Pastor's Retreat	0.00	2,500.00	(2,500.00)	100.0%
COM - New Professional's Orientation	0.00	500.00	(500.00)	100.0%
COM - Training Ruling Elders	0.00	500.00	(500.00)	100.0%
COM - Conflict Resolution Teams - training	0.00	1,500.00	(1,500.00)	100.0%
COM / total	(61.22)	13,700.00	(13,761.22)	100.4%

Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)

CPM - Financial Aid	0.00	7,800.00	(7,800.00)	100.0%
CPM - Psychological Evaluations	1,000.00	1,500.00	(500.00)	33.3%
CPM - Committee Administration	0.00	500.00	(500.00)	100.0%
CPM - Travel	0.00	700.00	(700.00)	100.0%
CPM - Recruiting	0.00	2,000.00	(2,000.00)	100.0%
CPM / total	1,000.00	12,500.00	(11,500.00)	92.0%

Leadership Connections Team (LCT)

LCT - Team Administration	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.0%
LCT - Black Caucus	0.00	2,000.00	(2,000.00)	100.0%
LCT - Collegiate Ministries				
University of Mary Washington	14,999.99	15,000.00	(0.01)	0.0%
University of Virginia	9,999.99	10,000.00	(0.01)	0.0%
Virginia Commonwealth University	12,500.00	12,500.00	0.00	0.0%
LCT - Older Adult	425.00	905.00	(480.00)	53.0%
LCT - Resource Center	0.00	1,000.00	(1,000.00)	100.0%
LCT - Small Church	0.00	4,500.00	(4,500.00)	100.0%
LCT - Nurture	(67.07)	3,500.00	(3,567.07)	101.9%
LCT / total	<u>37,857.91</u>	<u>49,405.00</u>	<u>(11,547.09)</u>	23.4%

Mission and Service Team (MAST)

MAST - Disaster Relief Team	2,546.00	6,000.00	(3,454.00)	57.6%
MAST - Self Development of People	37.80	900.00	(862.20)	95.8%
MAST - Social Justice	0.00	1,000.00	(1,000.00)	100.0%
MAST - World Mission	3,000.00	5,000.00	(2,000.00)	40.0%
MAST - Southwood Project Habitat of Greater Ch'ville (\$132K bal)	0.00	20,000.00	(20,000.00)	100.0%
MAST / total	<u>5,583.80</u>	<u>32,900.00</u>	<u>(27,316.20)</u>	83.0%

New Worshipping Communities (NWC)

NWC - Administration for team	0.00	500.00	(500.00)	100.0%
NWC - Voices of Jubilee	0.00	10,000.00	(10,000.00)	100.0%
NWC - BOP Voices of Jubilee	19,908.32	30,100.00	(10,191.68)	33.9%
NWC - Holy Trinity	0.00	10,000.00	(10,000.00)	100.0%
NWC - All Nations	0.00	10,000.00	(10,000.00)	100.0%
NWC - Every Table	15,000.00	30,000.00	(15,000.00)	50.0%
NWC - Coaching	1,200.00	2,000.00	(800.00)	40.0%
NWC - Liability Insurance	0.00	500.00	(500.00)	100.0%
NWC / total	<u>36,108.32</u>	<u>93,100.00</u>	<u>(56,991.68)</u>	61.2%

TOTAL - USES OF FUNDS	502,217.47	880,814.45	(378,596.98)	43.0%
EXCESS OF USES OVER SOURCES	(199,068.11)	(274,482.45)	75,414.34	27.5%
SUPPORT FROM EXISTING FUNDS				
Church & Ministries Development Fund	100,000.00	274,482.45	(174,482.45)	63.6%
Genesis & Generations Fund			0.00	
Support from Existing Funds / total	100,000.00	274,482.45	(174,482.45)	63.6%
NET USE	(99,068.11)	(0.00)	(99,068.11)	n/a

Account Balances at 08/31/2025	
Bank of America (cash)	\$52,466.89
RBC (cash and investments)	awaiting RBC statements
\$	52,466.89

Net Assets Report – Without Restrictions

FUND	Board designated funds											8.31.25	
	12.31.24	Contributions	Int. Income	Fees	Investment Interest Inc.	Investment Gains	Gains/Loss Sale of property	Expenses	Transfers	Support from M&D Interfund Transfers	Transfers from Restricted		
Advance Funds	40,029.28											40,029.28	Mgt
Aquired Properties (dissolved congregations)	907,645.00											907,645.00	Buildings NO CASH
Capital Replacement Fund	4,704.36			-3.74	12.24	-9.66		-2500				2,203.20	Mgt
Church & Ministries Endow Fund	3,630,102.61	199,965.00		-10,498.86	34,516.31	-26,172.93		-108,463.21	-199,965.00	-100,000.00		3,419,483.92	8010 Church Dev
Elizabeth Fitzgerald Fund	25,110.97											25,110.97	Church
GA Commissioner Reserves	3,627.75							-78.86				3,548.89	Program
Dismissed Churches	256,180.32	510.46		-738.35	2,419.83	-1,909.37						256,462.89	Dismissed Proceeds
Gordonsville Presbyterian Church	24,215.70	4,000.00						-7736				20,479.70	Church
Greenwood Presbyterial Church	81,382.16							-1349.42				80,032.74	Church
Forest Hill AC Committee	-							-57.4				-57.40	Mgt
Lakeside Church Funds	876.2											876.20	Mgt
Mechanicsville Presbyterian Church	-58,842.61	450						-22,223.26				-80,615.87	Mgt
Montrrose Church	69,229.21	6,000.00							-5,000.00			70,229.21	Church
New Covenant Funds	33.13											33.13	Mgt
POJ	29,846.83	284,039.39	8.28					-505,877.68	-10,000.00	100,000.00		-101,983.18	POJ
Reparations Action Fund (From sale of church bldg)	-								-29,994.75			-29,994.75	
Retained Earnings	813,148.00											813,148.00	POJ Plant & R.E. NO CASH
Resurrection Fund (from sale of church bldg)	-								49,991.25			49,991.25	
Small Church Emergency Cap Fund	-							-5,000.00	5,000.00			0.00	Church
Stewardship (from sale of church buildings)	-								-99,982.50			-99,982.50	Mgt
Tithing (From sale of church bldg)	-								19,996.50			19,996.50	
Trinity Presbyterian Church	-3,527.62	14,856.40										11,328.78	
Accumulated CB Adjustments	449,201.00											449,201.00	CB Adjustments
Total	6,272,962.29	509,821.25	8.28	-11,240.95	36,948.38	-28,091.96	0.00	-653,285.83	-269,954.50	0.00	0.00	5,407,965.96	Ⓢ

Net Assets Report – With Restrictions

					Investment	Investment			Release Funds		
	Balance	Contributions	Int. Income	Gains	Fees	Interest Inc.	Expenses	Transfers	to Assets	Balance	Class
	12.31.24								wo restrictions	8/31/2025	
African Fellowship Project	\$ 3,323.00									\$ 3,323.00	Program
Elizabeth Fitzgerald Fund	\$ 2,531.81	\$ 601.71								\$ 3,133.52	Church
Committee on Ministry & Worship	\$ 3,120.54									\$ 3,120.54	Program
Dismantling Racism Project	\$ 8,164.91						\$ (1,146.60)			\$ 7,018.31	Program
Five Cents A Meal	\$ 30,192.43	\$ 30,313.25					\$ (35,000.00)			\$ 25,505.68	Program
Flo Barbee=Watkins Fdn Class Fund	-									\$ -	Program
FBW Medical Reimbursement	-									\$ -	MFO
For a Time Such As This	\$ 3,000.00									\$ 3,000.00	Program
Glenmore Scholarship	\$ 1,266.08	\$ 1,864.45					\$ (1,250.00)			\$ 1,880.53	Program
Haitian Art Project	\$ 25.00									\$ 25.00	Program
Haiti Mission Project - Corell	\$ 9,616.66	\$ 2,925.00								\$ 12,541.66	Program
HCR - Misc	\$ -									\$ -	Program
New Church Development Site	\$320,258.07			\$ (2,243.88)	\$ (867.69)	\$ 2,843.76				\$319,990.26	Church
Norman Nettleton Retirement Fund	\$ 5,023.08	\$ 593.68								\$ 5,616.76	Program
Montgomery Immersion Matthew 25	\$ 6,429.96									\$ 6,429.96	Program
Pastoral Care Fund	\$ 7,625.40	\$ 6,250.72								\$ 13,876.12	Program
Peacemaking Offering	\$ 20,403.81	\$ 719.32								\$ 21,123.13	Program
Pentecost Offering	\$ 4,867.41									\$ 4,867.41	Program
Presbyterian Disaster Team	-	\$ 5,534.50								\$ 5,534.50	Program
SDOP Grant	\$ 7,213.79						\$ (6,000.00)			\$ 1,213.79	Program
Sunnyside Retirement - New Covenant	-	\$ 3,675.61					\$ (2,447.80)			\$ 1,227.81	MFO
U of R Campus Ministry	\$ 6,694.62									\$ 6,694.62	MFO
Volunteer Recognition	\$ 2,032.18									\$ 2,032.18	Program
Voices of Jubilee	\$ 85,045.01	\$ 69,864.15					\$ (156,120.00)	\$ 10,000.00		\$ 8,789.16	Program
William Neal Endowment	\$ 711.08			\$ (0.55)	\$ (1.86)	\$ 6.08				\$ 714.75	Program
										\$ -	
Endowment										\$ -	
Providence Powhatan	\$117,384.29			\$ 1,520.48	\$ (320.65)	\$ 1,456.02	\$ (5,000.48)			\$115,039.66	Providence
Anne Bolling Hobson	\$ 2,000.00									\$ 2,000.00	Anne Bolling Hobson
Eva Ross Barndt	\$ 500.00									\$ 500.00	Eva Ross Barndt
Permanently restricted net assets #3800	\$ 2,500.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$ 2,500.00	
	\$649,929.13	\$122,342.39		\$ (723.95)	\$ (1,190.20)	\$ 4,305.86	\$ (206,964.88)	\$ 10,000.00		\$577,698.35	
Total Temp. Restricted	\$644,929.13	\$122,342.39	-	\$ (723.95)	\$ (1,190.20)	\$ 4,305.86	\$ (206,964.88)	\$ 10,000.00	-	\$577,698.35	
Total Perm. Restricted	\$ 500.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$ 500.00	

Report of the Anti-Racism Committee for the October 18, 2025 Meeting of the Presbytery of the James

The current members of the Antiracism Committee (ARC) are: Joslyn Shipman and Laura Sugg, co-moderators; Liz Hulme Adam, Shady Clark, Peggy Fox, Lamar Lockhart, Crystal Varner Parker (advisory member), Marsha Summers, Christopher Tweel, Rebekah Tucker-Motley, Mary Jane Winter; Kerry Foster attends when he is able *ex officio*.

ARC would welcome additional participants. Reach out to Joslyn or Laura if you would like to attend a meeting of the Committee or help with particular initiatives.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the Antiracism Committee (ARC) did not meet in May, June, or July. In May, 2025, co-moderator of ARC, Robert Johnson, with regret and prayers of good will, resigned as co-moderator and committee member. Demands in his life made this necessary, and the Committee thanks him for his faithful leadership ever since ARC was formed about 18 months ago.

At the end of July, co-moderator Joslyn Shipman called for an emailed vote to elect a co-moderator, and Laura Sugg was elected to serve alongside Joslyn. August 6, a subgroup of ARC met to discuss what, if any, budget proposal would be sent to the Presbytery Mission Council Budget Committee for 2026. The Antiracism Committee submitted an application on August 8 asking for ZERO 2026 operating budget dollars and requesting clarification from the Presbytery (Mission Council Budget Committee, Mission Council, and/or Trustees) around the “Reparative Action Fund”:

- “1) How can ARC receive quarterly statements that tell us how much is in the Reparative Action Fund (RAF) (and a history of any disbursements, to whom, and for what purpose)?
- 2) How does ARC, a congregation, or an individual apply for monies from the RAF -- or from the Resurrection Fund; and does the Small Church Fund and its link to apply still exist/work?
- 3) What group/entity created and oversees the application process, decided the criteria for accepting/denying applications, how/when will they notify the POJ of its availability and process, etc.? If there is no application process set at this time, how can one be created, and who will serve on the deciding body? Will applications be on a rolling basis? Other questions like this will likely arise.”

ARC understands that these questions may take some time to answer and requests to be part of this process.

The Antiracism Committee met on August 28 and September 18 to continue its work. There are now sub-groups/mini task forces around 1) training, 2) an ARC resources POJ web page, 3) explore the development of a General Assembly Overture asking for the creation of denominational antiracism training that councils could use as they needed at no or low cost.

ACTION – Proposed amendment to the Presbytery of the James Antiracism Policy

While the Antiracism Committee desires everyone to continue to pursue antiracism as a way of being, we recognize that deep and meaningful training for all the parties required to attend training in the policy as it currently reads is difficult to achieve. The proposed amendment focuses the requirement of training on clergy, Commissioned Ruling Elders, and Certified Christian Educators

actively engaged in ministry (not retired) and removes the requirement for Ruling Elders serving on POJ committees. ARC still encourages everyone to avail themselves of antiracism training and educational events and actions as they are offered. ARC has asked Mission Council for time (15-20 minutes) at each of the three 2026 stated meetings of the Presbytery to offer a mini-training around antiracism themes. This will satisfy the policy requirement for all who attend any of those meetings. Deeper and more meaningful training, learning, and action opportunities will be offered, and ARC hopes that congregations and individuals will share what they have done or are doing so that we can connect around this life-affirming and important aspect of discipleship.

The proposed amendment as unanimously approved by the ARC is below—lines 90 through 94 in the Training Section. Amendments are underlined or struck through.

Respectfully submitted,
Joslyn Shipman (shipmanjes@gmail.com) and
Laura Sugg (southplainspastor@gmail.com), Antiracism Committee co-moderators

1 **Presbytery of the James Antiracism Policy –Approved at the October 19, 2024 Meeting**

2 Approved unanimously by the POJ Antiracism Committee, June 25, 2024

3

4 **Purpose:**

5 The Presbyterian Church (USA) requires each council to have an antiracism policy in place
6 (2023-2025 *Book of Order* G-3.0106). The purpose of this policy is to involve the
7 congregations, leadership, and people of the Presbytery of the James (POJ) in ongoing work
8 of identifying, rejecting, and repenting of racism in our society, congregations, and
9 interpersonal relationships; and to equip antiracism action. Further, the POJ pledges, though
10 this policy and its initiatives, to:

- 11 • listen to People of Color, including members of historically Black Presbyterian
12 congregations,
- 13 • repent of past sins against People of Color in our Presbytery,
- 14 • identify and forswear the legacy of enslavement/Jim Crow laws and its fruit,
- 15 • pursue restorative justice and repair for historical harms,
- 16 • promote racial harmony and mutual respect,
- 17 • foster and strengthen interracial relationships and understanding.

18 Our presbytery and the Commonwealth of Virginia bear the stain of a history of
19 expropriation of the land of Virginia's indigenous peoples, of being a slave trading center, a
20 perpetuator of southern plantation culture, being the former capital of the Confederacy, the
21 incubator of Lost Cause mythology, a key plotter in Jim Crow, and the originator of Massive
22 Resistance. Given this history and, as members of the Body of Christ, the POJ takes seriously
23 the need to deal frankly with and repent of our history of racism and its harms and to commit to
24 antiracism education, advocacy, and action.

25 Building on the work of the denominational policy, *Facing Racism* (2016), this policy is a
26 formal commitment to enable and better equip congregations and leaders in the difficult,
27 uncomfortable, valuable, life-giving, and liberating work of antiracism. A policy is only as good
28 as the hearts that follow it. Led by the Spirit, the people of the POJ are invited to examine and
29 confront issues of racial injustice, systemic racism, restorative justice, and racial healing and to

30 move towards *antiracism as a way of being*. We all have blind spots; we will make mistakes
31 along the way, but the God we follow is gracious. As disciples of a forgiving Savior, we shall
32 aim to offer grace to one other as well.

33 **Rationale:**

34 The Belhar Confession⁶ states, “*Christ's work of reconciliation is made manifest in the*
35 *church... ; that **unity** is, therefore, both a **gift and an obligation** for the church of Jesus*
36 *Christ; that through the working of God's Spirit it is a **binding force**, yet simultaneously a*
37 ***reality which must be earnestly pursued and sought....**”*

38 While race is a social construct, racism is very real and damages the fabric of the beloved
39 community that God intends—where, “*There is no longer Jew or Greek... slave or free... male*
40 *and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.*” (Galatians 3:28).

41 Racism is more than individual acts of bigotry or prejudice; it is any system, institution, or
42 cultural practice or tradition, which protects or prefers the lives, property, and status of White
43 people—or any group which takes power over another—at the expense of siblings of color or
44 other marginalized persons or groups. The conscious *or* subconscious idea that whole groups
45 of people are inferior because of their skin color and/or national origin defies the scriptural
46 assurance that all persons are created in the image of God: “*Let us make humankind in our*
47 *image, according to our likeness....*” (Genesis 1:26a) White supremacy not only oppresses
48 People of Color; it also causes internal damage to White people and separates them from their
49 humanity. The work of dismantling racist systems is liberating for *all* who participate in it.
50 Therefore, this transformative activity is a gift not a burden.

51 **Implementation:**

- 52 1. **TIMING:** While antiracism work has been and is happening in the POJ, this policy makes
53 formal commitments to specific actions. As such, it will take some time to “roll out” new
54 initiatives. It will take time for the development of training and resources for education,
55 advocacy, and action. Every effort will be made to make these events and resources easily
56 available, conveniently timed, and low-cost. In pursuit of the purposes described above,
57 through its Antiracism Committee, the POJ will publicize and offer the following.
- 58 2. **EVENTS:** These events will aim to address racism by focusing on one or more of these
59 areas:
- 60 a. Repentance and repair of the ruptures in the Body of Christ caused by racism --
61 personal conversation, group encounters, worship services, and plenary sessions
62 that hear of the harms of racism and offer concrete courses of repentance and
63 reconciliation. Particular attention will be focused on repairing historic harms,
64 particularly for Black, Asian, Native American, and Latinx Churches and peoples in
65 the POJ.
 - 66 b. Celebrations of the diversity of God’s people -- listening to the voices of peoples who
67 have been marginalized and the gift of a variety of cultures, foods, worship styles.

⁶ The Belhar Confession was written in South Africa in 1986 and included in the PC(USA) *Book of Confessions* in 2016.

- 68 c. Workshops on antiracism education, advocacy, and action.
69 d. Trips and online conversations to learn from others about the history of racism and
70 antiracism work bearing fruit elsewhere.
- 71 3. **RESOURCES:** The Antiracism Committee (ARC) will identify and share educational
72 resources for our congregations and individuals, some of whom may be just beginning to
73 explore the issues of racism, racial injustice, and racial reconciliation while others have
74 already begun to study and take actions toward racial healing.
- 75 a. **Resources on Website** -- ARC will share via the POJ website a compendium of
76 trusted resources (books, online resources, trainings, etc.) to illuminate and guide
77 this work wherever our congregations may be on this journey, including contexts
78 where certain resources have been proven helpful.
- 79 b. **“Speakers Bureau”** -- In time, the ARC will have a list of individuals in the
80 Presbytery who are willing and able to converse one-on-one with church leaders,
81 and to lead congregations in short-term conversations around issues of antiracism.
- 82 c. **Advocacy** – ARC will share ways to advocate for antiracism within the bounds of the
83 Presbytery and beyond.
- 84 4. **TRAINING:** Opportunities to understand our blind spots and unconscious biases can be a
85 beginning or chapter markers in the lifelong process of learning to live faithfully in the Body
86 of Christ. No one-time training, required or otherwise, can change hearts without the Holy
87 Spirit’s help, but at least a theologically-based baseline of acceptable and unacceptable
88 behavior can be articulated to all participants. Again, the goal is for antiracism to become a
89 habit of the heart.
- 90 a. **Once established, attendance at POJ antiracism training is required at least**
91 **every 3 years** for all Ministers of Word and Sacrament actively serving (clergy who
92 are not retired), Certified Christian Educators (not retired), Commissioned Ruling
93 Elders, Ruling Elders serving on POJ committees, as well as staff of the Presbytery
94 of the James.
- 95 b. Frequency: The Antiracism Committee will decide on trainers and/or online options by
96 January of 2025. **There will be at least 3 opportunities for training in any**
97 **calendar year.**
- 98 c. Deadlines: It is expected that people required to receive antiracism training will
99 complete **at least one session within 12 months of the first offering of POJ**
100 **Antiracism training** or within their first 12 months of joining the Presbytery of the
101 James.
- 102 d. Tracking: The office of the Stated Clerk will maintain a roster of those who have
103 attended and have completed training and will report the list to the Antiracism
104 Committee at least annually.
- 105 5. **FINANCES**
- 106 a. As mentioned above, every effort will be made so that POJ Antiracism events,
107 training, and resources are free or at a low cost.

108 b. Financial assistance in the form of grants will also be available to congregations
109 needing that help. Applications for financial assistance with antiracism work may be
110 directed to the Antiracism Committee.

111 **Conclusion:**

112 It is our mission in the Presbytery of the James to engage in a process of lifelong liberation for
113 all through letting go of the sin of racism. In today’s changing world, God calls us to stand
114 together across false lines of caste we create to see siblings as “other” and, therefore,
115 inferior—whether this is conscious or not. Not only is antiracism faithful discipleship, it is also
116 pragmatically needed if the Church is to continue, and, better yet, to thrive. The Presbytery
117 invites and encourages all clergy, leaders, and members to embrace this *liberating* gift and
118 task of training, ongoing learning, and commit to forging and fostering relationships that honor
119 the Image of God in all people. Training sessions and workshops will provide information and
120 insights into antiracism efforts; however, these are only beginnings or refreshers. *Ongoing*
121 prayer, study, conversation, relationship-building, discernment, and practice by and among
122 POJ members and congregations will be essential to, again, make *antiracism a way of being*.
123 The major work within the Presbytery of dismantling racism, of restoring right relationships with
124 God and each other, will be done within the Presbytery’s member congregations. The
125 Reformed tradition used the language of sanctification to name this lifelong work of the Holy
126 Spirit in the lives of individuals—and in a church ‘reformed and always reforming.’ Let us not
127 forget that we all have blind spots; we will make mistakes along the way, but the God we follow
128 is gracious. As disciples of a forgiving Savior, we shall aim to offer grace to each other on this
129 journey.

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Report of the Committee on Nominations

Presbytery of the James: October 18, 2025

- I. The Committee Reports the Following:
 - a. The election for Moderator and Vice Moderator of the Presbytery of the James will take place today, at the October meeting.
 - i. The Committee reports that its nominee for 2026 Moderator of the Presbytery of the James, is Ruling Elder Peggy Fox, Commissioned Ruling Elder. Peggy is serving Woodville Presbyterian Church. She currently serves as the Vice Moderator of the Presbytery as well as a member of the Commission on Ministry.
 - ii. The Committee reports that its nominee for 2026 Vice Moderator of the Presbytery of the James, is Teaching Elder Alex Creager. Alex is the pastor of Bon Air Presbyterian Church. He currently serves as the moderator of the New Worshiping Communities Team.
 - b. The election of General Assembly commissioners, alternates, and young adult advisory delegates will take place today.
 - i. The committee reports that its nominees for RE Commissioners are Mai Owens, Ginter Park; Bary Parks, Westminster, Charlottesville, and Chad Wayner, South Plains.
 - ii. The committee reports that its nominees for TE Commissioners are Ray Roberts, Retired; James Taneti, MAL (UPSem).
 - iii. The committee reports its nominee for Young Adult Advisory Delegate is Charlie Collins, First, Richmond.
 - iv. The committee reports its nominee for a TE Alternate Commissioner is Crystal Varner Parker, Providence Forge.
- II. The Committee reports the following openings:

The following openings exist on Committees and Teams that are filled by the Committee on Nominations (**highlighted names** will be nominated at the October POJ meeting):

**An updated list of vacancies and nominees can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/CoNOct25>. This list will be updated leading up to the presbytery meeting.

If you are interested in any of these opportunities for service, please contact Rev. Kate Fiedler, Moderator, Committee on Nominations at katef@2presrichmond.org.

Positions Filled by <i>Committee on Nominations</i>							
Team/ Comm	Class	First Name	Last Name	Church	Role	Region	Term
COM	2027				RE	B	1
COM	2025				RE	E	1
COM	2025				RE	F	1
COM	2026				RE	MAL	1
COM	2028	Crystal	Varner Parker	Providence Forge	TE	MAL	2
COM	2028	Ronda	Williams	Kirk O'Cliff	RE	MAL	2
CPM	2027				RE	B	1
CPM	2026				RE	C	1
CPM	2025				TE	F	
CPM	2028	Michael	Hawn	Second, Richmond	RE	MAL	1
CON	2026				TE	C	
CON	2026				RE	D	
CON	2027				TE	MAL VM	
PJC	2029				RE	MAL	1
PJC	2029				RE	MAL	1
Synod Service	2027	Carson	Rhyne	HR	RE	N/A	2
Leadership Conn	2027				RE	A	
Leadership Conn	2027				TE	B	
Leadership Conn	2026				MC	C	
Leadership Conn		(Vice)	(Moderator)			MAL	
Mission & Service	2026				TE	C	1
Mission & Service	2027				TE	F	1
Mission & Service		(Vice)	(Moderator)			MAL	

Report of the Mission and Service Team

The Mission and Service Team (MAST) supports ministries that enable congregations in the Presbytery of the James to experience new vitality as they reach beyond themselves to serve God in the world. The goal of these ministries is to strengthen discipleship as we widen our horizons, show God's love, and engage more deeply in God's mission in the world.

Read these reports and imagine how you and your congregation can get involved and find new energy for your faith in action. These ministries are one of the most positive offerings of the Presbytery! God is at work!

Mary Jane Winter (mjwinter@comcast.net), MAST moderator

World Mission Ministry

Recognizing the value of global partnerships, the Presbytery of the James came alongside Cindy Corell in 2012, and churches here joined together to sponsor her mission service in Haiti. It was remarkable! Our support of Cindy and the people she served, led to annual trips to Haiti and a great love for the people she served.

When it became no longer possible to go to Haiti, this presbytery joined with our neighbor, Peaks Presbytery, to offer a mission week in Guatemala with CEDEPCA (Protestant Center for Pastoral Education in Central America), an amazing global partner of the Presbyterian Church(USA). As with Haiti, our visits strengthen our faith as Christ's disciples, build lasting relationships, and open our hearts to God's people and to God's work.



In July, a team of 12 traveled to Guatemala and witnessed CEDEPCA's far-reaching ministry with rich opportunities to give both our hearts and hands. With a focus on Earth Care, the week included planting 100 trees in a reforestation project with church youth, delivering life-saving water filters to 110 families in the mountains, and distributing 25,000 vegetable seedlings to improve nutrition.

We also shared God's love as we visited in homes, heard from indigenous women who had found new beginnings after surviving the genocide of the Armed Conflict, learned from Mayan spirituality of our deep connectedness to all creation, and through it all strengthened our ties with the people of Guatemala and with CEDEPCA.

Sharing God's love lies at the heart of mission. It is incarnational. Our coming in person—listening, caring, sharing, eating at their tables, instilled hope and dignity to those on the margins, which is no small thing. Our coming in person offered inspiration, joy, and affirmation to them. And to us! The love that we shared was returned a hundredfold. In every encounter, we saw God's light shining and we were part to it.

They have asked us to come back! Would you or others from your congregation come in **July 2026** or in late October (to celebrate All Saints Day)? Please sign up for more information at the display table or email mjwinter@comcast.net.

More than ever, we need to be ones to travel there. It is risky for our global partners, especially in Guatemala, to come here.

Mission Co-Workers. In March, the Interim Unified Agency of the Presbyterian Church(USA) ended all mission co-worker positions in all countries, and the office of World Mission as well. We will no longer have mission co-workers coming to visit us. Our mission partners will no longer have their service. World Mission Ministry endorses the overtures that ask the General Assembly to reconsider its current approach to World Mission. In the meantime, let's build on the labors of our mission co-workers and strengthen our connections with our global partners, as we respond to our God who calls us anew to care for all God's children and to work together for a world of love, justice, and peace.

Self-Development of People Ministry

The presbytery's Self-Development of People (SDOP) Ministry seeks partnerships with POJ churches, community leaders, nonprofits and others, to address the issues of poverty and help alleviate homelessness, food insecurity, and unemployment. This ministry seeks to strengthen relationships, communication and collaboration with all POJ churches.

The Self-Development of People (SDOP) Ministry offers grassroots and community workshops to expand education and increase skill levels in identifying projects that meet the criteria and qualify for the Mid-Council Level SDOP Grant. Workshops provide the opportunity to apply directly to the National Level SDOP Committee.

In 2025, your SDOP committee hosted community workshops on January 25 and May 13 and grassroots workshops on September 8 and 18, with another scheduled for **November 20**.

For 2026, your SDOP committee is currently planning to host new workshops, to be hosted by the YMCA on dates to be determined and will continue to partner with the Chesterfield County Central Public Library as host sites in January and March.

How to apply for a grant? Please see the SDOP section on the POJ website, which has been updated: <https://presbyteryofthejames.com/ministries/sdop/>. There you will find information about the presbytery and national level grants that are available. Use the link to access both levels for the application and pre-application to be completed, and later the response to see if it should be submitted for approval at the next level.

Grants at the Presbytery Level have a maximum grant of \$10,000 and an application **deadline of November 1**. Grants at the National Level have a maximum grant of \$15,000, and **NO deadline** for submitting the application when using the link provided on the POJ website.

Lamar Lockhart, Moderator

Hunger Ministry

“Lord, when did we see you hungry?” Every church, every disciple of Christ is called to address hunger, and yet none of us can do all that is needed alone. The Hunger Ministry Committee brings together the offerings taken by each congregation to have a greater impact feeding those who are hungry here and globally through our mission partners, and also by addressing the areas of education and advocacy.

Does your church take an offering for hunger? The 5-Cents-a-Meal offering or Centsability?
Please include this offering in your church life or in your church budget.

Where does the money go? Money from this offering meets immediate needs right here, through food pantries or programs that directly feed the hungry. Part of the money supports local hunger

ministries in the Presbytery. Other funds help our international mission partners in places like Congo, Mexico, Haiti, and Guatemala. Funds are also sent to the Presbyterian Hunger Program of the Presbyterian Church (USA) that has far-reaching projects nationally and globally.

Feed My Sheep, an emergency food ministry in the Gordonsville area, writes these words of thanks: “Your gift is especially needed as EFT food cards, distributed by Social Services to the food insecure, were hacked, and the state has no money to reimburse. Thirty-five families just this month (July) lost ALL their benefits. We have been able to help due to your generosity. Thank you!”

Every contribution your church sends to the Presbytery for Hunger makes a difference, enabling many to eat and to have the resources to build a better life.

None of the money used to address Hunger is from the presbytery’s budget. It comes from you! **Please encourage your church to take this important offering** and to continue it! It is meeting critical needs all over Central Virginia and around the world.

Disaster Relief Ministry

Last spring 13 individuals under the leadership of Brown Pearson, went to Augusta GA to work on a home where two huge trees had demolished most of the roof trusses. They rebuilt the roof framing, installed a new roof, rebuilt 3 walls, insulated, and installed drywall. The next trip is October 18-25, a return to Burnsville, NC, which is still recovering from Helene and where the ministry team has established relationships.

If you can lend a hand and give a week of time, you will not regret it! For information on future trips, please contact Brown Pearson cbpearson3@erg-homes.com. Or Stan Parcell sparcell@comcast.net

Justice and Advocacy Ministry

Currently this ministry is reorganizing. If you have a heart for public policy witness, the call to justice in local and larger arenas, and the many issues that are facing the church and society, please consider helping the presbytery to determine how to best work in this critical area and be a voice for those who do not have a voice. Interested? Please contact the presbytery office or MAST moderator Mary Jane Winter (mjwinter@comcast.net)

New Worshiping Communities Team Report For October 2025 Presbytery Report

Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church (from Kwame Appiah-Yeboah, Outgoing Session Clerk)

- By the grace of God things are going on really well with Holy Trinity, especially since Rev. Eric Amoah joined as pastor. Enthusiasm is very high, and one can tell from the active participation in church activities.
- In August, the church organized its annual Summer Retreat at Westview, Goochland. Members and non-members participated. A three-day fasting and prayer session was held in the last week of August. Two days by Zoom and a grand-finale in-person prayer session for closing out the occasion.
- Four members have volunteered to serve as part of the council of elders. This is unprecedented. Rev. Derek Starr Redwine has volunteered to moderate session for Holy Trinity, and also to train the new session members prior to ordination.

Every Table (from co-pastor Rev. Jess Cook)

- We recently offered the opening prayer (Jess) and a grounding meditation (Charles) at a gathering at VUU hosted by Divine Inspirations Network, an organization run by Shaunta'h Powell, who organizes the food pantry at Westminster PC with Pastor Barbara. We've also been engaging with the LGBTQIA+ community lately, as there has been a lot of division that's revealed some deep wounds within the community. We've stepped into our role as a steady voice in the midst of the turmoil, and it feels like a pivotal moment for Every Table.
- We were recently awarded a Growth Grant from the PC(USA). This will go toward building out some of the necessary steps for opening The Clearing Space, our yoga studio. It will be a separate non-profit, so a big part of the work has been establishing the relationship between Every Table and The Clearing Space, and what our roles look like within both organizations.
- We also received a grant from Ginter Park to purchase supplies for our mobile meditation hub, which continues to be in progress.
- We have gained great ground in the search for a space and are in conversation right now about a location. Once we are settled, I will be offering a range of opportunities for pastors and other faith leaders: there will be a daily meditation specifically for clergy (so people can come on a day that works for them), and we'll be able to host our mindfulness for pastoral caregivers program in addition to other community offerings.
- Jess was in Louisville the first week of August, meeting with the committee writing a new confession, and we are making good progress. We hope to have a document prepared for General Assembly in 2026.
- It's been a period of internal churning for us. We've spent the last several months hunkered down and building out the infrastructure for The Clearing Space. We continue to be grateful for the community we are building and of which we are already a part.

Voices of Jubilee (from co-pastors Rev. Ashley Dias Mejias and Rev. Lauren Ramseur)

- We are thrilled to welcome one of our amazing mentors, Angel DeJesus, into a new position as the Community Coordinator for Voices of Jubilee. In this role, Angel will lead our new initiative to support youth as they return home to their community after time in detention and prison.
- We held a Christmas in July event at River Road UMC. There are 300 packages filled with candy, hygiene products, notebooks, puzzles, snacks, prayers, and love. Thanks to the donations we will be able to provide essential items and thoughtful gifts to the children we serve in the prison system. These contributions go a long way in reminding them that they are seen, valued, and loved.
- We hosted our most recent Family Dinner on Sunday, September 14 at Ginter Park Presbyterian Church. This is a time for community, support, fellowship, and connecting with one another.

Rev. Alex Creager: alex@bonairpc.org

Report of Camp Hanover September 20, 2025

Another Way: Following Jesus's Example At Summer Camp 2025

Jesus often confronted the world around him with *another way* of being. By his example, we are reminded that God always invites us to reimagine who we are and how we do things. This summer, over 500 Day Campers and Overnight Campers, as well as 38 young adult leaders sought to live *another way* in community with one another, apart from the trappings and distractions of home. In the peace of this space, we explored how God calls us to do a new thing and faithfully forge *another way* in the world outside of Camp.

As each week started, all were offered space to unplug, center, and begin self-reflection, pondering when we have or have not felt God's presence in times of change or trouble. Through the story of Saul and Ananias, we looked at how big and small discoveries can be revelations from God, and how past experiences lead us to change and grow. Learning about John the Baptist, we considered the multiple influences and voices in our lives, discerning how we recognize God's voice within and around us, and exploring what it means to "prepare a way" for God. The Daughters of Zelophehad made us think about how we might inspire each other to find the courage needed to confront injustice. We imagined what it takes to create change in the world and who we might work with to be leaders of change.

Studying passages from Psalms, Luke, Acts, Matthew, Numbers and Isaiah, together in our small groups, we learned how God is always moving and making changes. And as each week came to a close, campers and staff alike looked at all the places we saw God doing new things and headed out seeking to become partners with God in these endeavors, empowered to live, lead, and serve in new ways.

Servant Leadership Opportunities Abound

Volunteers Make Camp Happen! Do you have a few hours to give? Looking for ways you can fill an afternoon or a couple of days a month with some meaningful, rewarding service? Camp Hanover has several opportunities where you can use your gifts and talents. We are currently seeking volunteers for the following roles:

- Animal Caretaker
- Board or Committee Member
- Driver for After School Program
- Environmental Educator for After School Program
- Gardener
- Groundskeeping and Landscaping
- Weekend Retreat Host
- Group Service Project Leader

More information about each role can and an interest form to start you on your journey as a Camp Hanover volunteer can be found at www.camphanover.org/volunteer

Board Business

The Board of Directors for Camp Hanover Inc. met in June and August for regular, stated meetings. Some highlights from our time together include commissioning the 2025 summer camp staff, recognizing the outgoing class of Mission, Vocation, and Practice Interns (MVPs), and honoring outgoing Board Directors for their service.

At our June meeting we elected five new Directors to the class of 2028: Jeb Cooke, David Ensign, Jess Houser, Andrew Porter, and Tricia Wessler. We welcomed one new and one returning Youth Director to the board, they are Keane Stuart and Mai Owens. The elected officers of the board for the 2025-2026 term are: Erin Davidson, President; Will Kirk, Vice President; Amelia Adair, Secretary, and Jeff McDonald, Treasurer. In August, we thanked the members who concluded their time of service with the Board. They are Courtney Fabian, Leroy Jefferson, Robert Fidler and Tim Beane.

The Board held its annual retreat at Camp Hanover on September 12-13. We invited the Rev. Steve Darr from Pearisburg Presbyterian Church (Presbytery of the Peaks) to lead worship for this time together. Our retreat focused on building community within our board, understanding our role as Board Directors, discussing emerging programming, strategic partnerships, and strengthening the

impact of Camp Hanover's ministry. We identified our current community partners (Autism Society, Comfort Zone Camp to name a few), brainstormed ways to meet needs of other communities, and recognized areas where Camp Hanover is flourishing: the CHASE program, environmental education school partnerships, and being named Best Camp in Richmond and Virginia by the *Richmond Times Dispatch*, and *Virginia Living Magazine*.

Events and Happenings

Labor Day Weekend was filled with joy as friends, family, and alumni with connections to Camp spanning every decade back to 1957 converged for **Homecoming** to rekindle relationships, relive summer memories, and celebrate Camp Hanover's 68-year history. In addition to campfire building challenges, swimming and boating, worship and marshmallow roasting, the kids beat the adults in a high-energy game of Kickball (for the second year in a row!).

At the time of writing this report, the **#GreatCampGive** is two weeks away. On October 1st we'll be celebrating Camp Hanover's The #GreatCampGive has become the biggest generosity day of the year for friends and fans of Camp Hanover. This year, the Camp Goats: Lily, Zeke, Luna and Buttercup are leading the charge! The goal is to raise \$100,000 to support and strengthen what happens at Camp in the following ways:

- \$10,000 to provide day-to-day operational essentials
- \$15,000 to support facility care and upkeep
- \$25,000 to fund Camperships and adventure programs
- \$25,000 to strengthen Leadership Development, Staff Training, and camper skills- and confidence-building programs and activities
- \$25,000 to develop new programs and increase accessibility for individuals of all abilities, ensuring Camp Hanover is ready to welcome every child

We look forward to sharing the results of the #GreatCampGive with you at the stated meeting of Presbytery in October and hope you will join us in supporting your Camp by making a gift. You can give anytime by visiting www.camphanover.org/give

Lastly, we continue to work closely with Presbytery leadership on the renewal of the **Covenant Agreement** between the Presbytery and Camp Hanover Inc. We value the longstanding relationship and support from the Presbytery and look forward to continuing in this strong partnership.

How YOU Can Support Your Camp:

- Hanover Christmas is Friday, December 12th and Saturday, December 13th from 6pm-9pm. Bring your friends and family to Camp and celebrate the birth of Christ while walking a candlelit trail through the woods. If you'd like to help with this event, become a volunteer. Learn more at www.camphanover.org/hanover-christmas/
- Tell friends, family, and your church community about Camp Hanover's summer camp and year-round after school programming. We rely on you, our camp community and supporters, to get the word out about this ministry.
- If you would like to join us on the board or on one of our committees, we welcome you to reach out to Doug (doug@camphanover.org) or Erin (boardpresident@camphanover.org), or fill out the interest form at <https://www.camphanover.org/volunteer-committee-board-interest/>.

Respectfully submitted,
Erin Davidson, President

Doug Walters, Executive Director: doug@camphanover.org