



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

Theme for 2026 Stated Meetings: Called to Serve in Unity, Called to Give Sacrificially, Called to Love Unconditionally

122nd Stated Meeting • Saturday, February 21, 2026 • Hybrid Format

**Host/Physical Location: Fairfield Church
6930 Cold Harbor Rd., Mechanicsville, VA 23111**

Section II – Agenda and Reports

Agenda

- 9:00 Gathering, Greeting, Refreshments
- 9:15 Pre-Meeting Preparation and Instructions for the Meeting
- 9:30 Declaration of a Quorum – Call to Order – Prayer
Land Acknowledgment – Opening Prayer
Adoption of the Agenda TE Joel Morgan
Welcome of First-time Commissioners – Corresponding Members – Guests
Welcome of New Minister Members
Recognition of Retirements
- 9:45 Worship Service
Installation of Moderator and Vice Moderator
- 10:30 BREAK
- 10:45 [Temporary Stated Clerk](#) (p.8-14) / [Presbyter Report](#) (p. 15-16) TE Kerry Foster
- 10:50 [Consent Agenda](#) (p. 7)
- 10:55 [Commission on Ministry Report](#) (p. 16-58) TE Kelly-Ann Rayle
- ORDER OF THE DAY**
- 11:00 [Committee on Preparation for Ministry Report](#) (p. 59) TE Sandra Goehring
Examination of Cellonia Ndede
Examination of Spandana Deepthi Valbhapuram
- ORDER OF THE DAY**
- 12:00 LUNCH
- 12:45 [Mission Council](#) (p. 59-62) TE Joel Morgan
- 1:00 [Committee on Nominations](#) (p. 71-72) TE Kate Fiedler
- 1:15 Commissioning of GA Commissioners/Delegates
- 1:20 Presentation from POJ Disaster Relief Team Brown Pearson
- 1:30 [Camp Hanover](#) (p. 73-74) Harry Zweckbronner
- 1:40 [Leadership Connection Team](#) (p. 74-78) TE Carson Rhyne
- 1:45 Adjournment

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. Alex Creager: POJ Vice Moderator, 2026; Pastor, Bon Air
Rev. Todd Davidson: Moderator, Examinations Sub Committee of COM; Pastor, Sandston
Rev. Kate Fiedler: Moderator of CON; Associate Pastor, Second, Richmond
Rev. Kerry Foster: Bridge Stated Clerk/Temporary General Presbyter, POJ
Peggy Fox: POJ Moderator, 2026; CRE, Woodville
Rev. Sandi Goehring: Moderator, CPM; Pastor, Louisa
Rev. Shannon Hendricks: Zoom Host; Covenant Pastor, Tappahannock
Rev. Russ Kerr: Preacher; Student Engagement Coordinator, The Pace Center, VCU
Ayars Lore: Moderator, New Worshiping Communities Team; RE, Providence Forge
Webb Moore: President, Trustees of Presbytery of the James, Inc.; Ruling Elder, Second Richmond
Rev. Joel Morgan: Moderator of Mission Council; Pastor, Campbell Memorial
Cellonia Ndede: Inquirer, Westminster, Richmond
Rev. Crystal Varner Parker: Moderator of COR; Pastor, Providence Forge
Brown Pearson: Moderator, Disaster Relief Ministry; Southminster
Rev. Lauren Ramseur: Moderator of MAST; Organizing Pastor, Voices of Jubilee
Rev. Kelly-Ann Rayle: Co-Moderator of COM; Member at Large
Rev. Carson Rhyne: Moderator, LCT; Honorably Retired
Joslyn Shipman: Co-Moderator, ARC; RE, Bon Air
Rev. Laura Sugg: Co-Moderator, ARC, Pastor, South Plains
Rev. Nate Taylor: Zoom Host; Associate Pastor, Salisbury
Spandana Deepthi Valbhapuram: Inquirer, Second Richmond
Harry Zweckbronner: Associate Director of Programs, Camp Hanover

Action Items

Report	Page	Item
Consent Agenda	7	Consent Agenda
Stated Clerk	11	Concurrence with PEVA Overture
CPM	59	Examination for Candidacy: Ndede
CPM	59	Examination for Candidacy: Valbhapuram
Mission Council	62	Election of Forest Hill AC Members
Mission Council	Section III	Revised Manual of Administrative Operations
CON	71	Election of GA Commissioner
CON	71	Election of Members of Search Committee for Transitional GP/SC position

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
IUA	Interim Unified Agency
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 Sub 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, 122nd Stated Meeting
Hybrid Fairfield Church and Zoom Meeting
February 21, 2026

- I. The [Commission on Ministry](#) (p.16-58) makes the following recommendations for the Consent Agenda:
- A. That the Presbytery approve the [Listening Team Manual \(supplemental to Appendix W\)](#). (p. 19-24)
 - B. That the Presbytery approve [Relation of Former General Presbyters to the Presbytery of the James policy](#).(p. 24-28)
 - C. That the Presbytery approve the [Commissioned Ruling Elder Agreement Form](#).(p. 29-30)
 - D. That the Presbytery approve the [Conferring a Pastor Emeritus/Emerita Policy 6.10.25, revised 12.11.25](#). (p.30-32)
 - E. That the Presbytery approve the [POJ Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy](#).(p.32-51)
 - F. That the Presbytery approve the [POJ Background Check Policy](#). (p. 52-53)
- II. The [Committee on Preparation for Ministry](#) (p. 59) makes the following recommendations for the Consent Agenda:
- A. The committee recommends inquirer Cellonia Ndede (Westminster Presbyterian) for candidacy for the ordered Ministry of the Word and Sacrament.
 - B. The committee recommends inquirer Spandana Deepthi Valbhapuram (Second Presbyterian) 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.

Report of the Stated Clerk

Presbytery of the James

February 21, 2026

Communications

1. Readers of the presbytery minutes for the stated meeting of October 18, 2025, have approved those respective minutes. The stated clerk will recruit commissioners present today from Regions E and F to read and approve the minutes of this meeting.
2. On October 10, 2025, the office of the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of the James received email notification concerning a filed complaint from a member of the Presbytery of the James stating the Stated Clerk had violated Book of Order procedures in its reporting of a judicial process. The Synod of the Mid-Atlantic Permanent Judicial Commission Moderator and the Clerk determined that no action could be taken and the case was dismissed with no further action to be taken by the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic Permanent Judicial Commission.
3. The Presbytery of Eastern Virginia is seeking a concurrence vote for an overture they have just passed and have sent to the General Assembly. Our polity no longer requires overtures to have at least one concurring presbytery for the overture to be accepted. Our sister presbytery is seeking our concurrence to strengthen the impetus behind the overture. The overture is at the end of this report.

Permanent Judicial Commission

Each year the stated clerk reports the names of former members of the Permanent Judicial Commission (PJC) who may serve in case members of the current PJC cannot serve due to potential conflicts of interest.

Class of 2025

Ruling Elder Sharron Saunders (First United)

Teaching Elder James C King (Salisbury)

Teaching Elder Amy Starr Redwine (First, Richmond)

Class of 2023

Teaching Elder Denise Hall (retired)

Ruling Elder Tonya Johnson (Eastminster)

Ruling Elder Melissa Phillips (Salisbury)

Class of 2021

Teaching Elder Alexander Evans (retired)

Ruling Elder Michael Reynolds (Mechanicsville)

Teaching Elder Archibald Wallace (Member at Large)

Commission Reports

1. Installation of Rachel Thompson Orfield

First Presbyterian Church, Charlottesville

Sunday, October 5, 2025

Members of the commission: Rev. Kendall Cooke, Rev. David Forney, Rev. Liz Forney, Amy Gillespie, Mark Lorenzoni, Cherry Peters, Mark Roberson

- I. Opening prayer was offered by Cherry Peters
- II. All members of the commission were confirmed as present.
- III. Recording secretary was appointed.

- IV. The Presbytery of the James acted to install Rachel Thompson Orfield as Associate Pastor for First Presbyterian Church.
- V. Motion: “That this meeting of the Commission shall be adjourned with the benediction following the installation service of Rev. Rachel Thompson Orfield.”
 - i. Motion was seconded and the commission went into recess and reconvened in the sanctuary for the service.
- VI. Constitutional questions of Rev. Thompson Orfield were duly asked and answered.
- VII. The service ended at 11:10 a.m.

All requirements for the installation of Rev. Dr. Rachel Thompson Orfield were met and she is now the Associate Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Charlottesville, Virginia, of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

2. **Installation of Linda Kurtz Burch**

The Commission of the Presbytery of the James appointed to Install Teaching Elder Rev. Linda Kurtz Burch was convened with prayer by Rev. Josh Andrzejewski at Cove Presbyterian Church in Covesville, VA on 11/16/2025 at 2:15 p.m.

A quorum was present consisting of the following:

Teaching Elders:

Rev. Josh Andrzejewski (First, Richmond) Moderator, Presbytery of the James

Rev. Colleen Earp (Massanetta Springs)

Rev. Russ Kerr (The Pace Center at VCU)

Rev. Meg Peery McLaughlin (University Pres, Chapel Hill) Guest of the Commission

Ruling Elders:

Claudette Grant (Olivet), Charlottesville, VA

Les Dorland (Cove), Covesville, VA

Eric Johnson (Tuckahoe), Richmond, VA

Carol Bryan (Hebron), Manakin-Sabot, VA

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

- Rev. Josh Andrzejewski (First, Richmond) propounded the constitutional questions to the candidate
- Rev. Meg Peery McLaughlin (Guest of the Commission) preached a sermon based on Jeremiah 36 (selected verses)
- Ruling Elder Les Dorland (Cove) propounded the constitutional questions to the congregation
- A charge to the Teaching Elder was given by Rev. Colleen Earp (Massanetta Springs)
- A charge to the congregation was given by Elder Carol Bryan (Hebron)

Pursuant to the assignment of Presbytery and the provisions of W-4.04 of the *Book of Order*, Teaching Elder Rev. Linda Kurtz Burch is now the Installed Pastor at Cove Presbyterian Church in Covesville, VA.

The meeting of the Installation Commission concluded with the benediction following the service of installation.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Russ Kerr (The Pace Center at VCU), Clerk of the Commission

3. Installation of Christopher Tweel

The Commission of the Presbytery of the James appointed to Install TE Christopher Tweel was convened with prayer by TE Joshua Andrzejewski at The Brandermill Church in Midlothian, VA on November 22, 2025 at 1:30 p.m.

A quorum was present consisting of the following:

Teaching Elders:

Rev. Joshua Andrzejewski
Rev. Nicole Childress Ball
Rev. Crystal Varner Parker
Rev. Keli Shipley Cooper
Rev. Derek Starr Redwine

Ruling Elders:

Steve Colecchi
Romulo Alejandro

Rev. Joshua Andrzejewski asked the constitutional questions of the candidate.
Rev. Lindsey Baynam Freeman preached the sermon.
RE Steve Colecchi asked the constitutional questions to the congregation.
Rev. Marvin Gilliam charged the congregation and pastor.

Pursuant to the assignment of Presbytery and the provisions of W-4.04 of the *Book of Order*, TE Christopher Tweel was installed as Pastor and Head of Staff of The Brandermill Church, Midlothian, VA.

The meeting of the Installation Commission concluded with the benediction following the service of installation.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Nicole Childress Ball, Clerk of the Commission

4. Ordination of Levi Bannerman

The Commission of the Presbytery of the James appointed to Ordain TE Levi Bannerman was convened with prayer by Josh Andrzejewski at Olivet Presbyterian in Charlottesville, VA on January 10 at 2:00 p.m.

A quorum was present consisting of the following:

Teaching Elders:
Josh Andrzejewski
Seth Lovell
Taylor Lewis Guthrie Hartman

Ruling Elders:
James Lockett
Jerry Zekert
Cindy Cass

Guests of the Commission:

Andrew Bowman (Mid-Kentucky Presbytery)
Berry French (New Hope Presbytery)

Assignments:

A person to preside and ask the constitutional questions of the candidate - Josh Andrzejewski

A sermon to be preached – Andrew Bowman

A charge to the commissioned teaching elder – Seth Lovell

The following motions were made and resolved before worship:

A motion to elect the clerk.

A motion is in order that the worship service will constitute the work of the Commission.

A motion that the Commission's work concludes with the benediction. This relieves the Commission of meeting again.

A motion that the clerk and moderator are empowered to record the minutes and submit to the stated clerk.

Pursuant to the assignment of Presbytery and the provisions of W-4.04 of the *Book of Order*, TE Levi Bannerman was Ordained into a validated ministry to serve at UVA Hospital, Charlottesville, VA, as a chaplain.

The meeting of the Installation Commission concluded with the benediction following the service of installation.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Taylor Lewis Guthrie Hartman, Clerk of the Commission

The Stated Clerk makes the following recommendation for the Consent Agenda: none

The Stated Clerk makes the following recommendation:

1. That the Presbytery of the James receive the overture from the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia for consideration. The request will ask for the body to read the document and then vote to affirm our concurrence of this overture.

Rev. Kerry Foster, statedclerk@presbyteryofthejames.org

From the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia Overture to the 226th General Assembly (2026) On Studying A Collaborative Approach to Ordained Ministry for the Faithful Support of Congregations and Ministers

Main Directive

The Presbytery of Eastern Virginia overtures the 226th General Assembly (2026) to direct: a special committee of eight to ten (8–10) members, in consultation with the Interim Unified Agency and the Advisory Committee on the Constitution, and in further consultation with the Committee on Theological Education and the Board of Pensions, to study and develop recommendations for an approach to ordained ministry in which ministers serve together as part of ministry teams, supporting faithful ministry in congregations by drawing on their particular gifts to meet the evolving needs of the church, and to report its progress to the 228th General Assembly (2028) and its final recommendations to the 229th General Assembly (2030).

Areas for Exploration

The study may explore, but is not limited to, the following areas as possible expressions of collaborative and team-based approaches to ordained ministry:

- A. **Team-Based Ministry and Shared Leadership**
Models in which ministers serve together as part of ministry teams that share responsibility for leadership within and among congregations, allowing ministers to serve from their strengths rather than carrying the full weight of congregational leadership alone.
- B. **Relational Continuity for Congregations**
Practices that ensure congregations experience consistent pastoral presence and relational stability—such as a designated liaison minister—while also benefiting from the broader gifts of a ministry team.
- C. **Deployment of Gifts and Guild-Like Structures**
Methods for organizing ministry according to ministers' passions, gifts, and training (e.g., worship and preaching, pastoral care, administration, mission, education and formation, or envisioning future ministry), enabling congregations to receive well-rounded leadership.
- D. **Ministerial Flourishing and Equitable Compensation**
Financial and structural models that promote equitable compensation, access to Board of Pensions participation, continuing education, sabbaticals, healthcare coverage, and vocational flexibility, supporting clergy well-being and long-term sustainability without imposing micromanagement.
- E. **Partnerships for Formation and Renewal**
Collaboration with seminaries, camps, retreat centers, and other ministry partners to strengthen continuing education, spiritual formation, clergy cohorts, innovation, and ministerial renewal, recognizing that clergy renewal often becomes the spark that reignites imagination, energy, and hope for future ministry.
- F. **Presbytery-Based Support and Shared Services**
Ways presbyteries may serve as hubs of vocational support and coordination, including regular check-ins with ministers and sessions, assistance in matching ministerial gifts with congregational needs, and optional shared services that reduce administrative burdens and strengthen collaborative ministry.
- G. **Pilot Programs and Phased Adoption**
Encouragement of pilot projects testing collaborative ministry models across diverse contexts and consideration of phased or voluntary adoption, recognizing differences in presbytery resources, capacities, and needs.
- H. **Polity and Governance Considerations**
Identification of any constitutional or polity considerations relevant to supporting collaborative and team-based approaches to ordained ministry, in consultation with the Advisory Committee on the Constitution.

Reporting Requirement

Directs that a progress report be given at the 227th General Assembly (2028) and that final findings and recommendations from this study be reported to the 228th General Assembly (2030).

Rationale

For generations, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been shaped by a call system rooted in Reformed theology and covenantal relationships among congregations, ministers, and presbyteries. Formally articulated in 1788, this system has served the church well—forming faithful leaders, sustaining congregations, and carrying the gospel through changing seasons of ministry.

We honor this heritage. At the same time, the Reformed tradition calls the church to continual discernment. The principle of *ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda* reminds us that faithfulness requires examining even our most trusted systems in light of new realities. Today, those realities include significant changes in demographics, participation, and economics, as well as a vocational pipeline in which retirements outpace ordinations and many who attend seminary are no longer entering parish ministry.

As a result, many smaller congregations experience prolonged seasons without pastoral leadership, while larger congregations often operate under staffing constraints that limit ministry potential. Ministers and sessions alike report increasing stress and burnout as individual pastors are expected to sustain congregational life with limited support. While dedication and creativity remain strong, isolation and exhaustion threaten long-term sustainability.

Importantly, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is already a collaborative and connectional church. This overture does not seek to abandon that system, but to deepen it—inviting intentional reflection on how collaboration might more fully support congregations and ministers alike.

Advances in communication technology now make sustained collaboration, shared leadership, and coordinated ministry more feasible than in previous generations. At the same time, research consistently shows that Millennials and Generation Z are drawn to collaborative, team-based leadership environments. If the church hopes to attract and retain future ministers, its structures must reflect these values.

Collaborative, team-based approaches to ordained ministry offer a hopeful path forward. When ministers serve together, they are freed to serve from their strengths and supported by colleagues whose gifts complement their own. Congregations benefit from broader leadership capacity, deeper pastoral care, and renewed imagination for mission.

Care for ministers is not secondary to congregational vitality—it is essential to it. Clergy renewal often becomes the spark that ignites enthusiasm, creativity, and hope for future ministry, and when ministers are supported and allowed to flourish, that vitality bears good fruit in congregational life and witness.

This overture calls not for immediate structural change, but for careful study, broad consultation, and faithful discernment. By engaging denominational agencies and constitutional advisors, the church can explore collaborative approaches responsibly and creatively, strengthening congregations, renewing ministers, and stewarding the gifts God has entrusted to the church—remaining, as always, a connectional and reforming people in service to the ministry of Jesus Christ.



The Honor Roll of Clerks

For Diligence in the Submission of 2025 Statistics

The Presbytery of the James is well known in the Office of the General Assembly for promptly responding to their request for the annual statistical report. The clerks of session of the churches listed below began to enter their statistics in time to meet the deadline for reports to this meeting of presbytery. Thank you, clerks!

Amelia	Milden
Bethlehem	Milford
Blackstone	Oak Grove
Bon Air	Orange
Brandermill	Overbrook
Brett-Reed Memorial	Praise the Lord
Burkeville	Providence Forge
Campbell Memorial	Pryor Memorial
Chester	Rennie Memorial
Concord	Rivermont
Cove	Rockfish
Covenant	Sandston
Fairfield	Scottsville
First, Charlottesville	Second, Petersburg
First, Richmond	South Hill
Fredericksburg	South Plains
Ginter Park	Southminster
Grace Covenant	St James
Gregory Memorial	Swift Creek
Hebron	Tabor
Kings Chapel	Tappahannock
Kirk O'Cliff	Three Chopt
Madison	Westminster, Richmond
Mattoax	Woodlawn
Meadows	Woodville
	Zion Hill

Report of the Temporary General Presbyter

Since the October 2025 POJ meeting I have been approaching fulfilling the responsibilities of the position in the same manner as in the past--building up connections, being available, offering as much visibility and clarity as I can and to stay engaged with the POJ in person, by email, by committee resourcing, by writing, texting and phone. And I once again wish to say “thank you to the James” for your support and fellowship.

I draft this report hoping many have seen and read my articles in the Current concerning my time worshipping with some of the congregations in the presbytery. I have been very much “out and about” and look forward to continuing this ministry of being present.

Lent is almost upon us, and while many pastors have this season covered, please do not hesitate in asking me to attend, to participate, or even lead to cover planned or unplanned absences! No matter the reason, please know I am always ready to stay longer and chat about all sorts of things with the members and friends of the congregation!

In other parts of the agenda, you will find the good work of many volunteers, and I am so blessed to be a part of these committees and commissions. As a typical month unfolds, I will have been present with COM, CON, CPM, MC & the Trustees, NWC, ARC, the Financial Analysis Group and working weekly with Trustward (our accounting firm).

A most rewarding aspect of my ministry has been with resourcing our PNCs in the call process. I have encountered some wonderfully gifted volunteers doing great work for their churches. Perhaps the most challenging aspect of my work is being with a congregation just after their pastor has retired, has taken another call, or are searching for an interim. My first visit is always a time to meet with church leaders and church members, and have a time of questions and answers, and planning for the follow-up meetings as I work with COM liaisons to journey with our congregations in the search process.

Sometimes as I write these reports, my mind will wander a bit and start looking for some catchy phrase or quote that many will know, to sort of collapse my ministry into those one or two sentences. I vaguely remembered a portion of a quote from the movie *The Grapes of Wrath*. The part I remembered was “whenever this is happening, I will be there,” or something close to that; however, after Googling the complete quote, I found far more than what I thought was there. I was a bit sheepish then, thinking it was folly to think I could be that person speaking.

However, it is good to hear them, either again or for the first time. So,

“Then it don' matter. Then I'll be all aroun' in the dark. I'll be ever'where - wherever you look. Wherever they's a fight so hungry people can eat, I'll be there. Wherever they's a cop beatin' up a guy, I'll be there. If Casy knowed, why, I'll be in the way guys yell when they're mad an' - I'll be in the way kids laugh when they're hungry an' they know supper's ready. An' when our folks eat the stuff they raise an' live in the houses they build, why, I'll be there.”— “Tom Joad”/Henry Fonda, John Steinbeck, quote from *The Grapes of Wrath*.

If only I could become one percent of that individual, I would consider my time well spent.

I am thankful for being able to be there (here) to the best of my abilities.

Jesus speaking to those with the heart to listen and the spirit to respond:

“Happy are people whose lives are harassed because they are righteous, because the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

Happy are you when people insult you and harass you and speak all kinds of bad and false things about you, all because of me.

Be full of joy and be glad, because you have a great reward in heaven. In the same way, people harassed the prophets who came before you.

You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its saltiness, how will it become salty again? It's good for nothing except to be thrown away and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city on top of a hill can't be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a basket. Instead, they put it on top of a lampstand, and it shines on all who are in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before people, so they can see the good things you do and praise your Father who is in heaven.” Matthew 5: 10 – 16, CEB

Blessings and Thanks

Kerry

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Report of the Commission on Ministry

Presbytery of the James

February 2026

(October, November, December)

I. The Commission Reports the Following Actions:

A. Received Ministers Into the Presbytery:

B. Dismissed Members to Other Presbyteries:

C. Approved Terms of Call for Incoming Pastoral Relationships:

a. Terms of call for the Rev. Anthony Saturno to New Hanover Presbyterian Church

D. Approved Validated Minister Outside of a Congregation:

a. Nicole Ball - Advancement & Alumni Relations Officer, Union Presbyterian Seminary

b. Daniel Mensah-Awuah - Institutional Chaplain at the Greenville Correctional Center

c. Whitney Daou - Spiritual Counselor, Kirva Hospice

d. Stephen Hitchcock - Chaplain, Albemarle County Human Services Alternative Response Team (“HART”)

E. Approved Requests to Labor Beyond the Bounds of the Presbytery

a. Jim Moseley, retired minister member – to be Interim Associate Pastor at Naples UCC in Naples, FL

F. Approved the Following Commissions:

a. Installation commission for Rev. Christopher Tweel to Brandermill Church on November 22, 2025.

b. Ordination commission for Levi Bannerman at Olivet Presbyterian Church on January 10, 2026.

G. Approved Member at Large status:

H. Granted Exemptions to Policies:

- a. To Cove Presbyterian Church for an exception to the Relation of Former Pastors to Congregations policy to allow Jane Govan to participate fully in the life of the congregation less than one year after completing her service.
- b. To Keith Curran, Honorably Retired, for an exemption from the Boundaries Training Mandate Policy per section VII.C.5 of the policy. Note: The policy provides for exemptions as follows: “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.” The exemption only applies so long as the individual is not currently serving in any official capacity.

I. Received Covenants of Closure:

- a. Between Carson Rhyne and Summit Presbyterian Church

J. Completed Exit Interviews:

- a. Rev. Arch Wallace (The Brandermill Church)
- b. The Brandermill Church and the session
- c. Rev. Carson Rhyne (Summit Presbyterian Church)

K. Approved Retired Status:

- a. Gordon Mapes February 1, 2026

L. Approved Dissolution of the Pastoral Relationship:

- a. Gordon Mapes & Chester Presbyterian Church, January 31, 2026
- b. Sarah Schutte and Milford Presbyterian Church, December 31, 2025

M. Approved Pastor Emeritus status:

- a. Pastor Albert Connette and Olivet Presbyterian Church

N. Approved Covenant Pastor Agreements:

- a. Rev. Anne Cherry and Laurel Presbyterian, 6/29/25-6/28/26, renewal
- b. Rev. Denny Burnette and Orange Presbyterian Church, 7/1/25 – 12/31/25, renewal
- c. Rev. Shelley Barrick Parsons and Forest Hill Presbyterian Church, 10/5/25-12/31/25
- d. Rev. Susan Steinberg and Providence Presbyterian Church, Gum Spring, 10/17/25-10/16/26
- e. Rev. Richard Haney and Fairfield Presbyterian Church, Covenant Pastor 10/16/25-12/31/26 -- *need to add study leave and vacation*
- f. Rev. Nancy Clark and Fairfield Presbyterian Church, Covenant Pastor 10/16/25-12/31/26 --- *need to add study leave and vacation*
- g. Rev. Chad Rhodes and Pryor Memorial, renewal, 10/1/31 - 3/31/26.
- h. Rev. Tom Coye and Mildred Presbyterian Church, 11/1/25-10/31/26 renewal
- i. Rev. Leigh Anne Ring and Providence Presbyterian Church, Powhatan, 9/1/25-8/31/26
- j. Rev. Donald Denton and Rennie Memorial, 1/1/26 - 6/30/26.
- k. Rev. Faye Cooper and Salem Memorial, 11/1/25 - 2/1/26.

O. Approved Interim Pastor/ Associate Pastor Agreements:

- a. Rev. Kelly-Ann Rayle and Three Chopt Presbyterian Church, Interim, 2/9/26-2/8/27

- P. Approved Bridge Pastor Agreements:
- Q. Approved Covenant Pastor Parish Associate:
- R. Approved Termination of Covenant:
- S. Appointed Session Moderators:
 - a. Rev. Denise Hall and South Plains, during Rev. Laura Sugg's Sabbatical Leave (10/20/25 - 1/19/25)
 - b. Rev. Keith Johnston and First Presbyterian Church, Hopewell, beginning January, 2026,
 - c. Rev. Steve Starzer and St. Andrews Presbyterian Church, beginning January 2026,
 - d. Rev. Walter Winegar and Milford Presbyterian Church, pending completion of compliance requirements
 - i. *Rev. Elizabeth Milford and Rev. Tom Lovell were also approved to moderate Milford's Session meetings, as needed and available*
- T. Approved to preach more than three times in three months in one congregation:
 - a. Rev. Roger Gench and Three Chopt Presbyterian Church
 - b. Rev. Denise Hall and South Plains Presbyterian Church
- U. Approved for Pulpit Supply List, and to other list for which they have applied:
 - a. Daniel Mensah Awuah
 - b. Rebekah Tucker-Motley
 - c. Judy Thomson
 - d. Renita Page
 - e. Mary Kay Scott
 - f. Mary Bielen
 - g. James Taneti
 - h. Kerra English
 - i. Roger Gench
 - j. Mark Ramsey
 - k. Mary Jane Winter
 - l. Jay Sanderford
 - m. Colleen Earp
 - n. Jewell-Ann Parton
 - o. Arch Wallace
 - p. Tom Lovell
 - q. Shelly Barrick Parsons
- V. Removed from Pulpit Supply List: Safwat Marzouk, for a period of one-year during which time boundary training must be retaken.
- W. Approved Request to form a PNC or APNC after review of submitted Mission Study:
- X. Approved Commissioned Ruling Elder agreements:
 - a. Brandermill Church and Barbara Flynt, 9/11/25 - 12/31/25
- Y. Certified Ready to receive a Commission:
- Z. Recognized completion of work as Commissioned Ruling Elder:
- AA. Approved Ministry Discernment Profile:
- BB. Report for information:
 - a. [2026 Liaison Assignments](#) (p. 53-55)
 - b. [Guidelines and Practices for Retired Ministers](#) (p. 56-58)
 - c. **Pastoral Care Fund:** Balance as of November 30, 2025 is \$15,874.12
- CC. Guidelines for internal COM practices:

- a. [The Commission adopted a Delegation of Authority to Act in Exigent Circumstances](#). (p. 58)

II. Consent Agenda Recommendations:

- a. [Listening Team Manual \(supplemental to Appendix W\)](#) (p. 19-24)
- b. [RELATION OF FORMER General Presbyters to the Presbytery of the James](#) (p. 24-28)
- c. [Commissioned Ruling Elder Agreement Form](#) (p. 29-30)
- d. [Conferring a Pastor Emeritus/Emerita Policy 6.10.25, revised 12.11.25](#) (p. 30-32)
- e. [POJ Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy](#) (p. 32-51)
- f. [POJ Background Check Policy](#) (p. 52-53)

III. Recommendations: none

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Listening Team Manual

**Presbytery of the James
Commission on Ministry
Church and Pastor Relations Committee
COM Approved: October 9, 2025**

About this Document

This document provides guidelines for organizing, training, and implementing a Listening Team.

Abbreviations used in this document:

COM = Commission on Ministry

CPR = Church and Pastor Relations Committee

LT = Listening Team

POJ = Presbytery of the James

I. Getting Organized

The process begins when a request comes to CPR indicating that a church needs some help.

1. The request can come from a pastor or a Session, or through the Executive of the Presbytery.
2. The chairperson of CPR talks with the person through whom the request has come.
3. A member of CPR and the church's COM liaison (see section X.) meet with the affected church's Session to discuss what an LT is and does.
4. If the Session has not already done so, the Session then votes on whether or not to use an LT.

II. Qualities Needed in Listening Team Members

In building an effective LT, team members need to have particular qualities. These include:

1. Be of mature Christian faith
2. Able to listen with patience
3. Objective, open-minded, and willing to hear conflicting points of view
4. Able to summarize what another person is saying

Other considerations:

1. Someone on the LT should be able to write a report for the LT to present to COM and the Session of the church that is seeking assistance.
2. Generally, an LT is made up of Ruling and Teaching Elders; however, it is not required that all be Elders. If a non-Elder offers particular expertise, that person should be considered.
3. Previous members of CPR or COM may be considered for service on the LT.

III. Finding Appropriate People to Serve on the Listening Team

Depending upon the size of the worshipping congregation that seeks assistance, a team of three (3) to six (6) persons is formed. Ideally, these persons come from the region around the requesting church. The CPR moderator and CPR committee members find people with the qualities listed in Section II. above by:

1. Asking pastors and Christian educators for the names and contact information of persons who possess the above-mentioned qualities, targeting members of churches closest to the church seeking assistance.
2. Networking with people known by the CPR moderator and asking for recommendations.
3. Asking current members of COM and/or CPR to serve

When a potential LT has been assembled, the CPR moderator does the following:

1. Sends an email to each recommended person
2. Describes what an LT is (without mentioning the name of the affected church)
3. States a date by which CPR hopes to have the team formed
4. Follows up with a phone call to each candidate

IV. Formation of a Team

Once the requisite number of persons has agreed to serve on the LT, the CPR moderator (or person designated by the moderator) does the following:

1. Sends each team member the documents “Description of a Listening Team” and “Guidelines for Meeting Together.” to be read before the training meeting (see Appendix W on the presbytery’s website and see Section V.).
2. Determines a mutually convenient date when all team members can meet for training.
3. Schedules the training meeting.

V. Training Meeting

LT members may meet via Zoom or in person for training. The person leading the training should do the following:

1. Open the meeting with prayer.
2. Conduct introductions, giving all an opportunity to share (briefly!) their name, their church’s name, something about themselves, and motivation for serving on an LT.
3. Ask if anyone has questions about the concept of an LT.
4. Introduce the topic of “listening”:
 - Ask: For what do we listen?
 - Specifically mention: opinions, emotions, data, and faith perspectives
 - Ask: Why do we listen for the above items?
 - Ask: What do you think is appropriate, and inappropriate, in a listening session?

5. Demonstrate listening and summarizing (example below):

Congregant: “The pastor is insensitive to the needs of the congregation.”

LT member: “Can you tell me more?”

Congregant: “Two months ago, my mother had surgery and the pastor did not go to the hospital or visit afterward, even though I told the pastor about it. I was really angry that the pastor cared so little.”

LT member: “You are disappointed at the pastor’s lack of responsiveness to your mother’s illness.”

6. Provide background on the church that needs help; describe what has happened and the situation for which the LT is required.
7. Ask for questions; provide answers.
8. Conclude meeting with brief time of sharing joys and concerns; offer prayer.

VI. Preparing for, and Meeting with, the Session of the Church Seeking Help

Prior to undertaking the tasks below, a moderator of the LT needs to be selected. This selection may be left to the moderator of CPR or the moderator may be elected by the members of the LT. Ordinarily, the moderator of the LT is someone who has served previously on an LT.

Prior to the LT meeting with the requesting church’s Session, the LT moderator:

1. Polls the LT for all the times when they can meet over the upcoming three-week period; selects out common dates and times.
2. Asks the requesting church’s pastor to find, from the list of available dates and times provided by the LT, a date and time when the entire Session could meet with the LT.
3. Before the meeting of the LT and the Session, asks the pastor or the Clerk of Session to send to the members of the Session the “Description of a Listening Team” and “Guidelines for Meeting Together” documents.
4. Invites LT and Session members to a joint meeting at the date and time determined in #2.

At the combined LT/Session meeting, the LT moderator:

1. Thanks the Session for meeting and explains why the LT is present.
2. Invites LT members to introduce themselves; encourages emphasis on experience or training that has equipped them to be on the Team.
3. Invites Session members to introduce themselves.
4. Explains the LT process (suggested wording below):

A Listening Team is a trained resource team from the Commission on Ministry of the Presbytery of the James. We seek to be Christ-centered as we listen to you. We will not impose solutions, but we hope to help seek understanding and prayerful solutions. We seek to provide safe space for people to speak and listen and will engage in a process designed to build trust and mutual respect. The Listening Team will write a report summarizing the issues and making recommendations to the Session, which the Session may accept, amend or reject. What you specifically say will be confidential.

5. Asks for questions, being sensitive to the fact that a Listening Team often is a new concept to Session members.
6. Reads aloud the document, “Guidelines for Meeting Together.” (This is done in recognition that people process information differently and to emphasize the process that will be used. Have a different person read each section. When finished, ask for questions.)
7. Asks the Session members to raise their hands if they will abide by the “Guidelines” that were just read. (This is done because a verbal “yes” or “no” is not as effective as raising hands; raising hands makes people more accountable.)

8. Asks the Session, if it has not already approved the LT, to vote now on whether or not to have an LT come in to help.
9. Notes that at this meeting, or later, the pastor or the Clerk of Session may submit Session minutes or other pertinent information or documents to the LT for it is consider in its deliberations.

VII. Holding Interviews with Persons in the Church's Congregation

Prior to interviewing members of the congregation, the LT—in a separate meeting—decides:

- Should only the pastor and the Session be interviewed?
- Should the interview process be opened up to include the congregation and other staff members?

If members of the congregation and other staff (besides the pastor) are to be interviewed, these tasks are done ahead of time:

1. A member of the LT sets up a scheduling template with fillable slots. (The free version of Sign-Up Genius or comparable software are recommended for this process.)
2. Typical congregational interview sessions last 20 minutes, with a 5- to 10-minute break between interviews. (The pastor is given a longer interview time.)
3. Interviews may be conducted in person or via Zoom.
4. Time slots (appointments) are based on when two members of the LT can be available to interview together. (Experience has shown that to fully understand and record the issues, the process works best if two members of the LT interview either one individual or one married couple/one family at a time. One LT member writes notes and one leads the interview.)

An interview session includes the following:

1. Opening with brief prayer.
2. Introduction of the two-person team.
3. Description of the purpose of an LT.
4. Adherence to the schedule (and effort to keep each interview to 20 minutes).
5. Request to the congregant(s) to introduce him-, her-, or themselves and talk about their involvement in the church.
6. Invitation to the congregant(s) to share his, her, or their concerns.
7. Closing with brief prayer.

VIII. Collating the Material Obtained in the Interviews

LT tasks during and after interviews include the following:

1. As the interview process is going on, the LT meets periodically to share, using the notes taken during interviews, the issues that they have heard in the interviews they have conducted to date.
2. When all the interviews have been completed, the LT meets to lay out and discuss all the issues they have discerned.
3. The LT then discusses possible recommendations to be presented to the Session.
4. An LT member volunteers to write a draft of the Team's report.

Material that shall be included in the LT's report:

1. Members of the LT and the churches they represent
2. Listing of the Christian commitments honored in the work of the LT
3. Description of the situation at the church that requested help
4. Information about the congregation about whom the report is written, including pertinent background information that led to the present situation.
5. Recommendations for the Session.

The draft of the report is reviewed multiple times until all members of the LT are satisfied, then:

1. The LT report is sent to CPR for its review.
2. When CPR is satisfied with the report, it is sent to COM for review and a vote to accept or deny it.

IX. Presenting the Report to the Session and the Pastor

After COM votes, and if it votes to accept the report, the following happens:

1. A private meeting with the pastor and some or all of the LT should take place before a meeting with the Session, with the understanding that the report is confidential until the Session meets.
2. At the Session meeting, copies of the report are given out ONLY in person by some or all of the LT at a Session meeting where the report of the LT is on the agenda.
3. The report is presented by reading its sections aloud from either hard copies or a PowerPoint display.
4. The LT answers questions that may be posed.
5. The LT makes clear that the Session chooses what to adopt and what is communicated to the congregation. (The entire report should NOT be sent to the congregation; however, it is important that essential elements are shared and that what is shared is Christ-centered. The Session may invite the LT to be part of the presentation to the congregation.)
6. The LT may request a follow-up meeting with the Session to hear what progress has been made, particularly if the Session adopts recommendations that have time limits.

X. Role of the COM Liaison

1. The liaison is a representative of the COM who may also serve on the LT.
2. If not a member of the LT, the liaison attends the initial meeting with the Session, as well as the meeting in which the LT presents their report.
3. The liaison offers support to Session in their implementation of the LT recommendations, connecting them to POJ policies, guidelines, and other resources as needed.
4. Following the conclusion of the LT interviews and report, the liaison follows up with the Session and pastor periodically to discern how LT recommendations are being implemented.
5. The liaison documents all engagements between the church and the liaison monthly in the COM's liaison report.

Additional Documents

1. "Description of a Listening Team, Appendix W, Presbytery of the James"
2. "Guidelines for Meeting Together"

People like to know what is expected of them when we meet together in Christian community. An exercise that helps people absorb the following guidelines is to do the following.

Please read over the guidelines below by having different people reading aloud each of the guidelines. The easiest way to do this is to go around the table or circle with each person taking one guideline to read. Mark with a star * the items that you believe are essential to having a productive discussion. Then mark with an X those items that you will have difficulty doing. Discuss first the items that you think are essential. When everyone has had a chance to speak, discuss which ones are difficult to do. At the end of the discussion, please indicate your willingness to abide by the guidelines by raising your hand.

1. I will pray to be open to the Holy Spirit's leading and ask myself, "What is Christ calling us to do?"
2. I will listen as if the other person could be right.
3. I will ask myself what is best for the whole church and not just for me.
4. I will treat everyone with respect.
5. I will not interrupt or talk to a neighbor when someone else is talking.
6. I will use "I" language. Using "you" or saying "everyone knows" promotes disagreement. Please speak only from your experience and beliefs. Do not speak for others. Do not seek to change anyone else's mind.
7. I will treat others with respect.
8. I will never talk about other people, what they said or did. We may not have understood what a person said or have enough information.
9. If I feel irritated or angry with another person, I will ask for more information either during the meeting or after the meeting in order to gain clarity and maintain relationship. It is appropriate to say things like, "I would appreciate your elaborating on this point____," or "I find that when you said _____, I found myself uneasy. Could you please say more?"
10. If someone reveals something of personal nature, I will not try to fix it. It is okay for people to express hurt, disappointment, fear, compassion, or hope.
11. I will speak up and leave room for others to speak. I will not dominate a conversation nor withhold what I think and feel.
12. I will follow the directions of the Listening Team members and not take it personally if the team members ask us to move on to another item.
13. I will not participate in forming or participating in factions within the church.

RELATION OF FORMER General Presbyters to the Presbytery of the James Policy

Covenant Between Departing General Presbyters and the Presbytery of the James (Based on G-2.0905)

Commission on Ministry, Presbytery of the James

COM Approved: November 13, 2025

POJ Approved:

Purpose:

Setting personal and corporate boundaries is a healthy and necessary thing to do. When Presbytery leaders leave their calling in a Presbytery, and especially if the leader continues to live within the bounds of the Presbytery, such boundaries help both parties engage fully in the new life to which God calls them without the emotional and mental fetters that have bound us in the past. Having a mutual

agreement of those boundaries helps keep us accountable to healthy behaviors and helps avoid the entanglements that can complicate and harm corporate and individual lives. A covenant is to be negotiated between the departing General Presbyter and the co-moderators of the Commission on Ministry. The following are items that would ordinarily be included. The negotiation between the departing presbyter and the COM may result in modification of some of the provisions as set forth herein, and other items can be added as deemed appropriate. The COM can grant exceptions to the agreed covenant in instances of extraordinary circumstances.

I. TRANSITIONS COVERED UNDER THIS POLICY:

This policy applies when a General Presbyter departs that position.

II. POLICY DEFINITIONS:

While we acknowledge all teaching elders and ruling elders are presbyters in the church, the singular usage of presbyter refers to a General Presbyter or person bearing a similar title employed by the Presbytery of the James within this document.

III. POLICY SUMMARY:

For former pastors of congregations, the Book of Order (G-2.0905) provides: *After the dissolution of the pastoral relationship, former pastors and associate pastors shall not provide their pastoral services to members of their former congregations without the invitation of the moderator of session.* Although there is no similar Book of Order obligation attached to a former presbyter, the Presbytery of the James concludes that it is prudent to provide a similar structure for former presbyters. This policy is designed to assist the presbyter, minister members, and churches in developing and maintaining relationships that respect appropriate professional boundaries and promote healthy transitions of presbytery leadership. This policy is also intended to guide and support both former and new general presbyters as they seek to uphold their ordination vow to "...be a friend among [their] colleagues in ministry, working with them, subject to the ordering of God's Word and Spirit," (W-4.0404e).

Upon end of employment, the departing presbyter shall cease performing all functions in the presbytery, except when invited by the current presbyter or co-moderators of the Commission on Ministry (COM). In addition, **the departing presbyter and presbytery make the following covenant:**

A. What the General Presbyter Promises:

1. Dated Items, with the stated term beginning on the day following the last day of employment:
 - a) I won't be present at meetings of this Presbytery for at least **one year**.
 - b) I will not be on the Pulpit Supply list or preach in a church within the Presbytery of the James for at least one year.
 - c) I will not be a coach to anyone in the Presbytery for at least one year unless by specific request from COM and approval of the person who succeeds me (if any).
 - d) I will not serve as a bridge pastor, interim or as a covenant pastor in the presbytery for at least two years.
 - e) I will not serve on any presbytery committee for at least two years.

2. Ongoing Promises:

- a) I won't advise any Presbytery Committee or Task Force except as requested by a new General Presbyter (if any) and endorsed by the co-moderators of COM.
- b) I will be free to be in worship in only one Church in the Presbytery as my home church.
- c) I will not be involved as an elected leader in the Presbyterian Church I attend.
- d) I will not engage in casual conversations about Presbytery matters of any sort with any individual (except my successors) in the Presbytery or any of its congregations.
- e) I will not post or comment on social media sites that are connected to any individual or group related to the Presbytery.
- f) I will be free to attend funerals and weddings in Presbyterian churches but only after clearing my presence beforehand with my successors.
- g) I will continue to give references to persons and congregations but only as a colleague and not as General Presbyter.
- h) I will not interact with the staff of the Presbytery on any matters related to the Presbytery and, if necessary, only with the advance knowledge of my successor or the co-moderators of COM.
- i) I will remember that much of the information shared with me in my service as General Presbyter was privileged and I will maintain confidentiality on all matters.

3. What the Presbytery Promises

- a) Not to ask me to serve on Committees or Task Forces for at least two years.
- b) Not to seek advice from me except as requested by my successor or in their absence a co-moderator of COM.
- c) To encourage my successor to seek my advice or input as they are willing and as needed on any matter.

4. What we Promise Together:

- a) When we meet casually we will have friendly conversations on any matter except what relates to Presbytery business of any sort.
- b) People will not ask for nor will I give advice about matters in any Presbyterian congregation except as initiated and sought out by my successor or in his/her absence a co-moderator of COM.
- c) We will hold each other in our prayers.

IV. NEW GENERAL PRESBYTERS

The COM reminds new general presbyters that extending an invitation to the former presbyter to be involved in the life and work of the presbytery may not be in the best interest of the presbytery or the new presbyter. New general presbyters should consider any decision on this issue very carefully and should engage the COM to gain consensus on the appropriate degree of involvement, if any. Similarly, the new presbyter should notify the COM if a situation develops involving the former presbyter that the new presbyter believes has the potential to cause disruption. In some situations, such as when a retired presbyter remains in the presbytery, it

may be beneficial for the new presbyter to initiate contact with the retired presbyter as a sign of collegiality, conveying gratitude for the retired presbyter’s ministry, listening to the retired presbyter’s memories, and expressing appreciation for the retired presbyter’s compliance with this policy.

V. ROLE OF PRESBYTERY AND THE COMMISSION ON MINISTRY IN POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

A. Supporting the Departing Presbyter.

1. Upon learning of a presbyter’s imminent departure from the presbytery, one of the co-moderators will review with the presbyter and COM this policy, along with the Covenant of Closure, on their relationship with the presbytery after departure.
2. A representative of the COM will consult with the departing presbyter to determine what resources are necessary to meet the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of the presbyter and their family during the transition period. A member of the CPR committee of COM liaison will assist the pastor in securing those resources.

B. Educating the Presbytery.

1. It is vital that the pastors and sessions of congregations with the presbytery educate congregations of this policy. This policy shall be communicated to the presbytery following the end of the presbyter’s employment.

C. Providing Support and Assistance to New Presbyters. The COM will provide support to a new presbyter in making decisions about a former presbyter’s relationship with the presbyter and, if necessary, act as an intermediary among the new presbyter, the former presbyter, and the presbytery.

D. Compliance Issues. Non-compliance with this policy is a chargeable offense under the Rules of Discipline. Upon the invitation of the new presbyter, a serving ruling or teaching elder, a member of a congregation, or upon its own initiative, the COM will refer all non-compliance issues that could disrupt the peace and unity of the church to the Stated Clerk.

COVENANT OF CLOSURE

_____ (name of General Presbyter) and
_____ (name) Presbytery, and the Commission on Ministry of the
Presbytery of the James, having discussed the intent and requirements of the Presbytery’s policy
regarding former General Presbyters enter into the following covenant, effective
_____ (the date of the dissolution of employment):

I, _____ understand and agree to comply with each of
the following provisions;

1. not to be present at meetings of this Presbytery for at least one year;
2. not to be on the Pulpit Supply list or preach in a church within the Presbytery of the James for at least one year.
3. not to coach anyone in the Presbytery for at least one years unless by specific request from COM and approval of the person who succeeds me;

4. not to serve as a bridge pastor, interim or as a covenant pastor in the presbytery for at least two years.
5. not serve on any presbytery committee for at least two years;
6. not to advise any Presbytery Committee or Task Force except as requested by a new General Presbyter and endorsed by the co-moderators of COM chair;
7. be free to be in worship in only one Church in the Presbytery as my home church;
8. not be involved as an elected leader in the Presbyterian Church I attend;
9. not engage in casual conversations about Presbytery matters of any sort with any individual (except my successors) in the Presbytery or any of its congregations;
10. not post or comment in social media sites that are connected to any individual or group related to the Presbytery;
11. be free to attend funerals and weddings in Presbyterian churches but only after clearing my presence beforehand with my successors;
12. may continue to give references to persons and congregations but only as a colleague and not as Presbyter/Executive; and
13. not interact with the staff of the Presbytery on any matters related to the Presbytery and, if necessary, only with the advance knowledge of my successor or the co-moderators of COM.
14. It is understood that this policy does not affect or require termination of friendships with individuals in the _____ Presbytery.

The Commission on Ministry of the _____ Presbytery agrees:

1. to respect the terms of the Covenant agreed upon by _____ outlined above; and
2. to interpret the terms of the Covenant to the Commission on Ministry and incorporate this agreement in the report to the presbytery when the employment relationship is dissolved; and
3. to incorporate this agreement in the presbytery minutes.

By signing the document, I agree to comply with all the above guidelines.

_____	_____	_____
General Presbyter	Date	
_____	_____	_____
Stated Clerk of the Presbytery	Date	
_____	_____	_____
COM Representative	Date	

2025 Commissioned Ruling Elder Covenant Agreement Form

Presbytery of the James
Completed by the Session

On this date,		For the		Church, in		, Virginia
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recommends that this be approved for	
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The effective date is:		End date:	
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Check all that apply:	Full-time		Part-time		If part-time, how many hours?	
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Compensation					
Total Annual Cash Equivalent:		\$	Full-time Compensation + Benefits must be at least \$61,200 and prorated for Part-Time		
A. With Housing and Utilities		B. With Manse, No Utilities Provided		C. With Manse & Utilities	
Annual cash salary:	\$	Annual cash salary:	\$	Annual cash salary:	\$
Housing/Util allow:	\$	Manse value:	\$	Manse value:	\$
		Util/furnishing allow:	\$	Utilities are provided:	Yes
Benefits					
D. Self-employment tax (.0765 X total cash equivalent):			\$		
E. Pension & Major Medical dues; see BoP Choice:			\$		
F. Study Leave (2 weeks minimum) <i>Leave shall accrue at the rate of one week per six months of work.</i>					
G. Vacation (4 weeks minimum) <i>Leave shall accrue at the rate of one week per three months of work.</i>					
Professional Reimbursements					
H. Auto/travel expenses (IRS rate)			\$		
I. Study leave expenses (presbytery minimum \$1,000)			\$		
Other (please specify, e.g., compensation, benefits, reimbursement)					
			\$		

Duties		
Duties of a Commissioned Ruling Elder	During the above time period, the Commissioned Ruling Elder and the Session has agreed to the following priorities concerning responsibilities: (Rank 1-4)	
A. Worship preparation and leadership	#	
B. Pastoral care and visitation (mark all that apply)	#	
Hospital visitation		
Visitation of the homebound with communion		
Visitation of prospective members		
General visitation of church members		
Other:		
C. Administration (mark all that apply)	#	
Session meetings		
Meetings of Session committees		

Congregational meetings		
Other:		
D. Additional pastoral duties (mark all that apply)	#	
Church School		
Vacation Bible School		
Confirmation classes		
Officer training		
Other:		

A Commissioned Ruling Elder may enter into a Covenant Agreement for 12 months, renewable.

The Agreement may be renewed annually upon review by the Commissioned Ruling Elder Committee and the Transitional Relations Committee of the Commission on Ministry (COM).

Following three years of service, the commission to the particular church or ministry may be renewed but may not exceed three years without renewal.

The salary of a Commissioned Ruling Elder is to be prorated by the number of hours worked (i.e., 10 hours is 25%; 20 hours is 50%, etc.). Health and pension benefits may be paid by the church if mutually agreeable (minimum 20-hour work week is required in order to pay health and pension benefits). The salary is agreed to by the Session and the Commissioned Ruling Elder. *The church will annually review the adequacy of compensation and follow the presbytery's compensation guidelines.*

Signatures			
Clerk of Session:		Date:	
Commissioned Ruling Elder:		Date:	
COM Approval:		Date:	

Please send this completed document to com@presbyteryofthejames.org.

Presbytery of the James
Conferring Pastor Emeritus/Emerita Status Policy
COM approved: March 13, 2025
Revision: December 11, 2025
Presbytery approved: June 10, 2025
Revision Approved:

The title of Pastor Emeritus/Emerita is an honorary designation granted by the congregation to recognize a pastor’s exceptional service. It is a symbolic title that does not confer pastoral authority, active ministerial duties, or staff responsibilities. This policy ensures a clear and respectful process. The purpose of this designation is to honor the contributions of a retired pastor while maintaining the integrity of the congregation’s leadership and transition process.

Waiting Period & Discernment

- A minimum of **one** year following the installation of the new pastor or covenant agreement with a new pastor is **required** before considering the title;
- This waiting period allows for prayerful discernment, ensuring that leadership and affection are properly evaluated rather than conferred automatically upon retirement;
- It provides time for the congregation to adjust to new leadership and assess whether the honorary title is appropriate.

Eligibility Criteria

- The status is generally reserved for pastors who have served at least 10 years in the congregation;
- All retired pastors are eligible, but the decision should be based on exceptional service and congregational discernment;
- The Session may consult COM for guidance before making a final decision.

Session Approval & Ceremony

- The Session must formally vote on the designation after a period of careful consideration;
- If approved **by Session and subsequently approved by COM**, the title should be conferred during a worship service, using a simple liturgical recognition;
- It is best practice to communicate this decision clearly to the congregation, reinforcing the honorary nature of the title.

Roles & Responsibilities of a Pastor Emeritus/Emerita

1. Honorary Relationship & Boundaries

- The title is purely symbolic and does not include:
 - Pastoral authority
 - Remuneration
 - Office space or administrative privileges
- The church bulletin, letterhead, and signage should not list them as active staff to avoid confusion.

2. Best Practices & Ethical Responsibilities

- The Pastor Emeritus/Emerita should not:
 - Hold major leadership roles (e.g., church officer or decision-making bodies) unless the current pastor explicitly agrees.
 - Engage in criticism or private discussions that could undermine the leadership of the church.
 - Perform pastoral duties without an invitation from the current pastor.
- All pastoral service done by the Pastor Emeritus/Emerita must be initiated by the current pastor and agreed upon by the Session.

- If approached by parishioners about church matters, the Pastor Emeritus/Emerita must refer them to the current pastor.

Process Steps for the Session

1. Discernment & Discussion

- Consider the former pastor's length of service, impact, and the congregation's needs.
- Ensure the decision aligns with best practices and the church's long-term health.
- If applicable, consult the COM for guidance.

2. Formal Vote & Approval

- The Session formally votes on the designation.
- If approved by Session, Session requests approval by COM. This request must be accompanied by the pastor's written agreement to comply with the Presbytery's policy on the Relation of Former Pastors to Congregations.
- If approved, the current pastor and leadership communicate the decision.

3. Liturgy & Recognition in Worship

- Plan a worship service to officially confer the title.
- Use a simple liturgical act to honor the former pastor while reinforcing the honorary nature.

4. Ongoing Communication & Accountability

- Ensure the boundaries and expectations are clearly communicated to the congregation.
- If a covenant agreement is made for active roles, review it annually to prevent misunderstandings.

Presbytery of the James Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy

COM Approval 01/15/2026
POJ Approval

It is the policy of the Presbytery of the James that all employees, ministers, educators, non-member employees and/or contractors, and volunteers of congregations, councils, and entities of the church are to maintain the strongest sense of integrity, safety, nurturing, and care involving all interactions with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. This policy applies to all Presbytery of the James sponsored activities and/or affiliated activities that involve children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

DEFINITIONS

The following is a comprehensive list of definitions of terms and their intended use in this policy. For purposes of this policy:

Child: A child is a person between the ages of 0–11.

Youth: A youth is a person between the ages of 12–17.

Minor: A minor is any child or youth.

Child/youth/vulnerable adult/Vulnerable Adult Worker: Any person, volunteer or paid staff or contractor, who participates at any level at Presbytery sponsored events or activities involving children, youth and/or vulnerable adults.

Vulnerable Adult: Any person eighteen-years-old or older without the developmental or cognitive capacity to consent.

Vulnerable Adult Abuse: Any act or failure to act that results in the physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional mistreatment, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult.

Child/youth/vulnerable adult Abuse: Any act or failure to act that results in the physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional mistreatment, neglect, or exploitation of a child or youth.

Sexual Abuse: As defined in the Book of Order, D-7.0901, Sexual abuse is any offense involving sexual conduct in relation to any person under the age of eighteen years or anyone without the capacity to consent, or any person when the conduct includes force, threat, coercion, intimidation, or misuse of ordered ministry or position. Sexual abuse is contrary to the Scriptures and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and is therefore always an offense for the purpose of discipline.

Misuse of technology: The use of technology that results in the harassing or abuse of a child/youth/vulnerable adult. This includes using technology to send or share suggestive messages and images to a child, youth, or vulnerable adult. Please see POJ Social Media Policy Appendix 1

Healthy Boundaries Training:

Healthy Boundaries training is mandatory in the Presbyterian Church (USA). The workshops or training equip all clergy, presbytery leaders and presbytery volunteers to recognize healthy boundaries in ministry relationships. Leaders must understand the role of power and vulnerability to create and maintain healthy boundaries and choose healthy self-care strategies. In compliance with BoO G-3.0106, the Presbytery of the James adopted this policy to address the requirement for boundary training for all its members. This policy outlines the mechanisms for training and accountability with respect to boundary violations.

Mandated Reporters

In the state of VA, Mandated reporters are mentioned as belonging to 20 different categories. Two of them apply directly to the Presbytery of the James. They are:

1. Any person 18 years of age or older associated with or employed by any public or private organization responsible for the care, custody or control of children.
2. Any minister, priest, rabbi, imam, or duly accredited practitioner of any religious organization or denomination usually referred to as a church, unless the information supporting the suspicion of child abuse or neglect is required by the doctrine of the religious organization or denomination to be kept in a confidential manner or would be if offered as evidence in court.

These two categories cover all the leaders, advisors, staff, and volunteers that may be engaged in a Presbytery of the James event making them all mandated reporters who could be charged with a misdemeanor and a \$500 fine should they not report suspected abuse.

On-call Attorney:

An attorney designated by the Trustees to answer or handle emergency legal questions.

SCREENING, TRAINING, AND BACKGROUND CHECKS

The following is required for every child/youth/vulnerable adult/vulnerable adult worker, whether a paid staff, contractor, or volunteer:

1. The POJ Stated Clerk must receive, via email or mail, completed, signed, and approved application and background check authorization forms, including a signed form verifying the policy has been read. The application should include a minimum of two references.
2. All child/youth/vulnerable adult workers must be at least eighteen years old and four years older than the oldest youth whom they are serving.
3. The applicant must consent to a criminal background check prior to the event and be compliant with the presbytery's insurance company and if needed, paid for by the event committee. These checks may be copies of checks run by their congregations or work place and should be within three years for standard background checks and within five years for fingerprint background checks.
4. All child/youth/vulnerable adult workers, paid, contracted, or volunteer, must read and sign this Protection Policy prior to the POJ event. These signed documents will be scanned and kept on file at the presbytery office.
5. No person may serve as a child/youth/vulnerable adult worker who has a conviction on his/her/their/their record of certain felonies or misdemeanors, including, but not limited to, any of the following:
 - Criminal homicide;
 - Aggravated assault;
 - Crimes related to the possession, use, or sale of drugs or controlled substances;
 - Sexual abuse;
 - Sexual assault;
 - Injury to a youth;
 - Incest;
 - Indecency with a youth;
 - Inducing sexual conduct or sexual performance of a youth;
 - Possession or promotion of child pornography;
 - The sale, distribution, or display of pornographic materials to a minor;
 - Abandonment or endangerment of a youth;
 - Kidnapping or unlawful restraint;
 - Public lewdness or indecent exposure; and enticement of a youth;
 - Any crime that involves sexual misconduct or sexual abuse, particularly if it involves misconduct or abuse with a minor;
 - Any crime that involves misuse of technology for sexual purposes, such as collecting or distributing photographs of minors who are naked or in sexual or inappropriate poses (child pornography);
 - Any crime that involves the use of force, such as assault or endangerment;
 - Any crime that involves abduction or kidnapping;
 - Any crime that involves drinking and driving, such as driving while intoxicated within the last 10 years.

In addition, if the presbytery or a local congregation is or becomes aware that a child/youth/vulnerable adult worker has a conviction or pending charge for one of the aforementioned crimes or any related crime, the child/youth/vulnerable adult worker shall automatically be ineligible to attend/participate in a child/youth/vulnerable adult event in any capacity.

6. Whenever the presbytery organizes an event for minors that invites minors from local congregations who will be supervised by child/youth/vulnerable adult workers, the sponsoring entity of the presbytery shall:
 - a. Provide guidance to the congregations that are sending child/youth/vulnerable adult workers about best practices for securing child/youth/vulnerable adult workers and eligibility requirements.
 - b. Provide guidance to the congregations that are sending child/youth/vulnerable adult workers concerning the requirement that the congregation perform and pay for background checks for potential child/youth/vulnerable adult workers and how to evaluate the background check for offenses that would disqualify a person from being a child/youth/vulnerable adult worker with minors.
 - c. Provide guidance to congregations on when to perform the background checks and with what background check provider.
 - d. The Stated Clerk will be the designated recipient of copies of these background checks and be trained to:
 - i. To review every background check received.
 - ii. To identify criminal convictions on background checks that should disqualify a person from being a child/youth/vulnerable adult worker;
 - iii. To notify the event sponsor if the Stated Clerk believes the council/committee has erred in selecting a child/youth/vulnerable adult worker whose background check indicates that the person should not act as a child/youth/vulnerable adult worker;
 - iv. Report to the sponsor of the event of each potentially disqualifying background check and any other related concerns so that a decision can be made to inform the council/committee that the person whose background check is in question is not eligible to attend the event as a child/youth/vulnerable adult worker.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

The presbytery shall maintain all child/youth/vulnerable adult worker applications, results of background checks, and related information in confidential, secured files.

REPORTING

The sponsoring entity of the presbytery will publicize the procedure for reporting any prohibited actions and have copies available at all times in a public place at the event. Anyone suspecting or having knowledge of a violation of abuse may report such violation to any leader of the presbytery sponsored event. Any child, youth, or vulnerable adult who suspects or has knowledge of any type of abuse is invited to share the knowledge with any adult leader of the presbytery sponsored event. Anyone who has knowledge of or suspicion of child/youth/vulnerable adult abuse should be made aware that state law requires the immediate reporting of such abuse to the civil authorities. Any adult leader should report such violation to the Stated Clerk. All leaders, advisors, staff, and volunteers that may be engaged in a Presbytery of the James event are mandated reporters

REPORTING PROCESS

1. Make sure the alleged victim is in a safe place with two unrelated adults to supervise.
2. Report possible criminal activity to civil authorities. It is now a police matter and all investigations will be their responsibility.
3. Report to the event leader that an incident has been reported. The event leader will immediately notify the parents/guardians of the alleged victim.

4. Remove individual accused from contact with other event participants.
5. Fill out the Presbytery of the James incident reports.
6. Report to the Stated Clerk and or Lead Presbyter and give them the filled-out Incident Reports.

MANDATORY EVENT RULES FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The sponsoring entity of the presbytery shall ensure that the following measures are in place and that the following actions are taken for each event or activity involving children and youth:

1. Two-adult rule: Two non-related adults must always be present in groups of children and youth. The only exception is if an emergency situation deems this not immediately possible. All child and youth workers and volunteers must be a minimum of 18 years of age and four years older than the age group they lead or supervise.
2. Ratios: The adult-to-child ratio for all child-related events/activities is 2:10. The adult-to-youth ratio for all youth-related events/activities is 2:17. There shall also be one adult of each gender when there are one or more minors of each gender in a group. Only in emergency situations may the ratios or gender diversity be compromised.
3. View Windows and Open Doors: When minors and adult workers or volunteers are in a room, if the door is closed, the door must have a view window installed. If no view window is installed in the door, the door must remain open at all times.
4. Adult workers/caregivers should respect the privacy of the children to whom they provide care. (See POJ Social Media Policy Appendix 1)
5. Age-appropriate training to children and youth should be provided regarding behavior that should be reported to the caregiver or leader of the event.
6. Transportation: All adult drivers at child/youth/vulnerable adult events must have proper license and insurance on file with the organizing council. All vehicles used must have seat belts for the driver and each passenger. No minor under eighty-five pounds may sit in the front seat of any vehicle. All drivers transporting minors and vulnerable adults must be over the age of twenty-five and must be informed that if their vehicle is used, their insurance would be primary if an accident occurs. If a charter bus is rented, or any outside carrier is contracted, the company hired must ensure criminal background checks on their drivers. Each vehicle must follow the ratio rules noted in point 2 in this section. If in a caravan, this rule may be amended to have only 1 adult in each vehicle; however, whenever one vehicle stops, all vehicles stop. Lastly, no minor may be a driver at any event or activity (this includes golf carts at events).
7. Forms: The legal guardians of each minor must provide the appropriate information and medical forms for each activity/event. The information form should include all contacts for legal guardians and the medical form must include a copy of the minor's health insurance card. Further consent forms must be signed by legal guardians for any off campus events. Any photos at the event that are used in social media or published material by the organizing council must be released by a signed consent form from a participant's legal guardian as well as the minor. All such forms must be stored at the event site, in a secure place with restricted access. (Appendix 2)
8. Each event/activity must ensure that rules are gone over with all participants at each event/activity. These rules shall include but are not limited to a code of conduct (Appendix 3) specific to the event/activity, as well as a list prohibited and expected behaviors for the specific event/activity. The code of conduct and prohibited and expected behaviors list should be given in written form to each participant and legal guardians, as well as discussed thoroughly at the beginning of the event/activity.
9. All volunteers and employees at any presbytery entity sponsored events must also abide by a code of conduct (Appendix 4) that emphasizes the following prohibited behaviors. Some of these prohibited behaviors include but are not restricted to:

- a. Display of sexual affection toward a child.
- b. Use of profanity or off-color jokes.
- c. Discussion of sexual encounters with or around children or in any way involving children in personal problems or issues.
- d. Dating or becoming “romantically” involved with children (under the age of eighteen).
- e. Using or being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of children.
- f. Possessing sexually oriented materials—including printed or online pornography—on church property or property being utilized for a church event.
- g. Having secrets with youth/children.
- h. Staring at or commenting on children’s bodies.
- i. Engaging in prohibited electronic communication with children.
- j. Working one-on-one with children in a private setting.
- k. Abusing youth/children in any way, including (but not limited to) the following:
 - Physical abuse: hit, spank, shake, slap, unnecessarily restrain.
 - Verbal abuse: degrade, threaten, or curse.
 - Sexual abuse: inappropriately touch, expose oneself, or engage in sexually oriented conversations.
 - Mental abuse: shame, humiliate, act cruelly.
 - Neglect: withhold food, water, shelter.
 - Permit children or youth to engage in the following: hazing, bullying, derogatory name-calling, ridicule, humiliation, or sexual activity.

SOCIAL MEDIA – ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

General Social Media Policy - No minister, employee, contractor, or volunteer of the presbytery and its entities shall create or use a media site (Web, Facebook, YouTube, or similar) in the name of or purporting to represent the Presbytery of the James without the explicit written permission of the sponsoring council, presbytery, or event leadership.

Social Media Communications

Persons who shall create public pages on behalf of Presbytery of the James entity programs are responsible to monitor communications and to assure that employees and volunteers do not have private (and possibly inappropriate) conversations with children and youth. Persons having social media privileges on behalf of the Presbytery entity shall treat unsolicited communication or “friending” from children or youth underage as an unauthorized text message. No reply may be given except to indicate by a posting that accepting a “friend” invitation by underage children is a violation of the code of conduct.

If a child or youth reveals abuse or inappropriate interactions with an adult, the person must report this information in the manner of any “suspected abuse.”

When using social media to communicate with children or youth, the authorized administrator shall inform parents/guardians of each child or youth that the latter is communicating with the person via social media, providing the parent/guardian the opportunity to disapprove or to participate in a group.

Social Networking Code of Conduct

Each person who leads using the resources of social media shall apply this Social Networking Code of Conduct:

- Prohibit comments that are harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
- Prohibit sexually oriented conversations or discussions about sexual activities.
- Prohibit private messages between employees and volunteers and children or youth.
- Prohibit posting inappropriate pictures (for example, sexually suggestive, exploitive, or voyeuristic) or inappropriate comments on pictures.
- Provide children, youth, and their parents with this Social Networking Code of Conduct.
- Encourage parents to play a role in monitoring their children's and youth interactions with employees and volunteers.
- Continuously remind children and youth how to interact appropriately through social networking sites.
- Deny participation by individuals who repeatedly violate the code of conduct.

At the institution of the use of social media, the authorized administrator shall present this Social Networking Code of Conduct to children or youth and parents/guardians.

SIGNING OF POLICY AND APPLICATION TO SERVE

Each adult engaged in the leadership of a Presbytery of the James entity event shall acknowledge receipt of the Presbytery of the James Child/youth/vulnerable adult Protection Policy and Its Procedures by signing an application to be employed, volunteer, or supervise. (Appendix 5) In addition, each person engaged in the leadership of a Presbytery of the James entity event shall consent to all comprehensive background checks required and shall comply with any consequences of a reported violation of this policy.

PCUSA CHILD, YOUTH AND VULNERABLE ADULTS PROTECTION

The Presbytery of the James will follow, to the extent possible, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Child/youth/vulnerable adult/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Its Procedures (Revisions Approved by the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), A Corporation May 20, 2021)

POLICY RATIONALE

The implementation and documentation of a Child/youth/vulnerable adult/Vulnerable Protection Policy strives to reduce the risk of abuse and neglect for the following reasons:

- Children, youth, and vulnerable adults are a gift from God and the Church has a divine mandate to provide for their safety and nurturing. The Church is called to be a place that reflects the open arms of Jesus. In Matthew 19:14, Jesus says, "Let the little children come to me." The Church is to be, at all levels of council and in all entities, a place of safety and nurture reflective of the arms of Christ.
- Any type of abuse involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults has lasting and devastating effects on the life of the victim/survivor. It is the call of the Church to be a life-giving entity of Christ's healing and hope for community and individuals, not an entity that brings harm and hurt.
- The larger Church suffers with the victim/survivor and his or her family when abuse and neglect occurs. The Church is unable to do the full work of Christ, due to the hurt, pain, and

distrust that accompanies abuse. Not only does the Church lose its credibility at all levels, it also suffers considerable financial loss and loss of integrity. More importantly, in instances of child, youth, or vulnerable adult abuse within the Church, there is immeasurable spiritual, psychological, emotional, and physical harm that can be perpetrated that woefully hinders God’s call on the Church.

- The Book of Order states, “The congregation as a whole, on behalf of the Church universal, assumes responsibility for nurturing the baptized person in the Christian life,” and Presbyterians believe this baptismal commitment to be a serious one, understanding it to apply to all in the church’s care, including children, youth, and vulnerable adults (Book of Order W-2.3013).
- Children, youth, and vulnerable adults are not only persons of care and service in the church, but they are also co-recipients of the graces and love of God. Jesus exemplified this in the Gospel of Mark 10:15–16 when he urged his followers to receive the kingdom of God as a little child. And he specifically takes up the children into his arms and blesses them. So also the Church, as the body of Christ, is to be the presence of Christ’s love, in the same way taking up all children, youth, and vulnerable adults into its arms and blessing them; providing for them a safe, thriving, and nurturing environment in which to grow in every way.

Presbytery of the James Background Check Requests

Please mail to 3218 Chamberlayne Ave., Richmond, VA 23227

OR email to statedclerk@presbyteryofthejames.org

Questions – call 804-262-2074

Background Screening Consent and Information Form Applicant must complete all information and sign and date form. Only those over 18 years old may submit a request – legal restrictions for minors stops all requests below this age.

Full Name: First _____ Middle _____ Last _____

Background check requested for (select all that apply):

Pulpit Supply (in person) Local Church (staff or volunteer) Conference Activity

Other names used including maiden names: _____

Social security number: _____ Date of birth _____

Current Address: Street _____ City/State _____ Zip code _____

Home phone _____ Cell phone _____ Email _____

Include any other addresses for the past 10 years and how long at each address:

Former address _____

Former address _____

Please list all states of residence since turning age 18:

Reference: (Someone who knows you and has observed you working with young people.)

Name _____

Address _____ City/State _____ Zip code _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

I am a member of the following church: _____

I have been a member of this church since: _____

I have never been convicted of nor pled guilty or no contest to a crime. (Exclude convictions that have been sealed, expunged or legally eradicated, misdemeanor convictions for which probation was completed and the case was dismissed and minor traffic offenses) True Not True

If not true, on a separate sheet, please briefly describe the nature of the crime(s), the date and place of conviction and the legal disposition of the case.

I have never terminated my employment, professional credentials or service in a volunteer position nor had my employment, professional credentials, or authorization to hold a volunteer position terminated or reasons relating to allegations of actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation or misconduct; physical abuse; child abuse; or financial misconduct. True Not True

If not true, on a separate sheet, give a short explanation. (Please indicate the date of termination; name, address, phone number of employer or volunteer supervisor; nature of the incident(s) leading to your termination.)

I have a valid drivers' license. True Not True

With respect to my driving record, I have not had my license suspended or revoked within the last five years due to reckless driving or driving while intoxicated and/or under the influence of a controlled substance. True Not True

Is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that would call into question your being entrusted with the responsibilities of the position for which you are applying? Yes No

If yes, please provide a brief explanation:

The covenants between persons seeking employment or authorized volunteer positions in the Presbytery of the James require honesty, integrity and truthfulness for the health of the presbytery. To that end, I attest that the information set forth in this application is true and complete. I understand that any misrepresentation or omission may be grounds for rejection of consideration for, or termination of, the position I am seeking to fill. I acknowledge that it is my duty in a timely fashion to amend the responses and information I have provided if I come to know that the response or information was incorrect when given or, though accurate when given, the response or information is no longer accurate. Beginning such relationships with an open exchange of relevant information builds the foundation for a continuing and healthy covenant between employees and volunteers and the organization they seek to serve. To that end, I authorize the Presbytery of the James and/or its agents to make inquiries regarding my character and qualifications, including all statements I have set forth above. I also authorize all entities, persons, former employers, supervisors, courts, law enforcement and other public agencies to respond to inquiries concerning me, to supply verification of the statements I have made, and to comment on and state opinions regarding my background, character and qualifications. To encourage such persons and entities to speak openly and responsibly, I hereby release them from all liability arising from their responses, comments and statements.

The Presbytery of the James employment and authorized volunteer recruitment process involves the sharing of information regarding applicants with those persons in a position to recruit, secure, and supervise both the position I am seeking to fill and program I am seeking to participate in. To that end, I authorize the POJ and its agents to circulate, distribute, and otherwise share information gathered in connection with this application to such persons for these purposes. I understand that the Presbytery of the James will share with me information it has gathered about me, if I request it to do so.

I acknowledge my receipt and understanding of the Presbytery of the James Child, Youth and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy. I understand my signature below is legally binding and will be kept on file. I grant permission to the Presbytery of the James staff to complete a Sex Offender Registry check, basic criminal background check, contact a designated reference and interview me so I may serve in the role for which I have applied.

I authorize (THE PRINCIPAL) and/or its agents to make an independent investigation of my background, references, character, past employment, education, credit history, adult criminal or police records, and motor vehicle records including those maintained by both public and private organizations and all public records for the purpose of confirming the information contained on my Application and/or obtaining other information which may be material to my qualifications for service now and, if applicable, during the tenure of my service with them.

I release the Presbytery of the James and THE PRINCIPAL and its agents and any person or entity, which provides information pursuant to this authorization, from any and all liabilities, claims or lawsuits in regards to the information obtained from any and all of the above referenced sources.

Signature _____ Date _____

PRESBYTERY OF THE JAMES INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Date and time of incident:

Name of Reporter:

Primary phone #: _____ Work # _____

Name(s) of persons involved incident:

Name _____ Age: _____

Name _____ Age: _____

Name _____ Age: _____

Name _____ Age: _____

Location of Incident (including City, State and Country):

Quote the first words verbatim of the child, youth or vulnerable adult making the accusation:

Describe the behavior and appearance of the person making the accusation:

Describe the behavior and appearance of anyone else making the accusation or involved in the incident:

Describe what exactly happened as reported to you:

Were there any witnesses? Yes: No:

1st Name: _____ Age: _____

Signature _____ Date _____

2nd Name: _____ Age: _____

Signature _____ Date _____

3rd Name: _____ Age: _____

Signature _____ Date _____

4th Name: _____ Age: _____

Signature _____ Date _____

What actions did you take?

Has the incident been resolved? _____

How so? _____

Person(s) this report was given to:

1st Name: _____ Date: _____

2nd Name: _____ Date: _____

3rd Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature of person submitting report: _____ Date: --- _____

Appendix 1

SOCIAL MEDIA—ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

General Social Media Policy

No minister, employee, contractor, or volunteer of the General Assembly and its Entities shall create or use a media site (Web, Facebook, YouTube, or similar) in the name of or purporting to represent the Presbytery of the James without the explicit written permission of the Presbytery of the James (POJ), or event leadership. When clergy or staff, acting in their capacity as a representative of the Presbytery of the James, lead or coordinate a group activity using social media, each may use only official Presbytery of the James Entity sites/channels when they have been made available by the Entity of the POJ. These may include Web pages, Facebook, e-mail, and similar means.

Social Media Communications

Persons who create public pages on behalf of POJ programs are responsible to monitor communications and to assure that employees and volunteers do not have private (and possibly inappropriate) conversations with Minors and Vulnerable Adults.

Persons having Facebook privileges on behalf of the POJ Entity shall treat unsolicited communication or “friending” from Minors and Vulnerable Adults as an unauthorized text message. No reply may be given except to indicate by a posting that accepting a “friend” invitation by Minors and Vulnerable Adults is a violation of the code of conduct.

If a Minors and Vulnerable Adults reveal abuse or inappropriate interactions with an adult, the person must report this information in the manner of any “suspected abuse.”

When using Facebook to communicate with Minors and Vulnerable Adults, the authorized minister shall inform parents/guardians of each Minor and Vulnerable Adult that the latter is communicating with the person via Facebook, providing the parent/guardian the opportunity to disapprove or to participate in a group.

Social Networking Code of Conduct

Each person who leads using the resources of social media shall apply this Social Networking Code of Conduct:

- Prohibit comments that are, or could be construed by any observer, to be harsh, coercive, threatening, intimidating, shaming, derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
- Prohibit sexually oriented conversations or discussions about sexual activities.
- Prohibit private messages between employees and volunteers and Minors and Vulnerable Adults.
- Prohibit posting inappropriate pictures (for example, sexually suggestive, exploitive, or voyeuristic) or inappropriate comments on pictures.
- Provide Minors and Vulnerable Adults, and their parents and guardians with this Social Networking Code of Conduct.
- Encourage parents and guardians to play a role in monitoring their minor’s and Vulnerable Adult’s interactions with employees and volunteers.
- Continuously remind Minors and Vulnerable Adults how to interact appropriately through social networking sites.
- Deny participation by individuals who repeatedly violate the code of conduct.
- At the institution of the use of social media, the authorized minister shall present this Social Networking Code of Conduct to Minors and Vulnerable Adults and parents/guardians.

Misuse of Technology

No minister, employee, contractor, or volunteer of the POJ and its Entities shall misuse technology in the following ways:

- Using technology to send suggestive messages and/or images to a Minor or Vulnerable Adult.
- Having contacts by Misuse of Technology to contact a Minor or Vulnerable Adult that is not pre-approved by the Minor's or Vulnerable Adult's legal guardian with a signed waiver, unless the contact is on an open public medium, such as a church or Entity website or church or Entity social media program.
- To view pornography or sites (ex. dating websites) which include pornography or naked bodies on the premises of a POJ Entity event, activity or meeting, no matter where it is held or by which Entity it is organized.

Virtual Meeting Code of Conduct

Child/Youth workers, ministers, employees, contractors, or volunteers ("Adults") of the POJ or its Entities must follow any virtual meeting policies or protocols of the POJ and these protocols when planning and conducting a virtual meeting on virtual meeting platforms (ex. Zoom, Skype) with one or more Minors:

- Adults should seek permission of the parent or guardian who has legal custody of a minor before inviting the Minor to participate in a virtual meeting. Such permission can be sought in any hard copy or electronic registration forms but must be a separate and clear section seeking permission of the parent or guardian. The option to observe the virtual meeting (without visual or verbal participation) should be made available upon request to parent or guardian. The permission section of the registration form shall provide the parent or guardian with information (name, contact information, including telephone/text) on how to report concerns, issues or to make reports of inappropriate conduct or sexual misconduct or abuse by an Adult or any participant that occurs before, during or after a virtual meeting.
- Adults and meeting organizers should advise a parent or guardian who has legal custody of a Minor of the following so that the parent or guardian is aware of it when giving permission for the Minor to participate in the meeting: (1) that a meeting will be recorded; and (2) that images, video or audio may be used from the recording in media reports or on POJ or other websites.
- No Adult is permitted to meet one-on-one or one Adult with a group of Minors either in a virtual meeting space or a breakout room. There must be at least two (2) Adults in any virtual meetings or breakout room or other virtual meeting space.
- All Adults, Minors, and other participants in virtual meetings shall dress appropriately for the meeting. No meeting participants shall wear inappropriate (that is, sexually suggestive, exploitive, or voyeuristic - "Inappropriate") clothing or clothing that displays Inappropriate or offensive (that is, sexually demeaning or suggestive, pornographic, voyeuristic, discriminatory, harassing, bullying, intimidating, threatening, profane or abusive – "Offensive") messages.
- No Adults, Minors, and other participants in virtual meetings are permitted to make displays of Inappropriate or Offensive messages by putting a sign or note in front of the camera in some form or fashion.
- Adults, Minors, and other participants in virtual meetings should be considerate and not carry the phone or device they are using to participate in the meeting into private areas of their meeting space, such as bathrooms, with any camera or microphone on and the meeting is in progress.

- No Adults or Minors are permitted to use the chat function, the name section, or any other feature of a virtual platform for Inappropriate or Offensive purposes during a virtual meeting, including, but not limited to:
 - Displaying Inappropriate photographs or images, such as pornography or photographs of anyone who is naked or inappropriately attired.
 - Displaying Offensive or Inappropriate messages.
 - Providing links to Offensive and Inappropriate websites or platforms.
 - Bullying, discriminating against or harassing anyone based upon their race/ethnicity, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, creed, protected disability status, citizenship status, genetic information, or religious affiliation.
- No Adult is permitted to use the private chat function of a virtual meeting platform to communicate privately with one or more Minors except when the privacy or dignity of the Minor requires it. If a private chat is necessary, it must be recorded and must copy another Adult. Otherwise, all chat communications must be done openly so that all participants, including the other Adults, parents or guardians in the virtual meeting can see the chat communications. This should be announced at the start of every virtual meeting. (Exceptions: if the Adult is designated by the meeting organizers to receive reports of concerns or issues or to make reports of Inappropriate conduct or sexual misconduct or abuse).
- If a Minor attempts to contact an Adult using the private chat function, the Adult should not respond. If an Adult attempts to contact a Minor using the private chat function, the Minor should not respond. (Exception: unless the Minor is contacting the Adult designated by the meeting organizers to receive reports of concerns or issues or to make reports of Inappropriate conduct or sexual misconduct or abuse or that Adult is contacting a Minor who made a report.)
- No Adult is permitted to use other means of communication (such as texting or email) to communicate privately with one or more Minors before, during or after a virtual meeting. No Minor is permitted to use other means of communication (such as texting or email) to communicate privately with one or more Adults before, during or after a virtual meeting. (Exception: if the Minor made a report to the Adult and the Adult is designated by the meeting organizers to receive reports of concerns or issues or to make reports of Inappropriate conduct or sexual misconduct or abuse).
- Adults and meeting organizers shall provide Minors with information (name, contact information, including telephone/text) on how to report concerns, issues or to make reports of Inappropriate conduct or sexual misconduct or abuse by an Adult or any participant that occurs before, during or after a virtual meeting. Adults and meeting organizers are responsible to make mandatory reports of sexual misconduct or abuse as required by the Book of Order (G-4.0302) and under local, state, and federal law.

Appendix 2

Event Release Form Presbytery of the James

From time to time, photographs, videos, direct quotes, and/or audio clips may be taken of youth and adults attending Presbytery of the James events or participating in Presbytery-sponsored programs and activities. The Presbytery of the James requests the right to use all such photos, videos, print material and/or audio clips taken from youth and adults involved in these programs and activities. They may be used for a variety of purposes, including, but not limited to, publications, promotional brochures, promotions or showcase of programs on our web sites, showcase of activities in local and/or national newspapers or programming, and other similar lawful purposes.

By signing this form, I consent and give permission to allow the Presbytery of the James the unlimited right to use photos, videos, direct quotes, and/or audio clips that they have of me participating in Presbytery programs or events. I agree to give up my rights with regards to Presbytery of the James photos, videos, direct quotes, and/or audio clips of me. Further, by signing this consent and release form, I acknowledge that I understand and agree to the above request and conditions. I sign this form freely and without inducement.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

HEALTH AND MEDICAL INFORMATION

Name of participant

Birthday: _____ Age _____

Name/Address of Parent/Guardian

Telephone number and emergency contact numbers:

Please give any medical/physical information which might limit or prevent the participant's full involvement in these events and/or would help us to work more effectively with your youth:

POLICY STATEMENTS:

Prescriptions: Is this participant taking any prescribed medication? Yes No

If so, what and what is it for? Please be specific in drug name and dosages.

It is the policy of these events that all prescribed medications must be kept and dispensed by the adult leaders of the event.

I agree to have the adult leaders keep and dispense my child's medication while at these events.

Emergency treatment: If there should be an emergency which requires medical attention and I am unable to be reached, I hereby authorize the physician chosen by the Adult Youth leader to hospitalize, secure treatment and other injection, anesthesia, x-ray, or surgery for my child named above.

Signature of Parent/Guardian:

Relationship to participant _____ Date _____

Medical Insurance of Participant

Group Number/ ID Number

(If possible, please attach a photocopy of the front and back of your insurance card.)

Appendix 3

PRESBYTERIAN YOUTH EVENT COVENANT

For Youth, Adult

Advisors, and parents or participants this covenant is for both the **YOUTH and ADULTS** who attend presbytery youth events such as retreats, rally days, mission trips, youth conferences, as representatives of the Presbytery of the James, etc. **Seeking the guide of the Holy Spirit, while at a Presbytery of the James youth event, I covenant to . . .**

R: Refrain from consuming alcohol, using illegal drugs or smoking, and refrain from driving any vehicle for the duration of the event.

E: Enjoy the time of rest and renewal.

S: Seek to hear God’s claim on my life through the opportunities provided.

P: Participate to the best of my ability in all planned activities.

E: Expect to encounter God.

C: Care for others by being a good steward of the resources provided over the course of the event including, but not limited to the food prepared, supplies provided, and persons leading the event.

T: Treat the facilities with reverence.

F: Friendship - Take time to meet one new friend.

U: Understanding, be considerate of one another, seek to hear others.

L: Lights out. Abide by the lights out policy of the event and be in my room or cabin by that time.

Participant's Name (Please Print): _____

Participant's Signature _____

Parent/Guardian's Name (Please Print) _____

Parent/ Guardian's Signature _____

Church: _____

Date: _____

POLICIES VANDALISM AND PROPERTY DAMAGE

Any person who damages or destroys property will be responsible for the cost of replacement and repair.

SMOKING All POJ events are SMOKE-FREE

DISRUPTING EVENT ACTIVITIES A great deal of time, effort, prayer, and money go into preparing a youth event. Disruptive behavior during assemblies, workshops or worship times, or other planned activities makes it hard for everyone to get the most out of the time that we have together. Participants can expect 2 warnings about this from any adult leader. Anyone who continues to disrupt will not be invited to the next event and may be dismissed from the current event in addition to having the opportunity to explain their actions to their parents, guardians, and / or pastor.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS You are responsible for your own belongings. Do not bring any items that are of great value to you.

ALCOHOL AND ILLEGAL DRUGS Any youth or adult found in possession of illegal substances will be dismissed from the event and may be subject to arrest.

DRIVING Vehicles driven to the event should be parked and locked. They should neither be driven nor visited during the event, except in an emergency. Upon leaving the event, drivers must obey all speed limits and must carry passengers only inside vehicles.

Appendix 4

Presbytery of the James Supervisory Adult Code of Conduct Form

The Presbytery of the James is committed to providing a safe environment for minors and vulnerable adults within all activities and ministries of the presbytery. All the faithful cooperate in taking every reasonable action to ensure the safety of anyone under their care. The following policies are in effect whenever adults are acting as employees and/or volunteers of presbytery ("Church representatives").

I WILL:

- I will treat everyone with respect, courtesy, and consideration, performing my work in a manner consistent with the mission of the PCUSA and the Presbytery of the James.
- I will remember that any minors or vulnerable adults are entrusted into my care; I am not their peer or buddy. Recognizing that Church representatives must always be aware of their own vulnerability, as well as the vulnerability of any minor or vulnerable adult with whom they may be working, I will always use a team approach to activities.
- I will avoid situations where I am alone with a minor or vulnerable adult. I understand that at least two supervising adults should be present when there is only one minor or vulnerable adult, and at least two participants should be present when there is only one supervisory adult.
- I will ensure that any one-on-one meetings with a minor or vulnerable adult are held in a public area or in a visible area such as in an office with an interior window or an open door so that another person can be present outside the room as a witness.
- I will use positive reinforcement rather than criticism and condemnation when working with minors or vulnerable adults.
- I will maintain appropriate physical and emotional boundaries with the individuals with whom I work. I understand that any touch must be age-appropriate and based on the need of the minor or vulnerable adult, not the supervisory adult.
- I will always report any suspected abuse according to Virginia law. I understand that the failure to report suspected abuse to civil authorities is punishable by law.
- I will cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse.
- I will be available and visible during the entire event(s), take part in enforcing the rules, and take control of any situation those in my care are unable to handle.
- I will treat property with care. If someone from the group breaks something, I will tell the program director/event leader/presbyter. Each church will take full responsibility for any damage done by their members at a program site.
- I will keep cell phones/pagers off or in silent/vibrate mode to keep from disrupting or distracting from activities, especially during worship and prayer.
- I will behave in a way that respects the rights of all. I will be cooperative and do those things that promote a good reputation for the program, school, parish, and/or diocese.
- If I become aware of anyone violating this Supervisory Adult Code of Conduct, I will take responsibility to report that violation to the appropriate level of supervisor or to the presbytery so the issue can be addressed and minors can be kept safe.

I WILL NOT:

- I will not maintain inappropriate relationships/friendships with a minor or vulnerable adult. I will not have exclusive relationships with a minor or vulnerable adult. If I become aware of a minor/vulnerable adult desiring such a relationship, I will ask for assistance from the supervisor or pastor and exercise extra caution.
- I will not use, possess, or be under the influence of, any alcoholic beverage or any illegal drugs when working with minors or vulnerable adults. In addition, I will not inappropriately use any legal drug or mood-altering substance in this setting.
- I will not have a weapon in my possession while acting as a Church representative. (Exception: Active law enforcement officers who are required by law to carry a weapon. —Those individuals must guarantee that weapon is secured at all times from access by any other person.)
- I will not provide, or allow any minor to use, any alcoholic beverage, tobacco, or illegal drugs. Neither will I provide anything prohibited by law to anyone in my care. Medications of any kind may be administered to minors only with written parental/guardian permission.

- I will not have any sexually explicit or morally inappropriate materials on Church property or in the presence of minors or vulnerable adults. Such materials include, but are not limited to: magazines, videos, films, recordings, computer software, computer games, or printed material. I will not engage with minors or vulnerable adults in topics of conversation or discussion, vocabulary or any other form of personal interaction or entertainment that could not reasonably be used in the presence of parents or a responsible adult. I will not engage in sexually oriented conversations with anyone except in the context of sharing the Church’s teaching on human sexuality.
- I will not accept expensive gifts from Minors or their parent/guardian without prior written approval from the pastor or administrator. Neither will I give expensive gifts to minors without prior written approval from the parent/guardian and the pastor or administrator. Small gifts or privileges are not to be given to minors without the presumed knowledge and permission of a parent/guardian.
- I will never speak to minors or vulnerable adults in a way that is or could be construed by an observer as derogatory, demeaning, or humiliating.
- I will never touch anyone in my care in a sexual or other inappropriate manner.
- I will not use physical discipline for the behavior management of minors or vulnerable adults. No form of physical discipline is acceptable, including physical force as retaliation or correction for inappropriate behavior, except as may be needed to restrain them from inflicting harm on themselves or others.
- I will avoid posing any health risk to others (e.g., fevers or other contagious situations).
- I will not, as a Church representative, provide shared or private overnight accommodations for individual minors with the exception of blood relatives. This includes, but is not limited to, accommodations in any Church-owned facility, private residence, hotel room, or any other place where there is no other adult supervision present.

As a(n) employee/volunteer of the Church, I promise to strictly follow the rules in this Code of Conduct as a condition of my providing services to the minors and/or vulnerable adults of our presbytery. I understand that any illegal behavior may involve legal authorities. I understand that any serious violation of this Code of Conduct may result in my termination of employment, removal as a volunteer, and/or dismissal from a program, and/or financial and physical responsibility for transportation home (in the case of an off-site event).

Name (Please Print) _____

Signature _____

Date _____

I hereby consent to the use of a photograph of me for the purpose of publication. ____Yes ____No

Appendix 5

Volunteer Agreement and Release from Liability Presbytery of the James

Volunteer Name: _____

In signing this form, I understand and agree to the following terms and conditions related to my volunteer service with the Presbytery of the James:

- I recognize that, as a volunteer, I represent the above organization to the public. I accept responsibility for this status and will conduct myself accordingly.
- I understand that the “Healthy Boundaries Policy” of the Presbytery of the James applies to me and I certify that I have completed the required training as of this date:

- I understand that in the course of my service, I may learn certain facts about volunteers, participants, and donors which are of a highly personal and confidential nature. Examples of such information are medical diagnosis and treatment, phone numbers and addresses, finances, personal relationships, etc. I understand that all such information, including the identity of the individual, must be treated with total confidentiality (including on social media postings) and must remain confidential even after my service ends. Please initial here: _____
- I agree to abide by the child/youth/vulnerable adult protection policies of the Presbytery of the James. I understand that the limits of confidentiality, however, include that I must immediately report to the appropriate leadership any knowledge or involvement in regard to child/youth/vulnerable adult abuse and the intentions to do harm to another person or to one’s self. Please initial here: _____
- I am aware that as a volunteer, I expose myself to potential hazards which include but are not limited to: kitchen accidents, cuts, burns, back injury from lifting, car accidents, property damage or injury to others in car accidents, falls, etc. I am voluntarily participating in this service with the knowledge of the potential hazards involved and hereby agree to accept any and all risks of injury. Please initial here: _____
- I agree that my assignees, heirs, distributes, guardians, and other legal representatives will not make a claim against, or sue for injury or damage resulting from the negligence or other acts, howsoever caused, by any employee, agent, or volunteer contractor of the organization as a result of my participation as a volunteer. I hereby release the Presbytery of the James from all actions, claims, or demands that I, my assignees, heirs, guardians and legal representatives now have or may hereafter have for injury resulting from my participation as a volunteer. Please initial here: _____
- If my volunteer service includes driving an automobile, I acknowledge that I have both a valid driver’s license and automobile liability insurance policy as required by state law. I agree to maintain my license and insurance in good standing for my tenure as a volunteer for the organization. I am knowledgeable of and agree to abide by local and state traffic laws. I agree not to drive while under the influence of alcohol and/or other intoxicating substances. Please initial here: _____
- I agree to bring any problems or conflicts that are beyond the scope of my volunteer service or ability, to the immediate attention of the appropriate leadership. Please initial here: _____
- As a volunteer, I understand that my services can be discontinued at any time for any reason. Please initial here _____
- This understanding will remain in effect throughout my continuous service as a volunteer. Should I not serve as a volunteer for more than one year, a new agreement will need to be completed. Please initial here _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Presbytery of the James
Background Check Policy
COM Approved: January 15, 2026
POJ Approved:

Purpose

The Presbytery of the James (“POJ”) affirms its responsibility to ensure safe, trustworthy, and transparent ministry in all settings where its leaders serve. This policy establishes consistent standards for background checks for all Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Commissioned Ruling Elders (CREs), and Certified Christian Educators (CCEs) who serve within or hold membership in the presbytery.

This policy supports the Presbytery’s commitment to safeguarding children, youth, and vulnerable adults; supporting congregations; and fulfilling responsibilities outlined in the Book of Order (G-3.0106).

Scope

This policy applies to all individuals serving in ministries validated, authorized, or overseen by the Presbytery, including:

- Ministers of Word and Sacrament seeking membership in POJ
- Installed pastors (including associate pastors)
- Designated pastors
- Temporary Positions: Interim/Transitional, Covenant and Bridge pastors (including associate pastors)
- Parish Associates
- Ministers validated in non-congregational ministries
- Ministers At Large
- Certified Christian Educators (CCEs) serving within or validated by POJ
- Commissioned Ruling Elders (CREs)
- Retired ministers returning to active service

When Background Checks Are Required

1. Entrance Into the Presbytery: A background check is required for any minister, CRE, or CCE seeking membership or validation within POJ.
2. New Calls/New Covenants: A background check is required when entering any of the following:
 - Installed positions
 - Temporary positions
 - Validated ministries
 - Parish associate agreements
 - CCE or CRE ministry positions
 - Any new covenant or commission under POJ authority
3. Renewal Cycle (Every Five Years): A background check is required every five (5) years for all clergy, CREs, and CCEs who are actively engaged in any form of validated, covenantal, or authorized ministry within the Presbytery.
4. Return to Service: Retired clergy, CREs, or CCEs must complete a background check before entering any new service or ministry relationship under POJ authority.

Components of the Background Check

At a minimum, the background check will include:

- National criminal background search
- National sex offender registry search
- Federal district court search
- Social Security number verification
- Identity verification
- Motor vehicle record

Results must be completed before a call, covenant, commission, or validation is finalized.

Vendor and Cost

The Presbytery will maintain a relationship with an approved background-check vendor.

Costs may be:

- Paid by the Presbytery, or
- Shared with the employing congregation or ministry, or
- Paid by the individual, depending on Presbytery policy

Confidentiality

- Results are reviewed only by the Stated Clerk and COM Chair.
- The Presbytery will retain only a record of completion, not the full report.
- Full reports remain securely stored by the vendor.
- If concerns arise, COM will meet with the individual and determine next steps.

Failure to Comply

Individuals who decline or fail to complete required background checks may not begin ministry service, renew covenants, be validated, be included on the COM supply list, or be approved for presbytery membership until compliance is achieved.

2026 COM Liaisons

REGION	CHURCH	LIAISON
E	Aberdour Presbyterian Church	Shady Clark
D	All Nations Presbyterian Fellowship	Peggy Fox
D	All Souls Presbyterian Church	Rosalind Banbury
F	Amelia Presbyterian Church	Crystal Varner Parker
D	Ampthill Presbyterian Church	Joanna W. Sydnor
B	Ashland Presbyterian Church	Mike Watson
F	Bethesda Presbyterian Church	Barbara Flynt
B	Bethlehem Presbyterian Church	Cobus Greyling
F	Blackstone Presbyterian Church	Jerry Zekert
A	Blue Ridge Presbyterian Church	Cobus Greyling
F	Bon Air Presbyterian Church	Rosalind Banbury

Presbytery of the James – 122nd Stated Meeting – February 21, 2026 – Hybrid Meeting Zoom/Fairfield Church – Section II

F	Bott Memorial Presbyterian Church	Barbara Flynt
F	Brandermill Church	Jerry Zekert
B	Brett-Reed Memorial Church	Shelly Barrick Parsons
F	Burkeville Presbyterian Church	Barbara Flynt
C	Byrd Presbyterian Church	Shelly Barrick Parsons
B	Campbell Memorial Presbyterian Church	Kelly-Ann Rayle
E	Chester Presbyterian Church	Shelly Barrick Parsons
E	Colonial Heights Presbyterian Church	Shady Clark
F	Concord Presbyterian Church	Helen Phillips
A	Cove Presbyterian Church	Jim Allison
E	Covenant Presbyterian Church	Mary Jane Winter
A	Culpeper Presbyterian Church	Ronda Williams
D	Eastminster Presbyterian Church	Peggy Fox
F	Ebenezer Presbyterian Church	Jewell-Ann Parton
D	Every Table	Crystal Varner Parker
B	Fairfield Presbyterian Church	Mary Jane Winter
A	First Presbyterian Church Charlottesville	Ronda Williams
F	First Presbyterian Church Chase City	Shady Clark
E	First Presbyterian Church Emporia	Jewell-Ann Parton
E	First Presbyterian Church Hopewell	Shady Clark
D	First Presbyterian Church Richmond	Shelly Barrick Parsons
D	First United Presbyterian Church	Jewell-Ann Parton
D	Forest Hill Presbyterian Church	Kelly-Ann Rayle
C	Genito Presbyterian Church	Todd Davidson
D	Ginter Park Presbyterian Church	Todd Davidson
D	Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church	Jewell-Ann Parton
E	Gregory Memorial Presbyterian Church	Shady Clark
B	Hartwood Presbyterian Church	Helen Phillips
E	Hawkins Memorial Presbyterian Church	Peggy Fox
C	Hebron Presbyterian Church	Todd Davidson
C	Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church	Joanna W. Sydnor
B	King's Chapel Presbyterian Church	Mike Watson
A	Kirk O'Cliff Presbyterian Church	Jim Allison
C	Laurel Presbyterian Church	Crystal Varner Parker
F	Lawrenceville Presbyterian Church	Cobus Greyling
D	Lord Jesus Korean Presbyterian Church	Crystal Varner Parker
A	Louisa Presbyterian Church	Jim Allison
A	Madison Presbyterian Church	Jim Purser
F	Mattoax Presbyterian Church	Barbara Flynt
A	Meadows Presbyterian Church	Ronda Williams
B	Milden Presbyterian Church	Kelly-Ann Rayle
B	Milford Presbyterian Church	Jerry Zekert
A	Mitchells Presbyterian Church	Jim Purser
B	New Hanover Presbyterian Church	Mike Watson
F	Oak Grove Presbyterian Church	Peggy Fox
F	Ogden Presbyterian Church	Crystal Varner Parker

Presbytery of the James – 122nd Stated Meeting – February 21, 2026 – Hybrid Meeting Zoom/Fairfield Church – Section II

F	Olivet Presbyterian Church	Cobus Greyling
A	Orange Presbyterian Church	Jim Allison
C	Overbrook Presbyterian Church	Harold Cothorn
F	Pine Grove Presbyterian Church	Barbara Flynt
B	Praise The Lord Presbyterian Church	Harold Cothorn
E	Providence Forge Presbyterian Church	Rosalind Banbury
A	Providence Presbyterian Church Gum Spring	Jim Allison
C	Providence Presbyterian Church Powhatan	Cobus Greyling
F	Pryor Memorial Presbyterian Church	Shelly Barrick Parsons
F	Rennie Memorial Presbyterian Church	Harold Cothorn
C	River Road Presbyterian Church	Jerry Zekert
E	Rivermont Presbyterian Church	Mary Jane Winter
A	Rockfish Presbyterian Church	Ronda Williams
E	Rosewood Presbyterian Church	Helen Phillips
B	Salem Presbyterian Church	Mike Watson
F	Salisbury Presbyterian Church	Joanna W. Sydnor
C	Sandston Presbyterian Church	Harold Cothorn
A	Scottsville Presbyterian Church	Ronda Williams
E	Second Presbyterian Church Petersburg	Todd Davidson
E	Second Presbyterian Church Richmond	Crystal Varner Parker
F	South Hill Presbyterian Church	Jewell-Ann Parton
A	South Plains Presbyterian Church	Helen Phillips
F	Southminster Presbyterian Church	Mary Jane Winter
B	St Andrews Presbyterian Church	Jim Purser
B	St James Presbyterian Church	Mike Watson
B	Summit Presbyterian Church	Jerry Zekert
F	Swift Creek Presbyterian Church	Mary Jane Winter
A	Tabor Presbyterian Church	Cobus Greyling
B	Tappahannock Presbyterian Church	Kelly-Ann Rayle
C	The Gayton Kirk	Shelly Barrick Parsons
B	The Presbyterian Church	Todd Davidson
C	Three Chopt Presbyterian Church	Harold Cothorn
F	Thyne Memorial Presbyterian Church	Rosalind Banbury
C	Tuckahoe Presbyterian Church	Joanna W. Sydnor
C	Village Presbyterian Church	Helen Phillips
F	Voices of Jubilee	Jewell-Ann Parton
A	Waddell Memorial Presbyterian Church	Jim Purser
A	Westminster Presbyterian Church Charlottesville	Jim Purser
E	Westminster Presbyterian Church Petersburg	Joanna W. Sydnor
D	Westminster Presbyterian Church Richmond	Kelly-Ann Rayle
E	Woodlawn Presbyterian Church	Rosalind Banbury
D	Woodville Presbyterian Church	Rosalind Banbury
F	Zion Hill Presbyterian Church	Peggy Fox

Guidelines and Practices for Retired Ministers

Commission on Ministry

Approved: December 11, 2025

(Revised in accordance with the 2023–2025 Book of Order)
“...and the multitude of years should teach wisdom.” — *Job 32:7b*

I. Introduction and Theological Foundation

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) gives thanks for the faithfulness and wisdom of those who have served as Ministers of Word and Sacrament and who now live in retirement. Retirement marks not an end to one’s calling, but a transition in vocation and rhythm of service. The gifts and witness of retired ministers continue to enrich the life of the presbytery, the local congregation, and the wider church.

Under the current *Book of Order* (G-2.0503 – G-2.0504; G-3.0307), all Ministers of Word and Sacrament whether actively serving, engaged in specialized ministry, or retired remain members of the presbytery and under its pastoral care and oversight.

II. Relationship to the Presbytery

Retired ministers remain members of presbytery and continue to share in its life and witness. They retain voice and vote, unless otherwise limited by presbytery rule.

Retired ministers are **encouraged to**:

- Participate in presbytery worship, fellowship, and discernment as they are able.
- Share their wisdom and experience through mentoring, prayer, or committee service.
- Transfer membership to the presbytery in which they reside, when appropriate, to facilitate care and fellowship.

Retired ministers are **not required to**:

- Submit requests for excused absences from presbytery meetings.
- File annual reports such as those required of Members-At-Large or ministers serving outside congregations.
- Maintain validated ministry status.

These adjustments reflect the presbytery’s pastoral understanding that retirement is a new season of grace and rest, while maintaining accountability under *G-3.0307*.

III. Ethical and Pastoral Boundaries

All ministers—active or retired—remain bound by the *Standards of Ethical Conduct* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Retired ministers are expected to:

1. Support the ministry of their successors.

Upon leaving a congregation, retired ministers will act and speak in ways that strengthen the ministry of the next pastor. (*Standards of Ethical Conduct*, II.14–15)

2. Provide pastoral services only with presbytery authorization.

Retired ministers shall not return to serve the congregation from which they retired in any pastoral capacity (including weddings, funerals, or sacraments) without explicit invitation from the presbytery or the moderator of session.

3. Respect boundaries of ministry.

Pastoral relationships are built upon trust, and the integrity of transitions requires careful observance of appropriate boundaries.

IV. Participation in Ministry After Retirement

Retirement does not remove ordination or the call to service. Ministers who feel led to offer their gifts in part-time, temporary, or volunteer capacities may do so with presbytery awareness and support.

Retired ministers may serve, with presbytery approval, in such roles as:

- Interim, supply, or temporary pastoral service in a congregation other than the one from which they retired.
- Parish associate, pastoral counselor, spiritual director, or chaplaincy roles.
- Volunteer or community-based ministries consistent with the mission of the Church.

Each presbytery may determine what forms of service require formal approval or validation (*G-3.0307*).

All retired Ministers of the Word and Sacrament who wish to engage with congregations or validated ministries beyond the congregation must be in compliance with the policies of the Presbytery

- If applicable a current Background Check
- Sign Acknowledgment of the Misconduct Policy
- Complete Boundary Training
- Anti-Racism Policy (when available)

V. Pastoral Sensitivity and Care

The Presbytery recognizes that some retired ministers, especially those residing in care facilities or living with health limitations, may no longer be able to participate in presbytery life or fulfill administrative requirements. In these cases, the presbytery extends grace and pastoral sensitivity, acknowledging years of faithful service and affirming that these ministers remain valued members of Christ's body.

Accordingly, the presbytery affirms the following practices:

- Retired ministers in care facilities or with significant limitations are considered **excused** from signing annual acknowledgments (such as harassment or boundaries training policies).
- They are **not required** to attend presbytery meetings or file absence requests. The presbytery will continue to offer spiritual support, visitation, and prayer as part of its covenant care.

VI. Validation or Approval of Post-Retirement Ministry

While retired ministers are not required to engage in validated ministry, any post-retirement work performed under the title or function of “Minister of Word and Sacrament” should be conducted with the knowledge and approval of the presbytery.

Presbyteries retain the authority and responsibility to determine which ministries fall under their validation or approval processes (*G-3.0307*). This ensures accountability, appropriate support, and consistency with the mission of the Church.

VII. Board of Pensions and Compensation

Retired ministers receiving a pension under the *Board of Pensions Benefits Plan* may not return to compensated service for the same employing organization or congregation from which they retired. With presbytery approval, they may:

- Serve in another congregation or presbytery in an interim or temporary capacity.
- Serve with non-PC(USA) organizations.
- Volunteer in ministries not eligible for the Benefits Plan.

Questions concerning compensation, employment limits, or income continuation should be directed to the *Board of Pensions* and the presbytery’s Commission on Ministry.

VIII. Continuing Connection and Gratitude

The Presbytery celebrates its retired ministers as treasured members of the body of Christ. Their wisdom, stories, and faith continue to shape the witness of the Church. Through prayer, communication, and fellowship, the presbytery commits to remain connected to those who have served faithfully and now rest in a different rhythm of ministry.

“The Church is a community of memory as well as of hope. Those who have gone before us teach us faithfulness; those who serve still remind us that God’s call endures.”

Key References

- *Book of Order G-2.0503 – G-2.0504* (Ministers of Word and Sacrament; Retirement)
- *Book of Order G-3.0307* (Presbytery Responsibilities for Oversight and Support)
- *Standards of Ethical Conduct for Ordained Officers* (PC(USA))
- *Board of Pensions Post-Retirement Service Guidelines* (Administrative Rule 801)

Delegation of Authority to Act in Exigent Circumstances

As part of its duty to administer various policies of the presbytery, the Commission is in some instances empowered to grant exceptions to policies. Ordinarily a request for an exception would be processed through the appropriate committee at a regular meeting and then by the full Commission at its next stated meeting. In some circumstances, however, it may be necessary to act on the request for an exception more quickly than is possible in the Commission’s normal meeting schedule.

Therefore, in such exigent circumstances, the Commission delegates its authority to act on the request for an exception to the two co-moderators, acting together. The occurrence of any such action under exigent circumstances, and the action taken, shall be reported to the full Commission at its next stated meeting.

Report of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry

Presbytery of the James

January 22, 2025

Report includes information from committee meetings held October 2025 through January 2026.

I. The committee reports the following for information:

- A. Of the 17 persons under care on January 22, 10 are inquirers and 7 are candidates. Of the candidates, 3 are certified ready pending a call.

II. The committee reports the following actions:

- A. Interviewed Kaylin McGhee (Fairfield Presbyterian) and enrolled her as an inquirer, appointing Nate Taylor as liaison.
- B. Interviewed Chris Burton (First United Presbyterian Church) for Final Readiness. His liaison is Robert Johnson.
- C. Interviewed Inquirer Spandana Deepthi Valbhapuram and approved her to be interviewed by presbytery for candidacy.
- D. Interviewed Inquirer Subin Sim and approved her to be interviewed by presbytery for candidacy.

III. The committee makes the following recommendations in the Consent Agenda:

- A. The committee recommends inquirer Cellonia Ndede (Westminster Presbyterian) for candidacy for the ordered Ministry of the Word and Sacrament.
- B. The committee recommends inquirer Spandana Deepthi Valbhapuram (Second Presbyterian) 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: [None]

cpm@presbyteryofthejames.org

Report of Mission Council to the Presbytery of the James

February 2026

Executive Summary

- The Presbytery approved the 2026 budget at the November 13, 2025 called meeting.
- The Presbytery approved the job description for a combined General Presbyter / Stated Clerk position and directed the Committee on Nominations to nominate a search committee at the February 2026 stated meeting.
- Mission Council formed an Accounting Task Force to strengthen alignment with the Resource Management Policy and to recommend improvements in financial oversight.
 - Upon recommendation, the Mission Council approved the formation of a Finance Sub-Committee
- Mission Council recommends the Revised Manual of Administrative Operations for Presbytery approval.

Budget and Financial Oversight

- 2026 Budget: Approved by Presbytery on November 13, 2025, following listening sessions and the work of the Budget Committee. Mission Council continues oversight of the implementation and monitoring of budget assumptions and overall financial health.
- Mission Council remains committed to aligning financial practices and resource allocation with the Presbytery's mission and vision.

Staffing and Leadership

- **Combined General Presbyter / Stated Clerk Position:**
The Presbytery approved the job description for a combined position to provide a sustainable leadership model. As directed, the Committee on Nominations is asked to present nominees for a search committee at this February stated meeting. Mission Council and the Personnel Committee will continue to support this work as the search proceeds.
- **Interim Staffing:**
The interim staffing structure remains in place:
 - Rev. Kerry Foster continues to serve as Temporary General Presbyter and Temporary Stated Clerk.
 - Barbara Espigh continues to serve as Temporary Assistant to the Stated Clerk and Associate for Administration.

Accounting Task Force

At its December 2025 meeting, Mission Council approved the formation of an Accounting Task Force.

The Task Force is charged with:

- Aligning accounting practices more fully with the Resource Management Policy;
- Improving clarity, consistency, and accountability in financial processes;
- Recommending a plan for continuing financial oversight; and
- Recommending which Presbytery funds should require a formal grant application process.

Members of the Accounting Task Force are:

- Barclay Bradshaw, RE — Three Chopt
- Doug Jackson, RE — Three Chopt
- Barb Young, RE — Hebron
- Gary Selmeczi, RE — First Presbyterian Church, Charlottesville

Joel Morgan will convene the Task Force, with Rev. Kerry Foster also serving.

The Mission Council has approved one recommendation from the Accounting Task Force: the formation of a **Finance Sub-Committee**. (We plan to have this Sub-Committee in operation by March 2026.)

Statement of Purpose-

The purpose of the Finance Sub-Committee is to provide expertise and advice to the Mission Council regarding the financial reporting of the POJ, and ensure that appropriate accounting practices are in place and being followed with respect to the financial affairs of the POJ. The Finance Sub-Committee shall also be a resource to the POJ's Treasurer, contract bookkeeper, external accountants, Budget Sub-Committee, Investment Sub-Committee, and any other body of the POJ for which financial assistance is requested.

Specific Duties-

- Meet with the POJ's contract bookkeepers monthly to review the POJ's monthly and year-to-date financials.
- Meet with the POJ's external accountants at least on an annual basis to review the year-end financials.
- Review the monthly bank reconciliations prepared by the POJ's contract bookkeeper.
- Review the monthly investment statement reconciliations prepared by the POJ's contract bookkeeper.
- Review the quarterly and annual Federal and Virginia payroll reports of the POJ and reconcile such to the POJ general ledger.
- Monitor POJ staff compliance with the internal accounting controls established in the POJ Resource Management Policy.
- Any other responsibilities assigned by the Mission Council.

Make Up of the Finance Sub-Committee-

- Mission Council Representative (as chair of the Finance Sub-Committee)
- POJ Treasurer
- Budget Sub-Committee Representative
- Investment Sub-Committee Representative
- Member at Large with financial acumen (CPA is preferable but not required)

Terms of Service-

Each member of this sub-committee, except the Member-At-Large, is there by virtue of serving a term on another group. The Member-At-Large will serve a 3-year term, and can serve a maximum of 6 years.

Forest Hill Administrative Commission

- The Forest Hill Administrative Commission continues its work.
- Zack Parker, RE, Providence Forge, and Barbara Flynt, RE, Brandermill, are nominated to serve on the Forest Hill Administrative Commission and are presented for Presbytery action at this February stated meeting.

Manual of Administrative Operations

- Listening sessions for the revised Manual of Administrative Operations were held. Mission Council extends thanks to Josh Andrzejewski and Lynne Clements for organizing and facilitating these sessions.
- Based on the feedback received and subsequent revisions, the Revised Manual of Administrative Operations is recommended to the Presbytery for approval at this stated meeting.

Mission Council is grateful for the Presbytery's faithful engagement during this season of discernment. The approval of the 2026 budget, progress toward a sustainable staffing model, and the work now underway to strengthen financial accountability and governance are essential steps toward long-term clarity and stability. Mission Council welcomes questions and conversation as this work continues.

Recommendations for Action:

1. Approve the nominations of Zack Parker, RE, Providence Forge, and Barbara Flynt, RE, Brandermill to serve on the Forest Hill Administrative Commission.
2. Adopt the Revised Manual of Administrative Operations as presented by the Mission Council

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Morgan, joelmissioncouncil@gmail.com

Moderator, Mission Council

Report of Trustees of Presbytery of the James, Inc.

February 21, 2026 Stated Meeting of the Presbytery
November 19, 2026 and January 21, 2026 Trustees Meetings

The Trustees report the following as information:

1. The Trustees met last year with our independent investment manager, Jeff Chapman, with the RBC Wealth Management firm, to review the Presbytery's current investment portfolio. We maintain a risk-managed and well-diversified portfolio of stocks and bonds which have performed well and taken advantage of the rise in equity markets during 2025.
2. The Trustees continue to pursue the sale of the real property of the former Trinity Church and the former Gordonsville Church.
3. The Trustees received a progress report from the Forest Hill Administrative Commission.
4. The Trustees have received proposals from four (4) different accounting firms for the review of our 2025 financials and will select one and proceed with the 2025 financial review.
5. The Trustees have received our 2026 insurance coverage renewal package and have been engaged in the annual review of our insurance program and coverage.

The Trustees report taking the following actions:

1. The Trustees closed last year on the sale of the former Mechanicsville Church to a non-denominational Christian group.
2. The Trustees held the annual meeting of the Virginia corporation (in accordance with Virginia corporation law) and elected corporate officers and directors for 2026, as follows: Webb Moore (President and Director); Joel Morgan (Vice-President and Director); Kerry Foster (Secretary/Treasurer and Director).

The Trustees report the following actions made as a commission: None

The Trustees make the following consent agenda recommendations: None

The Trustees make the following recommendation: None

Respectfully submitted:

Trustees of Presbytery of the James, Inc.

NOTE: The following end of year reports are preliminary drafts. We expect the final reports to be ready after the packet goes online. If you would like a copy of those final reports, please send a request to office@presbyteryofthejames.org. Thank you.

**Statement of Sources and Uses of Funds
For twelve months ending December 31, 2025**

DESCRIPTIONS	CY 2025		
	Jan - Dec	Budget	Variance
<i>SOURCES OF FUNDS</i>			
<u>Congregational Intents -</u>			
Undesignated Support (POJ, Synod Per Capita, and G.A.)	466,707.33	450,000.00	16,707.33
Designated Giving to POJ Only	25,994.97	17,217.00	8,777.97
Per Capita (\$1.15 for Synod; \$8.98 for G.A.)	8,448.94	13,000.00	(4,551.06)
Designated Giving to Validated Missions thru G.A.	8,687.27	25,000.00	(16,312.73)
Intents / total	509,838.51	505,217.00	4,621.51
Checking Account Interest	53.27	15.00	38.27
Other income	26,110.00	8,000.00	18,110.00
NWC Funding/NCD	93,100.00	93,100.00	(93,100.00)
			0.00
TOTAL - SOURCES OF FUNDS	629,101.78	606,332.00	(70,330.22)

USES OF FUNDS

Synod and General Assembly

Synod Per Capita	8,300.00	16,600.00	(8,300.00)
GA Per Capita	78,237.70	156,475.00	(78,237.30)
GA Shared Mission Support	3,712.42	25,000.00	(21,287.58)
Synod & GA / total	<u>90,250.12</u>	<u>198,075.00</u>	<u>(107,824.88)</u>

Constitutional Committees

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	213,175.90	230,364.00	(17,188.10)
Housing Allowances	0.00	0.00	0.00
Payroll Taxes	10,393.43	14,314.45	(3,921.02)
Lead Presbyter Discretionary Expense	1,818.38		1,818.38
Auto Expense (Lead Presbyter)	2,598.41		2,598.41
Auto Expense (Stated Clerk)	0.00	3,000.00	(3,000.00)
Pension/Medical	17,021.81	25,003.00	(7,981.19)
MC Staff / sub-total	<u>245,007.93</u>	<u>272,681.45</u>	<u>(27,673.52)</u>

Presbytery Office

Utilities	18,512.58	11,000.00	7,512.58
Insurance	34,585.33	26,000.00	8,585.33
Office Supplies	2,482.00	4,200.00	(1,718.00)
Postage	748.17	700.00	48.17
Telephone/Internet	1,508.92	10,023.00	(8,514.08)
Grounds/Building Maintenance	16,300.41	11,000.00	5,300.41
Remote Bank Fees	312.57	250.00	62.57
Audit	18,138.75	17,275.00	863.75
Payroll Expense	3,506.48	2,905.00	601.48
MC Presbytery Office / sub-total	<u>96,095.21</u>	<u>83,353.00</u>	<u>12,742.21</u>

Presbytery Operations

Conferences/Retreats	(935.73)	2,000.00	(2,935.73)
Communications & IT Support	31,913.99	15,000.00	16,913.99
Presbytery Meetings	3,715.11	3,000.00	715.11
Administration	3,988.36	600.00	3,388.36
Camp Hanover, Inc. (per Covenant Agreement)	102,000.00	102,000.00	0.00
Capital Replacement Transfer	0.00	2,500.00	(2,500.00)
MC Presbytery Operations / sub-total	<u>140,681.73</u>	<u>125,100.00</u>	<u>15,581.73</u>
MC totals	<u>481,784.87</u>	<u>481,134.45</u>	<u>650.42</u>

Commission on Ministry (COM)

COM - Committee Administration	97.73	500.00	(402.27)
COM - First call ministry Support	3,220.54	7,000.00	(3,779.46)
COM - Psych Evaluations for CLP candidates	0.00	1,200.00	(1,200.00)
COM - Pastor's Retreat	0.00	2,500.00	(2,500.00)
COM - New Professional's Orientation	0.00	500.00	(500.00)
COM - Training Ruling Elders	0.00	500.00	(500.00)
COM - Conflict Resolution Teams - training	0.00	1,500.00	(1,500.00)
COM / total	<u>3,318.27</u>	<u>13,700.00</u>	<u>(10,381.73)</u>

Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM)

CPM - Financial Aid	0.00	7,800.00	(7,800.00)
CPM - Psychological Evaluations	4,129.00	1,500.00	2,629.00
CPM - Committee Administration	0.00	500.00	(500.00)
CPM - Travel	0.00	700.00	(700.00)
CPM - Recruiting	0.00	2,000.00	(2,000.00)
CPM / total	<u>4,129.00</u>	<u>12,500.00</u>	<u>(8,371.00)</u>

Leadership Connections Team (LCT)

LCT - Team Administration	0.00	0.00	0.00
LCT - Black Caucus	0.00	2,000.00	(2,000.00)
LCT - Collegiate Ministries			
University of Mary Washington	14,999.99	15,000.00	(0.01)
University of Virginia	9,999.99	10,000.00	(0.01)
Virginia Commonwealth University	12,500.00	12,500.00	0.00
LCT - Older Adult	425.00	905.00	(480.00)
LCT - Resource Center	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00
LCT - Small Church	0.00	4,500.00	(4,500.00)
LCT - Nurture	(67.07)	3,500.00	(3,567.07)
LCT / total	<u>38,857.91</u>	<u>49,405.00</u>	<u>(10,547.09)</u>

Mission and Service Team (MAST)

MAST - Disaster Relief Team	7,491.00	6,000.00	1,491.00
MAST - Self Development of People	37.80	900.00	(862.20)
MAST - Social Justice	0.00	1,000.00	(1,000.00)
MAST - World Mission	3,000.00	5,000.00	(2,000.00)
MAST - Southwood Project Habitat of Greater Ch'ville (\$132K bal)	0.00	20,000.00	(20,000.00)
MAST / total	<u>10,528.80</u>	<u>32,900.00</u>	<u>(22,371.20)</u>

New Worshipping Communities (NWC)

NWC - Administration for team	0.00	500.00	(500.00)
NWC - Voices of Jubilee	0.00	10,000.00	(10,000.00)
NWC - BOP Voices of Jubilee	29,017.11	30,100.00	(1,082.89)
NWC - Holy Trinity	0.00	10,000.00	(10,000.00)
NWC - All Nations	0.00	10,000.00	(10,000.00)
NWC - Every Table	29,246.00	30,000.00	(754.00)
NWC - Coaching	1,500.00	2,000.00	(500.00)
NWC - Liability Insurance	0.00	500.00	(500.00)
NWC / total	<u>59,763.11</u>	<u>93,100.00</u>	<u>(33,336.89)</u>

TOTAL - USES OF FUNDS

688,653.08 880,814.45 (192,161.37)

EXCESS OF USES OVER SOURCES

(59,551.30) (274,482.45) 214,931.15

SUPPORT FROM EXISTING FUNDS

Church & Ministries Development Fund	100,000.00	274,482.45	(174,482.45)
Genesis & Generations Fund			0.00
Support from Existing Funds / total	100,000.00	274,482.45	(174,482.45)
NET USE	40,448.70	(0.00)	40,448.70

Account Balances at 12/31/2025	
Bank of America (cash)	\$1,378,095.58
RBC (cash and investments)	awaiting RBC statements
\$	1,378,095.58

Net Assets Without Restrictions

FUND	12.31.24	Contributions	Int. Income	Investment Fees	Investment Interest Inc.	Gains	Gains/Loss Sale of property	Expenses	Transfers	Support from M&D Interfund Transfers	Transfers from Restricted	12.31.25	
	Board designated funds												
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
Dismissed Churches	256,180.32	510.46		-738.35	2,419.83	-1,909.37						256,462.89	Dismissed Proceeds
Elizabeth Fitzgerald Fund	25,110.97											25,110.97	Church
GA Commissioner Reserves	3,627.75							-78.86				3,548.89	Program
Gordonsville Presbyterian Church	24,215.70	4,000.00						-7736				20,479.70	Church
Greenwood Presbyterial Church	81,382.16							-2011.97				79,370.19	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						-22,941.27				-81,333.88	Mgt
Montrose Church	69,229.21	6,000.00						5,046.77	-5,000.00			75,275.98	Church
New Covenant Funds	33.13	6000										6,033.13	Mgt
POJ	29,846.83	605,948.93	8.28					678,628.39	-10,000.00	100,000.00		1,404,432.43	POJ
Reparations Action Fund (From sale of church bld)	-								216846.4			216,846.40	
Retained Earnings	813,148.00											813,148.00	POJ Plant & R.E. NO CASH
Resurrection Fund (from sale of church bldg)	-								361,410.67			361,410.67	
Small Church Emergency Cap Fund	-	599.88						-5,000.00	5,000.00			599.88	Church
Stewardship (from sale of church buildings)	-								722,821.34			722,821.34	Mgt
Tithing (From sale of church bldg)	-								144,564.27			144,564.27	
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	838,330.67	8.28	-11,240.95	36,948.38	-28,091.96	0.00	534,886.45	1,235,677.68	0.00	0.00	8,430,279.84	

Net Assets With Restrictions

									Release Funds		
					Investment	Investment			to Assets		
	Balance	Contributions	Int. Income	Gains	Fees	Interest Inc.	Expenses	Transfers	wo restrictions	Balance	Class
	12.31.24									12/31/2025	
African Fellowship Project	\$ 3,323.00									\$ 3,323.00	Program
Committee on Ministry & Worship	\$ 3,120.54						-3120.54			\$ -	Program
Dismantling Racism Project	\$ 8,164.91						\$ (1,146.60)			\$ 7,018.31	Program
Elizabeth Fitzgerald Fund	\$ 2,531.81	\$ 773.38								\$ 3,305.19	Church
Five Cents A Meal	\$ 30,192.43	\$ 64,194.39					\$ (35,000.00)			\$ 59,386.82	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	\$ 2,488.63					\$ (1,250.00)			\$ 2,504.71	Program
Haitian Art Project	\$ 25.00									\$ 25.00	Program
Haiti Mission Project - Corell	\$ 9,616.66	\$ 5,675.00								\$ 15,291.66	Program
HCR - Misc	\$ -									\$ -	Program
New Church Development Site	\$ 320,258.07			\$ (2,243.88)	\$ (867.69)	\$ 2,843.76		-93,100		\$ 226,890.26	Church
Norman Nettleton Retirement Fund	\$ 5,023.08	\$ 791.80								\$ 5,814.88	Program
Montgomery Immersion Matthew 25	\$ 6,429.96									\$ 6,429.96	Program
Pastoral Care Fund	\$ 7,625.40	\$ 9,879.72								\$ 17,505.12	Program
Peacemaking Offering	\$ 20,403.81	\$ 719.32								\$ 21,123.13	Program
Pentecost Offering	\$ 4,867.41	\$ 30.00								\$ 4,897.41	Program
Presbyterian Disaster Team	-	\$ 15,084.50					\$ (2,945.00)			\$ 12,139.50	Program
SDOP Grant	\$ 7,213.79	\$ 8,367.99					\$ (6,000.00)			\$ 9,581.78	Program
Sunnyside Retirement - New Covenant	-	\$ 2,456.68					\$ (2,456.68)			\$ -	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	\$ 94,864.15					\$ (189,180.00)	\$ 10,000.00		\$ 729.16	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 Ho
Eva Ross Barndt	\$ 500.00									\$ 500.00	Eva Ross Barnd
Permanently restricted net assets #3800	\$ 2,500.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$ 2,500.00	
	\$ 649,929.13	\$ 205,325.56		\$ (723.95)	\$ (1,190.20)	\$ 4,305.86	\$ (246,099.30)	\$ (83,100.00)		\$ 528,447.10	
Total Temp. Restricted	\$ 644,929.13	\$ 160,552.83	-	\$ (723.95)	\$ (1,190.20)	\$ 4,305.86	\$ (206,964.88)	\$ 10,000.00	-	\$ 600,749.37	
Total Perm. Restricted	\$ 500.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$ 500.00	

Report of the Committee on Nominations

February 21, 2026

- I. The Committee on Nominations was delighted to meet with members of the Committee on Representation on December 9, 2025. We discussed how we can work together better and set a schedule to meet in advance of every POJ meeting to look ahead to the openings across the commissions, committees, and teams of the presbytery. *We in the Presbytery of the James are blessed with a fantastic diversity of generations, racial make-up, and experience of the church.* We will be calling on you to help us ensure that our commissions and committees, teams and task forces fully represent God’s beauty and diversity. Thank you for your prayers

- II. **The Committee on Nominations would like to nominate TE Mary Jane Winter to join the other commissioners to represent the POJ at the General Assembly in 2026.**
 - a. If elected, Mary Jane will join other TEs: Ray Roberts (Retired) and James Taneti (MAL, UPSEM), and REs Mai Owens (Ginter Park); Barry Parks (Westminster, Charlottesville); and Chad Wayner (South Plains); and YAAD Charlie Collins (First, Richmond). These commissioners and YAAD were elected at the October 18, 2025, POJ meeting.

- III. The Committee on Nominations worked diligently to create the five-person search committee to discern and nominate the candidate for the Transitional General Presbyter/Stated Clerk position. **As of Jan. 22, the committee nominates Teaching Elders Russ Kerr (MAL, VCUPACE), and Vicki Murdock (Retired) to the search committee. As of Feb. 4, the committee nominates Ruling Elder Lamar Lockhart (Chester) and Teaching Elder Liz Hulme Adam (Tabor) to the search committee.** We hope—with the work of the Holy Spirit—to nominate a full team of 5 people at the meeting on February 21st.

- IV. The Committee reports the following openings.
 We aim to submit nominees for most if not all of these vacancies at the June meeting. If YOU are feeling the nudge of the Spirit to serve the presbytery, or you have someone you would like to nominate, please contact the committee at con@presbyteryofthejames.org. We appreciate your prayers!

The following openings exist on Committees, Commissions, and Teams that are filled by the Committee on Nominations:

Team/ Comm	Class	Name	Church	Pers Code	Role/ Reg./Dist.	Term
Commission on Ministry						
COM	2027			RE	B	1
COM	2028			RE	E	1
COM	2028			TE	F	1
COM	2028			RE	F	1
COM	2026			RE	MAL	1
Committee on Representation						
COR	2028			RE		1

Presbytery of the James – 122nd Stated Meeting – February 21, 2026 – Hybrid Meeting Zoom/Fairfield Church – Section II

Committee on Preparation for Ministry						
CPM	2027			RE	B	1
CPM	2026			RE	C	1
CPM	2028			TE	F	
CPM	2027			RE/TE	MAL VM	1
Permanent Judicial Council						
PJC	2029			RE	MAL	1
Leadership Connections Team						
LCT	2027			TE/RE	A	1
LCT	2027			TE/RE	B	1
LCT	2026			MC	C	1
LCT	2028			RE	E	1
LCT	2028			TE	F	1
LCT	2027				MAL VM	1
Mission & Service Team						
MAST	2026			TE	C	1
MAST	2028			RE	E	1
MAST	2027			TE	F	1
MAST	2028				MAL VM	
New Worshipping Communities Team						
NWCT	2028			TE	F	1
Westminster Presbyterian Homes Board						
WPHB	2027			TE	MAL	1
Synod Service						
Mid-Atlantic Synod	2027			Representation		1
Mid-Atlantic Synod	2027			Nominations		1
Mid-Atlantic Synod	2031			SPJC		1

Report from the Committee on Representation (COR)

for the February 21, 2026, Meeting of the Presbytery of the James

MEMBERS: Crystal Varner Parker, moderator; Todd Davidson, Donna Kelley, Ashley Diaz Mejias, Barbara Parks

- I. The Committee Reports the Following Actions: none
- II. Recommendations: none
- III. Report:
 - A. We have a new email for communications with the Committee on Representation (COR): cor@presbyteryofthejames.org. Please use this for any correspondence with the COR team.
 - B. We have held a joint meeting with CON to ensure we have a good flow of communication for reviewing nominations from and sending recommendations to the Committee on Nominations.
 - C. To aid in item B, we are meeting on the third Monday of the month

Camp Hanover Report to Presbytery

January 15, 2026

News and Happenings

In December Camp Hanover hosted two annual events – Winter Camp and Hanover Christmas. Winter Camp brought many summer campers back onsite for worship, new experiences, and fellowship. Over 300 people attended Hanover Christmas to celebrate the birth of Jesus. A HUGE “Thank You!” again to everyone who volunteered as decorators, actors, parking attendants, greeters, musicians, and refreshment servers to make the event a success!

Board Business

The Board of Directors met for its regular meeting in December and discussed how the Presbytery budget restraints impact Camp Hanover's budget. A letter was sent to POJ churches requesting they invite a Camp representative to meet with their session to provide an update on plans, ministry initiatives, programming for 2026 and beyond. We also continue to move forward with a partnership between Camp Hanover and Pearrisburg Presbyterian Church to offer adventure camp/mission trip programs in the New River Gorge region.

The Board continues to build momentum and grow financial support for Camp Hanover through creative, fun, and meaningful opportunities for giving. We are grateful to the donors who provided items and experiences for the inaugural “Great Camp Bid” online auction, generating nearly \$3,000. Now is the time to get your team lined up and start practicing your tosses for the “Battle of the Bags” Cornhole Tournament, a fun filled event for all ages coming this Spring. The Board is also working with those who desire to secure Camp Hanover's future and have an ongoing impact well beyond their own lifetimes. Guidance for placing Camp Hanover in your will and making a planned Gift can be found at www.grateful.camphanover.org

Summer 2026 Camp Registration is OPEN!

Registration for the 2026 Summer season opened in October and sessions are filling up quickly for both Overnight and Day Camp! Congregations with an in-person representative at the February Presbytery meeting will receive postcards, posters, brochures, bulletin inserts, and other tools congregations can use to get the word out about Summer Camp. Any congregation whose representative who attends by Zoom will receive materials in the mail after the meeting. You can learn

more about Summer Camp on the Camp Hanover website at www.camphanover.org/summer-camp

Mark Your Calendars...

- ❖ Sunday, April 26 -- Camp Hanover Fun Day
- ❖ Friday, May 15 to Sunday, May 17 -- Family Camp
- ❖ Sunday, June 14 -- The First Campers Arrive at Summer Camp!
- ❖ Friday, September 4 to Monday, September 6 -- Homecoming Weekend

The Board and staff recognize that with the Presbytery's current budget constraints, it is more important than ever to move to a direct congregational mission funding model. We ask you to please invite your congregation to deepen your partnership with Camp Hanover.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin B. Davidson

President of the Board of Directors, Camp Hanover Inc.

Email: boardpresident@camphanover.org

Doug Walters

Executive Director, Camp Hanover Inc.

Email: doug@camphanover.org

Report of the Leadership Connections Team

February 21, 2026

LCT Class

This past fall, LCT offered Polity 101 which was held in two sections, four weeks each, 7:30 p.m., via Zoom. 42 people registered and participated from 15 congregations. It was a good experience, and the decision has been made to offer a "winter term" and a "spring term" in 2026.

Winter Term, Polity 101, is March 5, 12, 19, 26, Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom. Registration began February 1 on the presbytery's website. Cost is \$50 per congregation regardless of the number of people participating. Each person shall register separately.

Spring Term, Polity 101, is May 5, 12, 19, 26, Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m., on Zoom. Registration will be in April.

The course is for all Ruling Elders, Deacons, Educators, and CREs. Come and participate.

The 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 continuously updated [searchable online catalog](#) to explore the possibilities:

www.resourcingchurches.com (there's a link at the bottom of the main page).

Lent is coming! We have resources to help!

Lent 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 are 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 a 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 will continue to share about 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. Whether in person or virtually, the staff of your Resource Center is here to help with consultation and resourcing!

Presbyterian Women

- I. Presbyterian Women, Leadership Connection Team
- II. Katheryn M Peebles, Moderator Presbyterian Women of the James
- III. Fall Gathering -was November 1, 2025 at Ameilia Presbyterian Church, Coordinating team meeting – January 10,2026, March 14, 2026 and Spring Annual Meeting - April 26,2026
The Fall Gathering of the Presbyterian Women of the James was hosted by Amelia Area Presbyterian churches (Rennie Memorial, Oak Grove, Zion and Amelia) on November 1, 2025, we had 39 women representing 14 churches. 2 Guest speakers, Rev. Kerry Foster, Temporary Presbyter and Stated Clerk and Rev Chad Blasdell to give an overview of this year's Horizons Bible study, "Finding Resilience, Joy and Our Identity in Jesus Christ".

Our Spring Gathering Misson offering was presented and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance for Western North Carolina, victims of Hurricane Helene was selected. Last Spring we collected \$1,700 for the Georgia's House.

A location for our 2026 Spring Gathering is Richmond First Presbyterian Church on April 25, 2026.

The Coordinating team continues to search for individuals who would like to join in supporting the PW of the James.

We continue to encourage support of the Building A Place for All, Massanetta Springs Capitol Campaign.

Older Adult Ministry

The Older Adult Ministry is planning several videos to add to our virtual library on the Presbytery's Website. If you haven't viewed the previous videos, they are available under the Older Adult Ministry tab. We meet by Zoom almost monthly. If you would like to add your talents and experiences to our

group, please contact George Whipple (gandjwhipple@aol.com) and he'll be glad to send you a link to our next meeting.

In the meantime we offer you this tidbit of spiritual reflection on aging from the Presbyterian Older Adult Ministry Network. Gayle Smith is a lifelong learner and member of Clear Lake Presbyterian Church in Houston Texas. She is passionate about her faith and aging well. She was deeply moved by the book, Pilgrimage into the Last Third of Life by Jane Thibault and Richard Morgan. It's a book of scripture-based meditations. She came to realize that prayer is not only words spoken to God, but also a listening for God's word in response. During the summer of 2024 she organized at the church a one weekday two-hour class based on the book and the practice of meditation. The first hour was a time of meditation instruction and practice. The second hour was a discussion of the book shaped by the questions offered by the authors. The first hour was always held in the sanctuary as a way of reinforcing meditation as a faith practice as worship and could be used for personal worship at home. The second hour was held in the church library. You may read the full article about Gayle's experience with the class on the Presbyterian Older Adult Ministry Network's website (poamn.org) "Sharing Meditation Practices: A Journey of Faith and Reflection" by Robin Johnson, director of Mental Health and 55+ Adult Ministry at Clear Lake Presbyterian Church.

George Whipple, Moderator

Campus Ministry

The Pace Center, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA

Thank you for your continued support! In 2025, Pace's ministry has centered around three major areas of growth: leadership development, faith formation, and expanding access to meals.

Leadership Development

This year marked a milestone in Pace's long-term goal of creating a comprehensive, written leadership curriculum. We now employ two paid student interns who work alongside Pace campus ministers to develop and teach this curriculum to Pace's student leaders. Each week, during our peer-led leadership badge training, students gather to explore the core principles of servant leadership - including how to introduce themselves with confidence, create welcoming programs, identify their personal gifts, recognize the God-given gifts of others, and foster genuine, lasting connections within their communities.

In 2025, 30 students participated in Pace's leadership training programs. These sessions have strengthened our student leaders' ability to build inclusive, asset-based ministries at Pace. In addition to integrating servant-leadership principles into our existing programs, students are developing new initiatives such as a game night ministry and an eco-stewardship ministry. They are also collaborating with Muslim and Jewish student organizations to establish an interfaith event that promotes dialogue and connection across faith traditions.

Food Ministry Expansion

Pace has also deepened its commitment to expanding our food ministries. We now host two weekly communal meals - *Weeknight Cooking and Stories & Lunch* - which together have provided over 1,700 meals this year. In addition, most of our other 25+ weekly student-led ministries provide a meal component. These meals nourish students physically and emotionally, offering meaningful opportunities for connection and a much-needed respite from technology.

This year, we shifted our food ministry focus toward more nutritious, homemade offerings. Each week, volunteers from local churches donate homemade soups, fresh fruits, and baked goods for students to enjoy throughout the week. Our part-time cook supplements these donations with two additional hot meals weekly, ensuring that students always have access to wholesome food while attending Pace events or using our space to study and connect.

Faith Formation

In 2025, Pace launched a new ministry, *Food & Faith*, which invites students to explore the intersection of faith and daily life. Each gathering begins with personal check-ins, followed by a discussion of scripture and its relevance to participants lived experiences, and concludes with the sharing of a simple meal. This new ministry has drawn twenty students and has become a cherished space for reflection, conversation, and community building.

Looking Forward

In 2026, Pace hopes to more fully develop our leadership curriculum. Along with this, we will continue to develop our peer-leadership program where student leaders learn, use, and teach the curriculum. In 2025, our students shared this curriculum by leading “Welcome and Inclusion” workshops at local churches. We hope to grow this ministry in 2026 which goes towards our goal of supporting partner churches where VCU students’ worship, so that church members and clergy know how best to be in ministry with college students.

Special Thanks

Over the years, Fund 14—a fund held at Second Presbyterian Church—was supported through a partnership among the Presbytery of the James, Union Presbyterian Seminary, and Second Presbyterian to benefit UKirk Campus Ministry at VCU, and accumulated a total of \$46,000. In 2025, all three partners prayerfully considered a request from Rev. Taylor Lewis Guthrie Hartman (Second – Richmond) to release the funds to the Pace Center. By mid-December, each body had agreed and voted accordingly.

We offer a heartfelt thank you to Rev. Taylor Lewis Guthrie Hartman (Second – Richmond), Rev. Kerry Foster (Presbytery of the James), and President Jacq Lapsley (Union Presbyterian Seminary) for their leadership and support in guiding this process. These funds are an important step in creating the financial foundation that will allow Pace’s ministry to grow and flourish.

UKIRK, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA

UKirk UVA began 2025 under the leadership of Rev. Dorothy Piatt-Esguerra. Student leaders led Bible study and discussion each week, participated in worship by attending weekly, reading Scripture, offering reflections on their experiences as a member of UKirk, and leading one service in the spring, including preaching. They also gathered each week for Bagel Brunches following worship.

Dorothy left WPC in March to take another call, and the dedicated group of 8-12 students, supported by members of the University Mission committee, continued to provide leadership in dinner and discussion and in Sunday bagel brunches. Most of that group – nurtured over four years under Dorothy’s attentive and adept leadership – graduated, leaving only two members on Grounds to assume student leader roles. One other student was studying abroad.

With Dorothy’s departure and the arrival of a new Head of Staff, some restructuring took place and Rev. Lynne Clements assumed responsibility for the pastoral role with Ukirk. The fall began with a Welcome to First Years event, participation in the activities fair on Grounds, and Monday night Bible study, dinner and discussion.

Fall also brought some moments of joy, curiosity, and surprise.

- JOY: For the opening part of the fall, one student leader took responsibility for planning and leading the discussion. We engaged in rich and interesting discussions on the devil/Satan using the Outlook study *The Devil You Say*. That was followed by a rich examination of the book of James, and selected Psalms. Following the Thanksgiving break, Rev. Clements led an Advent study that centered on the themes of Joy, Peace, and Hope. (Love will be the first lesson that begins the new year) using Psalms paired with spiritual practices. The discussions have been meaningful, rich, and personal as students bring their knowledge (or lack of), theological questions, and real-life experiences. Most especially, there is such joy in watching them share stories with one another about classes (we have lots of nurses and commerce/finance majors), lift each other up, laugh together, and build community with one another. Weekly gatherings average 6 attendees, plus a pastor or church member.
- CURIOSITY: The majority of the students coming to UKirk are not Presbyterian. In fact, none of the newest members are from Presbyterian churches and not all are Christian. We routinely have around the table the student leaders who are PCUSA, Catholics, including one young woman who grew up Polish Catholic and went to Mass spoken only in Polish, Methodists, and one Muslim. We have had several students come to visit worship and stay for bagels, but not ever return. Exploring this further is a key goal this year, along with how to broaden communication and advertisement within the First-Year community. We have greeted and welcomed as many as 30 students over the course of the semester, though most of those were in the first weeks. Occasionally, someone new will come, but that is less frequent now.
- SURPRISE: A couple of things have been surprising. One is the composition of the group that was mentioned above. The other is that there are students who come regularly on Communion Sundays and stay for bagels, but do not come other weeks. This perhaps may lead to consideration of alternative worship experiences that include communion on another day/time in the week. Another surprise has been the openness of the group to explore the biblical texts together and to lean together into learning and growing in faith. Students at UVA are thinkers, intellectually curious, and the ones coming to UKirk, introverted. Perhaps part of what is drawing them to UKirk is the way WPC approaches Scripture with thoughtfulness and intelligence.

Finally, I would like to share a particularly powerful moment. One Monday evening, the group was gathered around the table for dinner. Since not everyone knew one another, they began to share where they were from and what they were studying. Other fun details followed including this: of the 8 people gathered there, all but ONE spoke a second language fluently! Arabic, Lebanese, Spanish, Afrikaans, and Polish. It was like a little UN! As I drove home that night, I prayed, “Lord, you are showing us something about your beloved community. Let us have eyes to see it. Amen.”

I continue to give thanks for the gift of this ministry and for the generosity of Westminster Presbyterian Church and the Presbytery of the James that supports its work. This program is making a difference in the lives of young people in ways that are beyond anything we might have expected or imagined. Thanks be to God!

Respectfully and joyfully submitted,
Reverend Lynne Taylor Clements, Associate Pastor

CCC (Christian Campus Center), University of Mary Washington
No report submitted

Report of the Mission and Service Team

Hunger Ministry

This is a core ministry of the Presbytery of the James! Funds do not come from the general budget of the presbytery but solely from churches that receive the 5 Cents a Meal (or Cents-Ability) offering or make a direct contribution to the Hunger fund. A priority of the committee is supporting ministries in the presbytery that address hunger right here, right now; but funds also support efforts of mission partners in Mexico, Guatemala and Haiti to address hunger there. In addition, a grant to the denomination's Presbyterian Hunger Program extends our connections even further. However, the presbytery's committee can only distribute what is received. This past year \$61,194.39 received from churches, which is less than previous years.

Please help the presbytery address hunger with a contribution from your church!

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) states, "As people of faith, our vision is a world where everyone has access to enough nutritious food to thrive. We believe that, by standing shoulder to shoulder, our vision can become reality, around the corner and around the world."

Every church in the Presbytery of the James can align with Matthew 25. With federal funding cuts and growing hunger worldwide, we cannot sit on the sidelines when Jesus says, "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat."

If you or a member of your congregation would be willing to participate in the presbytery's Hunger Committee, and join in this critical ministry, please notify the office.

Justice & Advocacy Ministry

The Virginia Interfaith Center is rooted in a rich history of faith-driven activism. They are a non-partisan organization that amplifies moral voices in public life and works toward systemic change in health, economic, and civic equity. Founded by Presbyterian Pastor Rev. Jim Payne in the '80's, Rev. Payne saw the critical need for an inclusive, interfaith voice to advocate just public policies in the Virginia General Assembly. The Virginia Interfaith Center empowers people of all faiths to work together for justice in the policies that shape the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Presbytery of the James is a partner community of the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy. Here are some bills VICPP is advocating for that you can reach out to your state representatives and senators about:

- [HB1](#) – Raising the Minimum Wage – This bill would raise the minimum wage to \$15 by January 1, 2028. It passed the House Labor and Commerce Committee (15-7).
- [SB4](#) – Free School Breakfast for Students – This bill would provide school breakfast at no cost to students. It passed the Senate Education and Health Committee unanimously (15-0).
- [SB134](#) – Child Care Funding – This bill requires the Department of Education to establish a funding formula for early childhood care and education. It passed the Senate Public Education Subcommittee
- [HB5](#) – Paid Sick Days – This bill would require all employers to provide paid sick leave to all workers in Virginia.
- [HB594](#) – Expediting Affordable Housing – This bill would allow localities to create an expedited administrative approval process to rezone land for affordable housing.
- [HB20](#) – Farm Worker Minimum Wage Exemption – This bill would remove the exemption that currently excludes farm workers from minimum wage eligibility.

- [SB33](#) – School Nurses Funding - This bill allows schools to use “at risk add-on” funding to pay for nurses
- [SB133](#) – This bill protects mothers and babies in pregnancies with substance exposure. It removes criminal and CPS penalties for moms who get prenatal care and rehab if needed.
- [SB22](#) – Implicit Bias - This bill requires medical practitioners to complete two hours of continuing education on unconscious bias and cultural competency.
- [RISC](#) - Richmonders Involved to Strengthen our Communities - is an interfaith justice ministry organization made up of 28 congregations from throughout Richmond, Henrico, and Chesterfield. The Nehemiah Action will be held on March 24 at 6:30 p.m. at St. Paul’s Baptist church, 4247 Creighton Rd, Richmond, VA 23223. All are invited and encouraged to attend. The action will be addressing the issues of affordable housing, gun violence, and access to mental health care with public leaders of our community.

Self- Development of People Ministry of the POJ (SDOP)

THREE TOTAL FUNDED GRANTS: \$24,500.00:

- TWO SDOP MID-COUNCIL LEVELS GRANTS, \$9,500.00
- ONE SDOP NATIONAL LEVEL GRANT,\$15,000.00

The SDOP Ministry considered 2025 as comprehensive and fantastic.

The SDOP Ministry extends thanks to church leaders, church ministries in the POJ, community leaders, and non-profits for support and attendance at grassroots workshops during the year.

The grassroots workshops and community workshops were hosted by the Chesterfield County Central Library, 7051 Lucy Corr Blvd, Chesterfield, VA and the POJ Office.

Additional meet and greets during the three POJ Stated Meetings at the SDOP display table provided opportunities to discuss and answer questions on an in-person basis. The SDOP Ministry was blessed with many opportunities to host and meet and greet in 2025.

The SDOP Ministry was blessed with the opportunities to welcome four new members to the Ministry, which will enhance and provide spiritual strength and support to the agenda for 2026.

The first community and grassroots workshop for 2026 was hosted on January 13, 2026, at the Chesterfield County Central Library, and it was a success!

The SDOP Ministry looks forward to hosting grassroots workshops in 2026 with the local YMCA, and announcements including dates and locations will be listed in the Current newsletter.

Again, the SDOP Ministry is blessed to have the opportunities to meet with POJ church leaders, church ministries, community leaders in the POJ, non-profits and others in 2026

Lamar Lockhart
Moderator, SDOP Ministry

World Mission Ministry

Experience the vitality of world mission firsthand! Travel with the Presbytery of the James to Guatemala July 13-20. We will be hosted by CEDEPCA, a mission partner of the Presbyterian Church (USA) as they celebrate their 40th anniversary!

Come! See how God is at work! Discover how partnership, prayers and support have changed lives. Engage your hands and heart. Enjoy new friends, a beautiful country, and a rich culture. Experience God's presence in new ways. Cost for 8 days is \$1,120 plus airfare. A few places remain. Contact Mary Jane Winter (mjwinter@comcast.net). The trip is jointly sponsored with the Presbytery of the Peaks.

CEDEPCA (Protestant Center for Pastoral Studies in Central America) promotes, education, empowerment, and change, working for justice, the care of creation and a better world for all. It has a strong ministry in Disaster Response and in building resilient communities with better nutrition and lifesaving water filters. A small grant from the presbytery's Hunger Committee supports these efforts.

Presbyterian Mission Partners Need Our Support! Even though the service of all Presbyterian mission co-workers has concluded, mission has not. Your church can continue your support of global mission by supporting one of our denomination's partners. In this way you can draw closer to the work our colleagues were doing. The presbytery is continuing its support of Haiti by helping the farmers that Cindy worked with in the central plateau.

Young Adult Volunteer Program is another way to connect to God's work both globally and locally. Not sure what to do after college? Or looking for more meaningful work, consider a year of service. Applications are open for the 2026-27 year. There are 5 countries and 4 sites in the United States! Scholarship support is available from the Presbytery. Designed for young adults ages 19-30.

The Global Mission Center is sponsoring a symposium March 16-18 to help the denomination in its global engagement and vision. The Center's director, James Taneti, has recently published a history of church in India in Telugu to create a comprehensive understanding of the Christian community in India and to stimulate continued interest.

New Worshiping Communities Report

February 21, 2026

New Worshiping Communities is the primary way that the Presbytery of the James develops new congregations. In recent years there have been four that have emerged: All Nations and Holy Trinity, both with immigrant roots, Voices of Jubilee with a focus on incarcerated youth, and Every Table with an outreach to those on the margins. Holy Trinity has become an official congregation of the Presbytery of the James, but it is still included in this report. Please read the following update about each of these unique witnesses in the Presbytery.

Voices of Jubilee:

Voices of Jubilee is a community of pastors, returning citizens and volunteers who meet isolation with connection by accompanying incarcerated youth and their families. They are very excited to have received their 501c3 status and are considering a move to a Validated Ministry!

This year the team grew. They added Angel De Jesus and Jairmey Honea to their staff and Dr. Chris Burton to their board. Additionally, they welcomed Alica Neumann and Steve Harms as core Volunteers.

In addition to their regular visits every week, they were able to make multiple visits to Voices of Jubilee kids who are now in Department of Corrections facilities. They traveled to Sussex, Buckingham, and Wallens Ridge.

They welcomed home several youth from Department of Corrections facilities and because of your support, have been able to provide deep accompaniment as they navigate reentry.

This summer they sent their staff and mentors to the Homeboys Conference in Los Angeles and their staff attended the New Worshiping Communities Gathering in Estes Park, Colorado in October. These opportunities allow them to experience growth and development, giving them the tools to continue the work of liberation.

In the summer they began their Youth Justice Companions program with a kickoff training in September, and more events are planned for 2026.

They held two Restorative Justice Circle Trainings, allowing them to provide their volunteers with additional tools for detention visits.

Two staff members, Angel and Jemarr lectured at Duke University for a history of prisons course in November and December.

They finished out the year packaging and delivering over 250 Christmas Packages to detention center and prisons through the Commonwealth.

Every Table:

Every Table is discerning what it means to live as the first followers of Jesus did. In Acts 2:42-47, we see a newly formed community drawn together for a shared purpose of living into the message Jesus embodied in his life. Those first believers lived together, to provide for one another together in fellowship, sharing meals, learning, and reading sacred texts. Those who had more, sold their possessions and belongings to give the proceeds to the community to ensure that everyone could live in abundance. They received their food with glad and generous hearts.

This passage had been a guide for us in moments of discernment. We are learning what it means to live together and be supported by a community as we co-create spiritual this growing spiritual community.

This conversation has led Every Table to a new model of engagement. Rather than meeting in one location, we've begun hosting house parties for the Every Table Community. These informal gatherings offer people the opportunity to come together and share space rooted in a collective desire to exhale and connect with others. There is often simple programming at the house parties.

Previous gatherings have included:

- The first house party was scheduled around All Saints Day, Day of the Dead, and various other days from traditions honoring those who have died. Board member, Rudy Joy Garcia, created an altar for our beloveds who have passed, and facilitated space for people to offer prayers
- On the Winter Solstice, Jess led us as we converted a room into a camera obscura. This process involved blacking out every window and door in the space, except for one tiny pin hole of an exterior window. We then sat in the darkness together until our eyes adjusted to the darkness. As this happened, the scene outside the window began to appear inside the space

and all around us. It was gentle and prescient reminder of the ways in which darkness and light co-exist, and that even a pinhole of light becomes enough to illuminate the space around us.

- In January, Charles guided us through a Yoga Nidra meditation, and we then created the vision board for 2026.

Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church:

By the grace of God things are going well with Holy Trinity since Rev. Eric Amoah joined as pastor. Enthusiasm is strong as seen in the active participation in church activities.

The church has seen growth in attendance of Wednesday Bible Study and Thursday Prayer meetings. Members show up, share their in-depth knowledge and understanding of Scriptures and join as well on Thursday evening to pray. The church started the study of the Gospel of Luke from July until the end of year 2025.

They have started the study of Nehemiah as they embark on new ways and strategies to improve on our money raising activities for the church on the theme, “Let us rise up and build.” With this study, they hope members will be encouraged to support the church with their resources to help them meet our budget for the year.

The new session members received about four weeks of training from Rev. Derek Redwine. This training equipped the new elders with the gifts and skills to lead the church.

On November 23, 2025, the church organized a successful welcome service for Rev. Eric Amoah. They received many visitors who came to grace the occasion. Mr. Ayars Lore from the Presbytery of James came to support us.

In December 28, the church organized a Christmas party which saw in attendance many church members and other members of the community. They dined with good Ghanaian local dishes and made merry with music. The children also acted the birth story of Jesus Christ.

The church also organized an honor and appreciation day for elders rotating off session. The day was marked with the presentation of plaques cash donations to all these elders. Past elders were full of praise to the church for the recognition of their services.

The church bought and dedicated children’s Bibles for our Sunday School. Teachers thanked the church for this gesture. They said with the Bibles, children can read and study at home and memorize the Word of God for their spiritual growth.

All Nations Presbyterian Fellowship:

All Nations has struggled with pastoral leadership since the return to Kenya in 2024 of Rev. Humphrey Muraya, its organizing pastor. Sadly, it has concluded its journey as a new worshipping community with its remaining members dispersing to other congregations. Several have returned to New Hanover.

All Nations began as AFREIM (African Evangelical International Ministries) in March 2012, as a house church under the leadership of Humphrey Muraya, recently arrived from Kenya. As it grew, it moved to a classroom at Trinity Presbyterian, then to New Hanover for several years, and in 2016 it moved to Westminster on Monument Ave. There it thrived under pastor Humphrey’s leadership. It developed

a growing food pantry, an initiative envisioned and led by Barbara Campbell, the mission pastor of All Nations. The food pantry ministry will continue!

We give thanks for the multicultural witness that All Nations has offered over these 14 years and pray that their members will now enrich other congregations with their vibrant faith, commitment to service, and dedicated leadership

Ayars Lore, NWCT Moderator

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