

August 2026 Mission Council Update

Dear Friends in Christ,

As we move toward the fall, Mission Council continues its work on finances, staffing, property, and ministry structures that support the Presbytery of the James's shared ministry.

Preparing the 2027 Budget

Mission Council has begun reviewing the proposed 2027 budget. The Investment Committee has recommended a 4.5% draw from our investments, which would provide approximately \$219,891 in support of the budget—about \$17,700 less than the amount available for the 2026 budget. Also, the General Assembly voted to increase the 2027 per capita by 30% to \$13.04, which means the POJ will pay over \$20,000 more in GA support than in 2026.

The Budget Subcommittee continues its work. Mission Council will approve the proposed budget at our September meeting. It will be shared with the Presbytery before the October stated meeting, with listening and conversation opportunities to follow. We will hold a called meeting of the Presbytery in early November for action on the 2027 budget.

Forest Hill Community Center

We are moving from the work of the Forest Hill Administrative Commission toward establishing the Forest Hill Community Center as a sustainable ministry and community resource.

Mission Council has approved a job description for a part-time **Forest Hill Community Center Administrator**, and the position has been posted. A search committee consisting of Jen Rowe, Cherry Peters, and Kerry Foster has been appointed to lead the search.

We are also working to establish the structure and leadership of the Forest Hill Community Center Task Force. As we (the POJ) voted in June, the Task Force will include both Presbytery representatives and members of the surrounding community as we continue to discern how this property can best serve its neighbors.

The Finance Committee recommended that the Community Center maintain separate financial records while remaining connected to the Presbytery's payroll and financial oversight. This provides accountability and a clear picture of the Center's financial operations.

Grant Applications for Resurrection and Reparation Funds

Since February, we have been working to prepare the grant application processes for the **Resurrection Fund** and the **Reparative Action Fund**.

We expect to approve these processes at our September meeting and bring them to the Presbytery for consideration at the October stated meeting. Our goal is to provide a clear and accountable process for congregations and ministries seeking support from these funds.

Leadership and Nominations

Mission Council is responsible for bringing nominations for several Presbytery committees. At our August meeting, we approved nominations to be presented at the October stated meeting for positions on the Committee on Nominations and the Committee on Representation.

We are also continuing to look for faithful leaders to serve in several other open positions across the Presbytery, **including one at-large member of the finance committee, two members for the Investment Committee, and one at-large member of the budget committee.** As always, if you know someone with gifts to share, please have them reach out to me.

Property and Financial Stewardship

The court has authorized the Trustees to proceed with the sale of the Gordonsville Church property, allowing that process to move toward closing.

The Presbytery office has been sold, and we are awaiting a closing date to be set in September. Mission Council and POJ staff are currently reviewing potential locations for leasing new offices.

We are also working to complete the transfer of the Forest Hill property to the Trustees. In addition, proceeds from recent property sales are being managed in accordance with the Resource Management Policy and invested for the long-term stewardship of Presbytery resources.

Looking Ahead

The October stated meeting is shaping up to be a day of worship, fellowship, learning, and business. In addition to examinations, we expect to hear from several of our mission partners and ministry teams, including the Anti-Racism Committee, World Mission, and our seminaries.

There is a great deal of work happening across the Presbytery, much of it involving details that can sometimes feel far removed from congregational life. But these conversations about budgets, property, staffing, and structure all serve a larger purpose: helping us use the resources entrusted to us wisely so that we can continue to support congregations, strengthen ministry, and respond to where God is calling us next.

Thank you for your prayers, patience, and partnership in this shared work.

Please contact me if you have any questions: 804-651-6710 (or joelmissioncouncil@gmail.com). And I as often encourage us: More phone calls, fewer emails.

Grace and peace,

Joel Morgan

Moderator, Mission Council
Presbytery of the James